

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013

## OFFALY LOCAL AUTHORITIES



Front Cover (clockwise from top left)

Images of **“The Gathering”** events:

- ❖ St. Patricks Day Parade, Tullamore,
- ❖ Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival,
- ❖ St. Patricks Day Parade, Tullamore,
- ❖ World Record Breaking, *“Rock the Boat”*, Rhode

Main Photo:

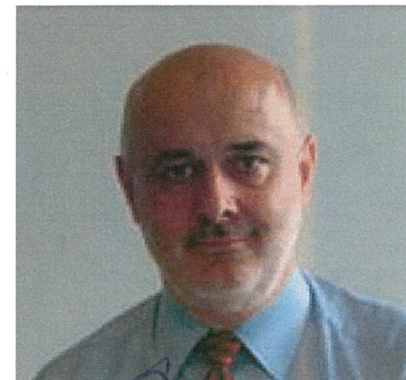
Harvest Offaly Food Festival



## JOINT ADDRESS BY THE CATHAOIRLEACH AND COUNTY MANAGER



*Sinead Moylan-Ryan*  
Cllr. Sinead Moylan-Ryan — Cathaoirleach



*Seán Murray*  
Seán Murray — Bainisteoir Chontae

We are very pleased to present the *Offaly Local Authorities 2013 Annual Report*, which outlines the various services provided by the Council, the elected members, and the staff of the various departments to the people of Offaly.

This report provides Offaly County Council and the Town Councils of Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore the opportunity to record the activities undertaken by these organisations.

2013 could be described as a period of transition, with staff across the organisation preparing for the establishment of **Uisce Éireann / Irish Water**; planning for the organisational changes included in the *Local Government (Reform) Bill 2013* (enacted in January 2014) which provides for the abolition of Town Councils and the establishment of three **Municipal Districts** in Offaly following the Local Elections to be held in May 2014; and, preparing for the establishment of **Local Enterprise Office**

**(LEO)** in early 2014. 2013 was an exciting year on the social and community calendar with many of Offaly Local Authorities staff getting involved and co-ordinating with community groups various **"Gathering"** events that were held throughout the year.

In previous years Offaly County Council resolved to provide quality and a good level of service to its customers despite the continuing difficult financial environment. This ethos was continued in 2013. Some of the more noteworthy milestones of 2013 would include:

- ❖ Establishment of 'Offaly Innovation and Design Centre' located in Axis Business Park, Tullamore,
- ❖ The Draft *Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020* went on public display in 2013,
- ❖ Establishment of *Music Generation Offaly / Westmeath*,

- ❖ Construction commenced on the *Tullamore Dew Distillery* in Tullamore,
- ❖ Launch of the *Business in Offaly Video* online on Offaly.ie,
- ❖ Establishment of *Uisce Éireann / Irish Water*,
- ❖ Unveiling of the gateway sculpture for Birr, titled, *Looking to the Future*,
- ❖ Commenced construction tender phase for *Tullamore Community Arts Centre*,
- ❖ Highest level of film activity reported in Offaly to date by *FilmOffaly*, with 12 productions in total,
- ❖ Peatland's Survey completed by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government,
- ❖ New national strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017 launched,
- ❖ Reduction of Waste Management Regions from ten to three,
- ❖ Water Services report that Offaly is one of only ten Water Services Authorities that does not have a Water Supply Scheme on the EPA Remedial Action list,
- ❖ New Waste Permit regulations are due to be published in 2014 which will impact on the operations of the NWCPO Office,
- ❖ The findings of the National Housing Development Survey 2013 showed that County Offaly has one of the lowest levels of unfinished housing developments and vacant residential units nationally.

ordination of public services and reducing costs. The authority is involved in the pilot of **MyPay**, the Payroll and Superannuation Shared Service initiative operated by Laois County Council and is also in a shared service initiative with Westmeath County Council regarding the shared collection of paid parking fees. All sections subscribe to the National Procurement Framework and strive to achieve "value for money" in the provision of all its services.

The current economic climate presents the organisation with huge challenges and it is only through the continued commitment of the Elected Members, Chairpersons and Members of the Strategic Policy Committees, the Corporate Policy Committee, Area Committees, Management Team and Staff, together with the many voluntary and community organisations, with whom the Council engages, that the organisation can face these challenges with confidence.

The members, at the December Council meeting, congratulated Mr. Pat Gallagher on his successful appointment to the position of Westmeath County Manager. They thanked him for his dedication, and acknowledged the innovative and collaborative approach by which he had worked to develop County Offaly during his term of office as Offaly County Manager. They cited a number of significant developments achieved, notwithstanding the challenging economic times that had prevailed.

We trust that *Offaly Local Authorities 2013 Annual Report* is a true reflection of the commitment and hard work of all our stakeholders and records the work and achievements of Offaly Local Authorities over the past twelve months.

Offaly Local Authorities are fully committed to improving the co-

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## HOUSING, SOCIAL & CULTURAL SERVICES

<b>SPC Chair</b>	<b>Nichola Hogan MCC</b>	<b>Director Of Services</b>	<b>Seán Murray</b>
<i>Members</i>	<i>Sectoral</i>	<i>Senior Executive Officer</i>	<b>Dermot Mahon</b>
<b>Cllr. Paddy Rowland</b>	<b>Ms. Susan Ryan</b>	<i>Senior Executive Engineer</i>	<b>Martin Quinn</b>
<b>Cllr. Sinead Moylan-Ryan</b>	<b>Ms. Tessy Doyle</b>	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	<b>Mary Flynn Kenny</b>
<b>Cllr. John Carroll</b>	<b>Mr. Joe O'Brien</b>	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	<b>Jackie Finney</b>
<b>Cllr. Nicola Hogan</b>		<i>County Librarian</i>	<b>Mary Stuart</b>
<b>Cllr. Finian O'Neill</b>		<i>Arts Officer</i>	<b>Sinead O'Reilly</b>

## HOUSING DEPARTMENT

### ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

There was a further increase in the number of applications for social housing supports in 2013 due to the ongoing economic downturn. 356 complete and validated housing applications were received in 2013 with each applicant attending an assessment interview. 314 applications were approved following assessment. 704 approved applicants were on the Housing list at year end. Increasing demand for social housing together with capital budget restrictions continue to make it difficult for the Council to fully respond to the housing needs in the County.

A challenge to all areas of housing provision in 2013 was the increase in the number of applicants who are or have mortgage arrears. It is expected that this trend will

continue and indeed increase in 2013 as more previously been home owners and who have fallen into mortgage arrears. It is expected that this trend will continue and further increase in 2014 as more homeowners find themselves in the repossession process. A new Mortgage to Rent Scheme was introduced in 2012 to assist home owners remain in their homes under tenancy arrangements and 11 referrals were received from the Housing Agency for consideration. 2 applications were approved in 2013.

The number of RAS / Leasing transfers achieved was 35. 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. 40 long-term and casual voids were brought back into stock with ICR funding.



Meeting customer demands for housing adaptation, housing aid for older persons and mobility grants continued to be a challenge. 83 grants were issued to the value of €690,000.

Continued suspension of Estate Management grants made it more difficult to engage with residents groups or to plan additional estate improvement works. Despite this, work continues in dealing with anti-social behaviour complaints and estate management issues in a number of locations. Emergency Homeless Accommodation opened in 2012 in Tullamore managed by Midlands Simon in partnership with Tullamore Housing Association has been very successful to date in providing options for homeless customers. There are significant difficulties accessing appropriate traveller accommodation in the private rented market coupled with significant reductions in capital funds available to construct traveller specific accommodation. As a result, there is a significant increase in the numbers of travellers presenting as homeless.

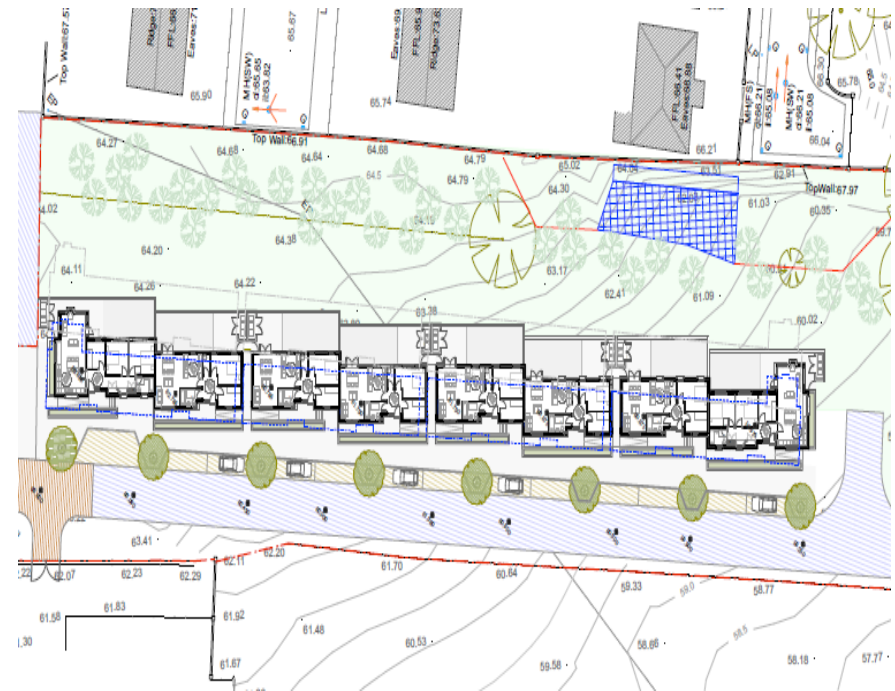
Funding and Part VIII planning was approved for an 8 unit scheme in Banagher to provide homes for older persons and works are expected to commence in early 2014. Over 300 homes benefited from energy efficiency upgrades and remedial schemes were completed in four locations.

### SOCIAL AND VOLUNTARY HOUSING OUTPUT

The housing stock stood at 1,088 at year end with an average occupancy rate of 96.3%. 73 tenancies were

allocated in 2013; 32 under re-let of existing stock, 40 under the Social Leasing and RAS schemes and 1 nomination to voluntary bodies.

Part VIII Planning and budget cost approval for the construction of 8 units for older persons in Banagher has been received and construction is expected to commence in early 2014.



*Banagher scheme proposed layout*

The Offaly Local Authorities housing capital drawdown for

2013 was €1,868,384 compared to €13m in 2010. The allocation enabled the acquisition of 5 housing units in Tullamore, commencement of Banagher scheme, Energy Efficiency upgrade to 300 houses across the county and completion of 6 DPG's. The Muiriosa Foundation CAS Scheme for the construction of a 6 unit house for the intellectually disabled at Moylena, Tullamore was completed in 2013 and CAS funding for the acquisition of a property in Ballinagar was also secured to accommodate an additional four persons previously housed in institutional care settings



*Moylena Tullamore under construction*

It is anticipated that the combined capital budget for 2014 will be again be severely limited and will restrict activity to pre approved schemes. A Tenancy Deposit Scheme was successfully introduced in 2012 for all new allocations.

### **HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ALLOCATIONS**

73 tenancy allocations were made across the range of social housing options. The Housing waiting list stood at 704 at year end with the greatest demand from the Edenderry area. A statutory Housing Needs Assessment was completed in May. The form of assessment was prescribed in the Social Housing Assessments (Summary) Regulations 2013. In order to fulfill the requirements set out in the prescribed form, housing authorities were required to do one or more of the following:

- Re-examine or re-interview households that had already been approved for social housing support. Since 1 April 2011, housing authorities have been required to assess all applications for social housing support in accordance with the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011, prepared under Section 20 of the 2009 Act.
- Ask households to confirm that they are still seeking social housing support, or
- Obtain additional information on a household's current circumstances, including its housing situation, areas of choice, household composition and income.

In March 2013, the Council wrote to all applicants approved for housing up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012 (721 households). Of the 721, 481 applicants responded to the satisfaction of the Council while 240



made no reply. On completion of the exercise, together with those excluded as being over the statutory income limits, 235 applications were closed off. The net position with Offaly County Council as of 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013 – the statutory assessment date – was that there were 579 open applications. Only 12 applications were closed as a result of the revised income regulations. The numbers of individual applicant location preferences in most locations increased in comparison to pre-HNA assessment, despite the reduction in the number of approved applicants from 814 pre-HNA to 579 post-HNA.

This represented a gross reduction in the numbers on the waiting list of 29%. The numbers of individual applicant location preferences rose from 827 to 1035, an increase of 25%. The Tullamore Area was the only Area to return a decline in the number of preferences for housing. 704 approved applicants were on the list by year end.

Year	Number
2009	134
2010	177
2011	277
2012	333
2013	356

1,277 housing assessments have been completed over the 5 year period 2009 to 2013 with the number of assessments increasing year on year. All eligible applications were accepted and assessed within statutory deadlines.

## LOCAL PROPERTY TAX

Liability for LPT for local authority stock was determined in 2013.

	OLA combined	OCC	TTC	BTC
<b>Total Properties</b>	1,752	1,041	479	232
<b>Exempt Properties</b>	237	122	61	54
<b>Liable Properties</b>	1,515	919	418	178

All properties are valued in the €0 - €100,000 band with a liability of €90 per property. The combined 2013 / 2014 liability for Offaly County Council was €124,335.

## HOUSING MAINTENANCE AND PRE-LET REPAIRS

Housing maintenance repairs continued throughout 2013 despite ongoing limitations in the budget available and further progress was made in bringing back into use homes that were void for periods of time. Pre-let repairs to 39 houses were completed at a cost of c.€200,000 from ICR's. The Council will attempt to secure additional funding from the Department in 2014 in order to ensure stock does not remain vacant for extended periods.

A review of Housing Maintenance structures has proposed the reduction in the number of maintenance areas from five to three in line with introduction of proposed Municipal District areas in 2014. Amalgamation of Town Council areas into revised

Municipal Districts will result in the central management of Housing Maintenance functions from 2014. Proposals to rebalance staff compliments in each area are also under consideration. Due to non replacement of staff it has become increasingly necessary to contract out housing maintenance works where local resources are no longer available. 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 2014.



*Hill View Cloghan RWS*

#### **REGENERATION AND REMEDIAL WORKS PROGRAMMES**

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 were completed at Meadowlands Kilcormac, Hill View Cloghan, The Walk Kinnitty, Clonmullen Edenderry and Sycamore Drive Ballycumber.

Works included enhanced car parking facilities, landscaping, boundary walls, back lane and footpath restoration, road lining, signage and drainage works. Each scheme was commenced following consultation with local residents. Funding was also allocated to complete footpath remedial works at College View, Rahan. Tree felling at Erry Mill Clara and St. Oliver's Geashill was also completed during the year.

#### **DPG's / DEMOUNTABLE DWELLINGS / IWS**

No IWS schemes were completed in 2013 while the Council provided funding for the removal of two demountable dwellings. There has been good progress in addressing the DPG list since 2010 with 20 Disabled Persons Grants projects completed at various locations to the value of c.€400,000 with 90% of this cost claimed from the DoECLG. In addition, 4 DPG applicants have been re-housed in alternative accommodation. Six DPG projects were completed in 2013 at a cost of €162,687 of which OCC provided €24,227 in match funding through ICR's. Two significant projects were completed in Shinrone and Belmont.



*DPG works underway at Belmont*



*Shinrone DPG works*

### **ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME**

In 2012, 20 vacant housing units benefited from significant energy efficiency upgrades at pre-let stage. Total expenditure under the scheme in 2012 was €323,486 with €179,730 coming from own resources. The EEP scheme was revised in 2013 to include a basic energy upgrade (attic and cavity wall insulation) to existing tenanted properties. 2 contracts were awarded in 2013 to upgrade c.300 homes with €335,606 allocated from the Department.

Location	No. of Units	Location	No. of Units
St. Finians Park Kinnitty	8 units	Churchview Edenderry	36 units
Presentation Place Birr	10 units	Greenwood Edenderry	28 units
Bulfin Park Birr	4 units	Bridge St Kilcormac	14 units
Feighs / Birr Rd. Banagher	2 units	Church Rd Banagher	4 units
Cuba Av Banagher	28 units	Hill View Cloghan	17 units
Twickenham Ballycumber	1 unit	Mooney Tce Kilcormac	21 units
Arden View Tullamore	37 units	Beechgrove Belmont	12 units
Chancery Lane Tullamore	10 units	Tubber	4 units
Silverdale Clara	18 units	Hillview Killeigh	5 units
Esler Court Clara	12 units	Mountbolus	3 units
Beechmount Mucklagh	12 units		

It is anticipated that a similar number of units will benefit from upgrades in 2014 and 2015.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PART V**

A total of 156 units have been acquired under the Part V process to date, 75 of which are Affordable units. 6 unsold Affordable units in Clara were transferred to social stock with funding received from the Department. The remaining 9 units in Edenderry remain allocated under the Rental Accommodation Scheme in partnership with Tuath Housing Association. No social Part V's were acquired during the year. One Part V agreement was

completed to acquire lands in Rhode. These lands have subsequently been leased to the local community to develop a playground. A formal review of Part V has been undertaken by the Department and changes to the format may be introduced in 2014.

It is anticipated that funding for the acquisition of social units under Part V will not be available in 2014 and alternative options will have to be considered where Part V agreements are being negotiated. Revised Guidelines on Implementation of Part V were agreed by Council in December 2009 to reflect changing circumstances.

#### **TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

Housing unit continued to provide corporate technical support services for Library facilities, Aras maintenance and service contracts together with energy efficiency contracting for swimming pools. Specifications for proposed Ferbane Fire Station were drafted and Tenders were awarded for the construction of an access road through Council lands at Killane Edenderry to facilitate future school provision. Funding for the construction of the road was provided by the Department of Education & Skills and works supervised by the Housing Unit.



*Killane Schools Access road under construction*

#### **LAND MANAGEMENT**

Short-term land lettings were agreed at 10 locations for grazing purposes generating a modest income during the year. Lands at Grogan Ballycumber and Gallen Ferbane were disposed of in 2013 and members agreed to the disposal of some lands at Sycamore Drive Ballycumber. Proceeds from land sales are principally used to offset against other land debit balances. Lands were acquired in Rhode under a Part V agreement to facilitate local community playground provision. Lands at Belmont were referred for consideration under the Land Aggregation Scheme while lands at Kilcormac previously submitted to LAGS remain in local authority ownership pending formal approval of application.



## **TENANT PURCHASE**

Tenant Purchase Scheme sales peaked in 2006 with almost 40 houses sold during the year, generating close to €2m. By contrast, three sales were finalised in 2013 generating €109,731 for Internal Capital Receipts. The Council contacted 935 tenants in July 2012 to notify them that applications for inclusion in the 1995 Scheme were closing on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012. No new applications for TPS were accepted in 2013.

It is intended to introduce a new scheme providing for the sale of existing local authority houses to tenants on incremental purchase principles in 2014. In contrast to the 1995 scheme, the discounts provided under the Incremental Purchase principles will be based on household income rather than length of tenancy, thereby allowing low-income households to move into home ownership earlier than otherwise might have been possible. The significantly reduced level of activity under TPS continues to have severe implications for the level of capital funding available to deliver programmes across a range of areas and existing balance of Internal Capital Reserves will run out in 2014.

## **HOUSING RENTS**

Rent re-assessments were conducted on approximately 350 accounts in 2013. A national Differential Rents Scheme is expected to issue to local authorities in 2014 with a commencement date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. Considerable resources are required in order to

adequately manage the housing rents system and manage arrears as they arise.

Tenants in arrears are immediately notified to enter into payment agreements and these agreements are monitored weekly. Where no agreement can be reached or where the tenant fails to adequately address arrears, Notice to Quit may be issued. A Housing Rent Arrears Policy was adopted by the Council in 2010 which outlines our procedures in this regard. 19 Notices to Quit were issued in 2013, however no houses were repossessed as a result of court proceedings.

## **HOUSING LOANS**

Eight loan applications were received in 2013 while four provisional approvals were issued. One loan was paid out in 2013 and under the terms of the new loan scheme, the repayments are being reported monthly to the Irish Credit Bureau. A revised Housing Loan Arrears Policy was adopted in 2012 including the introduction of a Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process. All customers in loan arrears are required to engage in the MARP process. To date, eight MARP agreements have been agreed by the Housing Section and the process will continue in 2014 to ensure all loan customers are in sustainable repayment agreements.

As a result of the MARP agreements, arrears on each of the eight customer accounts have substantially reduced and all agreements are being kept. The MARP

agreements are being reviewed bi-annually.

#### **ADAPTATION, MOBILITY AND OLDER PERSONS GRANTS**

The Council's 2013 allocation for Housing Grants was €689,579. Outturn in 2013 is 83 grants approved under the following schemes; HAGS: 18, HAOP: 62, MAGS: 3. At the end of 2013, there were 246 eligible applications pending across the 3 grant categories. Average grant amounts paid in 2013 were €18,730 for HAG, €4,000 for MAG and €5,500 for HAOP.

In January 2013, Council approved the reduction in the amount of maximum grants available under each category to ensure an additional number of grants could be approved with reduced funding. More competitive construction costs, better value for money and stricter adherence to completion of works as specified by the applicant have ensured the significant element of applicant requirements are being met within reduced grant allocations.

Housing Adaption Grants were reduced from a maximum of €30,000 to €20,000, Housing Aid for Older People from €10,500 to €6,500 and Mobility Aid Grants from €6,000 to €4,000. Reducing maximum grants has had a significant impact on the Housing Aid for Older People grant scheme with 62 applications processed in 2013 compared to 30 in 2012.

#### **PRIVATE SITES**

There was one sale completed in 2013 but 2 offers previously received were withdrawn. A considerable debit balance remains on lands acquired and developed previously 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. 46 sites remain available in 5 locations. Considerable remediation works were completed at the Meadowlands Kilcormac scheme to complete estate entrance road and to block access to part of the estate subject to frequent illegal encampments.



*Estate Works at Meadowlands, Kilcormac*

#### **RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME / LEASING SCHEME**

272 customers have transferred to the RAS scheme since inception with 12 transfers completed in 2013. Tullamore continues to be the priority as it represents the area of

greatest need. While Tullamore will continue to be the focus for 2014 other eligible applicants will be supported in their area of choice as demand for participation in the scheme is actively identified. Rent reviews were carried out at regular intervals throughout the year which achieved savings on existing contracted properties.

Efforts will continue in 2014 to identify and secure good quality rented accommodation. A landlord inspection fee for properties proposed under RAS / Leasing was introduced in 2012, refundable once the property was successfully transferred under either initiative.

The 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. The total number of individual Lease agreements concluded to date is 65 units, with 23 of those being signed in 2013. There is an ongoing requirement for units under this scheme in 2014 in the Council's areas of high demand. Tenants accommodated in leased units to date have reported a high level of satisfaction with the quality of accommodation provided.

#### **PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION 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. 60 inspections were conducted which also included some properties which were the subject of complaints. Increased cooperation between the Community Welfare Section of the Department of Social Protection and the Council is envisaged in 2014 with a view to further identifying and inspecting substandard properties.

#### **TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORTS**

The 2009 – 2013 Traveller Accommodation Programme sought to provide 78 units of accommodation over its lifetime. A total of 42 families have been accommodated under the programme up to 2013. At the October Council Meeting the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 was adopted for public consultation. Following the statutory 2-month public consultation period the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 will be presented to Council for adoption in early 2014. The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee continued to meet on a quarterly basis to co-ordinate delivery of the Programme.

#### **HOMELESS SUPPORTS**

Offaly operates its Homeless Services on a regional basis along with Westmeath, Longford and Laois. The Midlands Regional Homeless Action Plan 2013-2016 was adopted by the 4 Midland Counties in March 2013. The Plan sets out sets out the measures to be undertaken in the

Midlands Counties by the key stakeholders including Housing Authorities, Health Service Executive, Homeless Service Providers and any other bodies providing homeless services. The Plan was amended and readopted in October 2013 to reflect the Homeless Policy Statement 2013. The National Homeless Policy Statement published in Feb 2013 renewed the commitment to end long-term homelessness by the end of 2016. A key focus of the Statement is on a Housing-Led Approach to tackle long-term homelessness.

The Tullamore Emergency Accommodation Service has been operating since June 2012. The facility is a 6-bed unit run by Midlands Simon Community in partnership with Offaly Local Authorities, Tullamore Housing Association and the HSE. The Service is 90% funded by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government. The facility operates as a regional facility for the 4 Midlands Counties. During the first year of operation there were 28 admissions to the Emergency Accommodation Service (19 males and 8 female admissions). The average length of time in the service for males was 9 weeks and 5.5 weeks for females and 86% of service users attained a positive housing outcome.

Offaly County Council administers and Chairs the Offaly Homeless Action Team. The interagency team was established in June 2012 and meets on a fortnightly basis. The team includes representation from Offaly

County Council, Tullamore Town Council, Dept. Of Social Protection, HSE Primary Care, HSE Community Mental Health Services, Community Alcohol & Drugs Service, Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service, Midlands Simon Resettlement Service, Tullamore Emergency Accommodation Facility, HSE Homeless Liaison Nurse and the Probation Service. The HAT team takes an interagency case management approach to the more complex homeless cases. A total of 53 homeless cases have been addressed by HAT since its establishment with 33 cases dealt with in 2013.

Offaly County Council continues to contribute towards the operation of the Midlands Simon Settlement Service. 114 homeless cases (comprising 133 adults and 69 children) presented at Áras an Chontae during the year compared with 69 cases in 2012. In mid 2013, The Department of the Environment devolved control over Section 10 Homeless Funding to Westmeath County Council, the Lead Authority for the Midlands region. In August 2013 the Midlands Local Authorities were advised of a 12.27% reduction in the budget for 2013.

#### **ESTATE MANAGEMENT**

Pre-tenancy supports are provided on an on-going basis with some limited support for residents associations. The Housing Section continues to implement its Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. The Grove Street Inter-agency Steering Group, established in 2010 completed their action plan in 2012. The Steering Group was wound up



however Offaly County Council continues to support the Grove Street Community Development Committee.

#### **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 and servicing contracts for Aras an Chontae and identified a number of significant savings and efficiencies including energy savings and accessibility.

#### **PLAYGROUNDS / MULTI-USE GAMES AREAS**

Over the four year period of the Offaly County Council and Offaly Local Development Company Joint Playground Policy 2009 - 2013, fifteen facilities have been developed at various locations across the county based on a partnership approach combining local community planning and financial input, funding and support from Offaly Local Development Company and provision of either funding, land and insurance cover from Offaly County Council.

Total funding provided to support the development of facilities was €1,479,964 comprising €117,841 from Offaly County Council, €152,457 sourced under the Sports Capital Programme, €273,991 raised by local

communities and €935,675 provided by Offaly Local Development Company under the Rural Development Programme. The fifteen facilities developed compliment eight other playground facilities directly provided by Offaly County Council over the previous five years at various locations. Funding for a MUGA in Mucklagh was also announced in 2013 with construction to commence in 2014.

Offaly Local Authorities provided land for ten of the facilities by way of lease or direct provision and insurance cover was extended to fourteen of the fifteen facilities. All facilities have been developed in line with universal accessibility criteria and use of accessible play equipment was factored into design. Playgrounds were completed in Clara, Moneygall and Kinnitty during the year, while Rhode and Daingean playgrounds will open in 2014.



*Rhode playground under construction*

#### **HOUSING, SOCIAL & CULTURAL S.P.C.**

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

#### **SPC Policies, Programmes and Initiatives adopted**

- Draft 2013 Housing Rent Arrears Policy (Amended)
- Draft Policy on use of the Aras Atrium by the Community
- Draft Amendments to the Scheme of Letting Priorities as a result of the Social Housing Assessments (Summary) Regulations 2013
- Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018
- Draft Homeless Action Plan 2013 – 2016 (Amendments)
- Draft Policy on Tenant Home Improvements

#### **Other Items considered and discussed by SPC**

- Tullamore Arts Centre
- Music Generation Project
- Film Offaly Update
- Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Update
- Housing Needs Assessment Regulations 2013
- Revised Private Rented Standards Regulations 2013
- Housing Grants Scheme Update
- Public Library Strategy 2013-2017
- Immigration Programme (Dept. Justice)
- Joint Playground Policy 2009 – 2013 (Review)

## LIBRARY SERVICE

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2013 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.*** Considerable progress has been made with the delivery of the actions set out in the development plan. 90% of actions are achieved despite the budgetary cutbacks and decreased staffing of library services. A new 5 year Development Plan will be prepared during 2014.

A new national strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017 will be launched in December 2013. Key recommendations include:

- Library Buildings capital programme
- Public libraries will be the frontline service of local authorities and lead in community engagement
- Public libraries will develop the roles of information, literacy learning and job seeking support
- Universal public library membership
- Shared ICT – a single national catalogue and access to a digital library
- Review of organisations structures and service delivery
- Shared Procurement

This strategy will inform the next library development plan and priorities for 2014.

Overall the trend in increased use of the library service continues. The opening of Tullamore Central library has impacted on the visits and loans in Clara, Ferbane, Kilcormac and Daingean libraries as members are using the central library to access Wi-Fi, technology training and increased book and media resources.



The continuing moratorium in recruitment has put additional pressures on decreased staffing resources. A continuous review of library services activities including opening hours, staffing levels and evaluation of services

based on budgetary cuts and non filling of staff vacancies is in place.

### PERFORMANCE 2013

- *Membership increase – 2% (14,144)*
- *Visits increase – 19 % (267,572)*
- *Loans including e loans increase – 21% (300,277)*
- *Wi-Fi/internet increase 133,860 sessions – 1%(issues with bandwidth during 2013)*
- *Website hits 69,991- 11% increase*
- *Wide variety of events –Hullabaloo Festival, Bealtaine, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Heritage Week, Environmental talks, Author visits, Art exhibitions, Engineers Week, Aontas – Adult Learners’ Festival, Bealtaine, National Music Day, All Ireland Poetry Day, Culture Night, Positive Ageing Week, National Childminding Week, Help My Kid Learn Day.*

**TULLAMORE CENTRAL LIBRARY:** continued with the pattern of increased visits, issues, internet use and membership. Since opening in August 2012 membership has increased by 50% (6000 members). Average daily visits to the

library are 550. The demand for Wi-Fi, online learning and help with e government is increasing. Increased user activity and need for staff assistance in accessing digital resources and information is challenging with reduced staffing. The meeting rooms are in constant use for technology training, community groups, performances, launches, lectures, exhibitions and community activities.

**EDENDERRY LIBRARY:** An application for funding towards a new library in Edenderry was submitted to the DoECLG for inclusion in the next capital programme in 2014.

**LIBRARY SUPPORTS FOR BUSINESS:** was launched in November 2013 as part of Edenderry Enterprise Focus week. This is a partnership initiative of Offaly County Enterprise Board



and Offaly Library service offering a wide range of material available in various formats: books, magazines and ebooks from any library or the library website. There are materials on starting

and growing a business, project management, Interviews, careers and technology.

**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. 10% of the books and media budget is now spent on digital resources.

**TECHNOLOGY:** Further development of the online library continued in 2013. It is now possible to become a member online, borrow books, magazines, and access the business library. Users can request information and keep up to date with latest developments in libraries using social media. Website hits have continued to increase as more services are added. 186 users attended the popular computer classes' programme in Tullamore Central Library during 2013.

**CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS SERVICES:** The School Reading Challenge, an initiative to improve literacy among young people in the county took place this year between January and June at the library. The library staff and primary school teachers worked as a team to



promote literacy and forged a strong link between primary school pupils and their local library. 1761 students took part in the reading challenge in 2013. They read 35,368 books in a 5 month period. This is an average of 20 books read per pupil.

An early literacy initiative with Offaly County Childcare Committee promoted literacy and the practice of reading as a family through the classic series of Dr. Seuss books in September. The library hosted story telling sessions in conjunction with the local primary schools as part of the promotion

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 & Edenderry
- ❖ Book clubs – Tullamore, Edenderry, Kilcormac, Ferbane, Clara & Birr
- ❖ Literary festival, Author visits, reader development, art workshops, storytelling etc
- ❖ Family Fun days
- ❖ Summer reading challenge
- ❖ National Poetry Day,
- ❖ Offline Film Festival
- ❖ School reading challenge



*Tae Lane at launch of Scratch Gallery*

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

- ❖ Partnership with Offaly Local Development Company supporting local communities by providing job resource centres in library buildings throughout the county
- ❖ Digitisation and creation of a searchable web portal of all local newspapers from 1831–2011 – partnership with Offaly History and Heritage Officer
- ❖ Offline @ Library – partnership with Birr Offline Festivals and libraries at Birr, Tullamore, Clara and Edenderry
- ❖ Arts: Culture Night, National music day & Foundation 13 Arts event.
- ❖ Autumn Literary programme – More than books

- ❖ Sacred Heart School Irish project
- ❖ Offaly Travellers movement and Offaly Local Development online math's grinds programme.
- ❖ Positive Ageing week
- ❖ Dyslexia workshops in Tullamore Central Library
- ❖ Grand Canal Festival and Harvest Offaly Food Festival
- ❖ Leinster Regiment lectures during Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival.
- ❖ Art exhibitions by local artists and book launches by authors
- ❖ Monthly exhibitions by Offaly Crafty
- ❖ Edenderry Comhaltas /Leinster Fleadh 2013
- ❖ The Birr Photographic Club and Birr Historical Society joined forces and produced a wonderful exhibition on the Birr Workhouse.
- ❖ The Midlands Science Festival: Tales of the Unexpected hosted by Jonathan McCrea



*Donal Ryan at Birr Library*

## PRIORITIES FOR 2014

1. Inclusion of Edenderry Library in next Library capital funding programme 2014-2016.
2. Continuous review of library services activities to include opening hours, staffing levels and evaluation of services based on budgetary cuts and non filling of staff vacancies.
3. Participate in a pilot open library project funded by DoECLG -Tullamore Central Library
4. Commence the preparation of data transfer in correct format for new Library Management System roll out.
5. Cooperate with Shared Services programme for Public Libraries – structures review, procurement and shared ICT.
6. Preparation of new Library Development Plan 2015- 2019
7. Continue to focus on literacy and provide quality book and media materials to library users.
8. Improve digital resources
9. Increase the provision of online learning.
10. Promote services to children and young people.
11. Implement new Child Safeguarding guidelines for libraries.
12. Continue to develop linkages and collaborative approaches to providing services
13. Continue involvement in local and national projects, events and exhibitions for the promotion of archives and local studies material
14. Continue with Health and Safety works – funding dependent.
15. Seek funding to assist in reducing energy costs in 5 libraries
16. Continue with priority maintenance works



## ARTS SERVICE

Our Arts Service aims to demonstrate the multiple **cultural, social, educational and economic benefits** of increased access to and involvement in the arts for all our citizens. This is achieved by planning a strategic infrastructure and programme in partnership with the community, local and national organisation. The Arts Service drives a number of significant projects such as **Tullamore Community Arts Centre, FilmOffaly, Music Generation, Culture Night** and **Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival** alongside its ongoing support and advice to the many artists, festivals, arts organisations and community projects across the county.

### MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2013:

#### MUSIC GENERATION OFFALY /WESTMEATH

In 2013, we began the process of implementing a new regional music education programme following the announcements of a successful bid worth €558,000 over the first three years of the programme.

Key achievements in 2013 were:

**Margaret Broome is appointed as Development Officer** and takes up position on 17 June having previously held posts as a Principal Teacher of Music in Fife, Scotland and as a performance tutor at NUI Maynooth. Roisin Dillon (ASO) is assigned to administratively support the project.

**A new Diploma in Kodaly Music Education** – the first of its kind in Ireland is developed in partnership with the DIT

Conservatory of Music and 17 midland musicians undergo people.

By October 2013, 18 schools are identified as the first participators using the criteria of little or no current music education and **1472 children begin receiving music education** twice a week, when previously they had none.

Capital applications for an instrument bank are made to OLDC, Westmeath Community Development, National Lottery Funds and IPB in order to roll out instrument training in 2014.

In Dec 2013, the members of the Irish Midlands Youth Orchestra receiving mentoring from members of the **National Symphony Orchestra** and had the opportunity to perform with and be conducted by them





*St Josephs NS, Arden Tullamore participating in Music Generation*

#### **PUBLIC ART – PER CENT FOR ART SCHEME**

##### ***LOOKING TO THE FUTURE***

Artist Ann Meldon-Hugh completed and installed her gateway sculpture for Birr, entitled, *Looking to the Future* reflecting the rich historical and cultural life of Birr.

##### **PUTTAGHAUN YOUTH**

A series of youth drama and dance projects for the young people of Puttaghaun came to completion with a performance of a new play written and performed by the young members entitled *Brain Teasers* in Tullamore Library to an audience of family and friends.



### THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT SHINRONE

Filmmaker Steven Goldsmith was commissioned by Offaly County Council to make a short film with and about the people of Shinrone. The idea stemmed from the 1967 RTE documentary made



about Shinrone and its infamous connections such as Barack Obama and Arlo Guthrie, the film discovered that despite its renown, it is the people who call it home who make it special. The film was screened locally, 250 free DVD's were distributed and is Youtube is has to date been watched over 1,000 times.

### ENGAGE WITH ARCHITECTURE

This collaborative project between the Arts, Heritage and Architecture Services aimed to encourage the public to actively engage with architecture. Funded by the Arts Council, we received the highest level of funding nationally for the third year. The programme included engagement with primary and secondary schools, architects, artists and community groups and included lectures and exhibitions.



A significant aspect of the 2013 project was Mapping Town's which took place over the whole year. 5 local architects worked with 5 towns and their community/school



groups to identify aspects of each town which needed development and practical ideas which could be realised (**Adam Hernes**/Tullamore **Patrick Little**/Daingean **Denis Duggan**/Ferbane **Peter Lyons**/Kinnitty and **Francis Moran**/Banagher). Some of the outcomes are being developed further for the Village Enhancement Schemes, while all projects have provided valuable usage information of each surveyed street.

### FILMOFFALY

2013 saw the highest level of film activity in Offaly to date, with 12 productions in total, including 2 feature films and a US drama pilot. We launched the FilmOffaly Vendor Card scheme (the only scheme of its kind in Ireland) in Dublin with the Irish Film Board and special guest actress Antonio Campbell Hughes. In addition we created a new website [www.filmoffaly.ie](http://www.filmoffaly.ie) and hosted two Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Programme interns from the UK.



*Gary Hctor (FilmOffaly) Cllr. Nichola Hogan (Chair of FilmOffaly) Antonio Campbell Hughes (actress) and Marcella Corcoran Kennedy TD (FilmOffaly)*

### MINI MOVIES

In association with the OFFline Film Festival the Arts Office created a filmmaking programme for primary schools working with filmmaker Michael Fortune on short animations (Rath NS, Crinkle NS and Carrig NS) In total 40 films were made by over 81 children who all attended their own premier at the festival.

### BIRR THEATRE & ARTS CENTRE

Birr Theatre & Arts Centre provides a valuable Arts resource to Birr and Offaly. In 2013 the Arts Service partnered with Birr Theatre on several community arts projects, in particularly Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival. The Council also provided €20,000.00 of funding to Birr Theatre in 2013.

### CULTURE NIGHT

From ballet in a castle to music on the street, Culture Night in Offaly treated the public to 14 free events as part of the national programme. 17 events took place across the county with over 900 people attending.



*At the launch of Culture Night 2013, Irene Sweeney (Fancroft Mill), Sarah Jane Cleary (Birr Theatre) Sinead O'Reilly (Arts Officer) Cathaoirleach Cllr. Moylan Ryan, Emma Nee Haslam (Birr Theatre) and Tim Mann (Public Access Arts)*

### NATIONAL MUSIC DAY

A national one day event where music is performed for free in the public domain; Offaly events included St. Colmchille's Pipe Band at Tullamore Train Station, who went on to become World Champions in 2013.



### **OFFALY YOUTH THEATRE**

Offaly Youth Theatre expanded in 2013 to include Edenderry aligning it with the other chapters in Tullamore and Birr. There are currently 36 young people learning skills for stage and screen. Their annual showcase in April took place in Birr Theatre to a packed house of family and friends.



### **SCULPTURE IN THE PARKLANDS –HEDGE SCHOOL**

The Arts Service organised a three day professional development workshop for artists facilitated by Tom Meskill and Jean Conroy that trained artists in making art in the natural environment.

### **ARTS ACT GRANTS**

14 community groups received grants towards arts activities in their community totalling €5,000.00. The projects were specifically chosen for their innovativeness and quality arts impact on the community.

### **FESTIVAL SUPPORT**

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

- The Shannonbridge Midsummer Music Festival
- Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival
- IFONLY Dance Festival
- OFFline Film Festival
- Shakefest
- Daingean Homecoming Festival
- Scripts

### **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 over fifty events organised across Offaly, most of them focussed on the theme 1963, 50 years hence.



### **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.

### **TULLAMORE COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE**

In 2013 the construction tender phase for the arts centre began, fundraising continued with the young people of Tullamore breaking the Guinness Book of records for the largest coin mosaic and a new arts event called FOUNDATION 13 began as a way of laying the artistic foundation of the centre.



*Crowded Room, a community portrait of Tullamore by Tim Mann featuring 1,041 people who live and work in Tullamore*



### **HULLABALOO! OFFALY'S CHILDREN'S ARTS FESTIVAL**

In 2013, Hullabaloo expanded to Edenderry allowing it to take place across 3 towns including Birr and Clara during the October midterm break. The festival attracted over 1,400 young people and their families to workshops and

performance, from music making to puppet shows, storytelling to dancing, workshops were sold out across all towns. Led by the Arts Office, in partnership with Birr Theatre and Arts Centre, Clara Family Resource Centre and the Library Service over 35 events were organised.

#### **ARAS EXHIBITION POLICY**

In 2013, we expanded our exhibition policy to invite submissions from community groups, schools as well as artists and arts groups to use the space. In 2013, we hosted exhibitions by the Slieve Bloom Photography Group, Rehabcare Tullamore and Banagher Youthreach

#### **MIDLANDS ARTS AND CULTURE MAGAZINE**

There were 2 publications of the Midlands Arts and Culture Magazine. This free, 32 page magazine, highlights the diversity and quality of arts projects across the four counties and aims to create a greater national cultural identity of the Midlands.

## ENVIRONMENT & WATER SERVICES

<b>SPC Chair</b>	<b>Eddie Fitzpatrick MCC / John Leahy MCC</b>	<b>Director Of Services</b>	<b>Seán Murray</b>
<i>Members</i>	<i>Sectoral</i>	<i>Senior Engineer</i>	<b>Tom Shanahan</b>
<b>Cllr. Percy Clendennen</b>	<b>Ms. Anne Fahey</b>	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	<b>Brian Pey</b>
<b>Cllr. Thomas McKeigue</b>	<b>Mr. Joe Gaffey</b>	<i>Senior Executive Engineer</i>	<b>John Connolly</b>
<b>Cllr. John Foley</b>	<b>Ms. Teresa Ryan-Feehan</b>	<i>A/Senior Executive Engineer</i>	<b>Jean Ryan</b>
<b>Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick</b>		<i>A/Senior Executive Engineer</i>	<b>Vivian O'Brien</b>
<b>Cllr. Brendan Killeavy (TTC)</b>			

The Water Services and Environment sections were amalgamated into one single section in May 2012, to help improve efficiency through sharing of senior staff resources and taking advantage of synergies between the two sections.

In 2013, the section commenced the process of adapting our operations in accordance with very significant changes which are being introduced at National Level:

1. The establishment of Irish Water
2. Reduction in Waste Management Regions from 10 to 3.
3. The introduction of further shared services and rationalisation in the sector

## WATER SERVICES

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.

In 2014, water services will be 100% funded by Irish Water who will be the Statutory Authority for water services. The budget available to OCC to deliver water services in Offaly will be determined by Irish Water and all major decisions around funding of services will be approved by Irish Water.

Offaly Co. Council, along with all other Local Authorities will continue to deliver water services through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Irish Water and in accordance with an agreed Annual Service Plan. Legislation to give effect this change is currently going through the Oireachtas. It is proposed that the Service Level agreements will be for an initial period of 12 years with interim reviews.

A series of protocols to define the interaction between Irish Water and the Local Authorities has been developed and water services staff are undertaking intensive training in Irish Water Systems.

The SLA's will be a challenge and an opportunity, as they

will be performance driven but will retain a level of water services activity within Local Government.

## PUBLIC WATER & WASTEWATER SERVICE DELIVERY

### **DRINKING WATER SUPPLY**

The recently published EPA Drinking Water Report shows that Offaly had a 100% microbiological compliance rate in 2012 and Offaly is one of only 10 Water Services Authorities that does not have a Water Supply scheme on the EPA Remedial Action list.

There was increased pressure on maintaining water quality standards in 2013, due partly to the impact of reduced funding for maintenance over the previous two years. While the EPA report for 2013 will not be available for some time, it is likely that it will report a small deterioration in water quality in the County for 2013.

Countywide Unaccounted for Water (UFW) is currently at 46%. While the progression of watermain rehabilitation contracts will reduce mains leakage on a number of schemes, this figure is likely to increase due to reduced maintenance funding during 2012 and 2013. The introduction of Domestic water metering will potentially provide the biggest impact on UFW.

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**

Five wastewater discharge licences were issued by the EPA during 2013, bringing to eight the number of licences in Offaly. Meeting the stringent limit values on these licences is challenging but considerable progress was made in 2013.

Wastewater treatment was upgraded in Belmont, Ballycumber and Shannonbridge in 2013 and full secondary treatment is now provided in all public sewerage schemes in Offaly.

#### **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 have previously been 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)

From 2014, Irish Water will fund all Water Services Capital Projects. Projects currently in Progress will be completed but commencement of new projects will be at the discretion of Irish Water. Three Watermain Rehabilitation contracts at various stages of Progress, two in Tullamore and one in Birr will be completed under the existing WSIP.

Offaly Co. Council have commenced discussions on developing a new Capital Priority List with Irish Water. It is envisaged that greater emphasis will be placed on completing low cost small scale projects that will expedite improvements to schemes. This approach will be beneficial to Offaly given the large number of small schemes in the County.

The following Schemes were completed or commenced in 2013:

Scheme	Cost	Source of Funding
Tullamore WSS- Development of new sources at Arden and Clonaslee.- Commenced	€ 1.0m	WSIP
Watermains Rehabilitation Contracts 1 and 4 (Tullamore) Commenced	€ 4.5m	WSIP €12m (total)
Watermain Rehabilitation Birr-Contract awarded	€ 1.6m	WSIP € 12m (total)
Ballycumber and Belmont Wastewater Treatment Systems Upgrade Works- Ballycumber and Belmont Commenced Shannonbridge Completed	€ 670K	RWP Small Schemes 2012 and 2013

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.

The completion of the Belmont, Ballycumber and Shannonbridge Wastewater improvement schemes will bring all wastewater treatment schemes in Offaly to Secondary Treatment standard.

### RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

The Capital Allocation to Offaly Group Water Schemes (GWS) for 2013 was €350,000, which included €100,000 for GWS takeover, and €250,000 for Water Conservation/Network Upgrades. This funding was allocated as follows:

	GWS Name	Amount	Total
<b>Network Upgrades</b>	Tubber GWS	€ 87,497	<b>€ 246,934</b>
	Clareen GWS	€ 77,255	
	Aghancon GWS	€ 13,600	
	Rath GWS	€ 27,412	
	Boher/Leamonaghan GWS	€ 34,000	
<b>Takeover</b>	Leabeg/Leamore GWS	€ 100,000	<b>€ 100,000</b>
<b>Emergency Works</b>	Blackwater GWS	€ 10,948	<b>€ 10,948</b>
<b>Total Cost of above works</b>			<b>€ 350,712</b>

An application for €10,948 emergency funding for Blackwater GWS was also approved by the Department in November. The total approved funding for the Rural Water Programme in 2013 amounted to €360,948.

For 2013 there was an increase in the grant allowed for group sewerage schemes from €2,031 to €6,500 per house. A pilot Group Sewerage Scheme for Military Road, Crinkle, Birr was allocated €39,000 under this scheme.

An allocation of €556k for Small Public Schemes was also received. This funding was granted for specific works under the Drinking Water and Waste Water Compliance categories.

The Council processed approximately €571k in subsidies to Group Water Schemes in 2013. Over €15K will be paid in Well Grants in 2013. 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.



*Staff presentation of a cheque to Jigsaw following the Social Club charity walk in May 2013*

## ENVIRONMENT

### **NATIONAL WASTE COLLECTION PERMIT OFFICE (NWCPO)**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2012 Offaly County Council was designated as the National Waste Collection Permit Office and has since made significant progress in establishing and developing its operations.

Funding for the NWCPO comes from a levy of €2,500 on each local authority and by application fees from waste collection permit holders. The Office remains cost neutral in 2013 despite a significant reduction in income from applications due to the economic downturn.

New Waste Permit regulations are due to be published in 2014 which will impact on the operations of the office.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

### **DERRYCLURE LANDFILL**

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.

The capping of two cells was completed in 2013. The gas utilisation project was advanced to Tender stage.

### **RECYCLING FACILITIES**

There are currently 43 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 contract for servicing textile banks was procured regionally in 2013 with Laois, Westmeath and Offaly County Councils participating.

We continue to operate three Civic Amenity Facilities (CAF) in Birr, Derryclure and Edenderry. These accept a wide range of materials for recycling and complement 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 accepted at Derryclure CAF.

As there is no collection service for household hazardous waste, there is provision at Birr and Derryclure facilities 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. A community composting project generated a lot of interest during 2013.



### **WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Waste Management Planning regional structure was changed to three regions during the year. Offaly is in the Eastern/Midlands Region. The lead Authority is Dublin City Council. Work on a Waste Management Plan for the region is under way.

Key challenges ahead are the diversion of biodegradable waste away from landfill; ensuring that all waste collectors operating in the county operate a pricing system that encourages 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. The Council also participated in multi-agency road blocks.

### **AWARENESS PROGRAMME**

Offaly County Council has continued to actively promote

environmental awareness both in the community sector and schools. Over 90% of schools in Offaly have registered for the green schools programme. Currently we have 64 schools registered for the Green Flag programme and 39 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-planting initiatives and the Midlands Gateway initiative. We continue to promote and support litter awareness, especially during national spring clean week. We host tidy town seminars to facilitate groups participating in the national tidy towns programme.

## **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. We continue to implement an extensive operational monitoring programme of the rivers and groundwater within the county.

We continued to investigate activities and facilities, such as agriculture, septic tanks and commercial and industrial discharges to surface waters, within the catchment area of designated rivers with less than good

status. We also continue to identify and implement remediation measures

Two people were trained to participate in the National Inspection Plan for septic tank inspections. Inspections under this programme will be carried out in 2014.

#### **PROTECTION OF GROUNDWATER**

Staff from the Environment Section implements the revised Code of Practice for the assessment of onsite 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.

#### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND 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. Training was carried out in energy reduction techniques and audits carried out in some facilities.

#### **BURIAL GROUNDS**

The Council's Burial Ground policy has been amended in 2013 to include the opportunity for greater involvement by local community groups who wish to maintain council cemeteries by agreement with the Council. This amendment will be reviewed in late 2014. An extension to Raheen cemetery is undergoing the Part VIII planning process. Following Ministerial Orders Dungar and Portarlinton Joint Burial Boards will be dissolved on 1st June 2014 which will result in the transfer of all their assets and liabilities to Offaly County Council on that date.

### **ANIMAL CONTROL AND WELFARE**

#### **STRAY ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICE**

Offaly County Council's Veterinary section manages its dog control service in co-operation with the ISPCA and in accordance with the Control of Dogs Act, 1986 which involves:

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

The Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010 is being enforced by the Council to help maintain and improve the welfare standards of dogs bred in such establishments.

### **CONTROL OF HORSES**

Under the Control of Horses Act 1996, all local authorities are responsible for the control of horses in their area including the collection of stray horses on public land. New draft Control of Horses Bye Laws have been published which are due for adoption by the Council in early 2014. Funding by the Department of Agriculture has been greatly reduced during 2013 which will impact on the level of service provided.

It is also the statutory responsibility of Offaly County Council to dispose of animals dumped on public land. Every effort is made to trace the ownership of 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 four operating in the County, to meat product and distribution premises of which there are three operating within the County.

## PLANNING, ECONOMIC & LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>SPC Chair</b>	<b>Sinead Dooley MCC</b>	<b>Director Of Services</b>	<b>Declan Kirrane</b>
<i>Members</i>	<i>Sectoral</i>	<i>Senior Planner</i>	<b>Andrew Murray</b>
<b>Cllr. Dervill Dolan</b>	<b>Mr. Ray Kennedy</b>	<i>Senior Executive Planner</i>	<b>Lorraine Mitchell</b>
<b>Cllr. Peter Ormond</b>	<b>Mr. Dominic Doheny</b>	<i>Senior Executive Planner</i>	<b>Alma Walsh</b>
<b>Cllr. Liam Quinn</b>	<b>Mr. Tom Finnerty</b>	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	<b>Caroline Dempsey</b>
<b>Cllr. Sinead Dooley</b>	<b>Mr. Dominic Carroll</b>	<i>Senior Executive Architect</i>	<b>Rachel McKenna</b>
<b>Cllr. Johnny Butterfield</b>		<i>Heritage Officer</i>	<b>Amanda Pedlow</b>
<b>Cllr. Michael Loughnane</b>		<i>Administrative Officer</i>	<b>David Minton, Economic Development</b>
		<i>Administrative Officer</i>	<b>Catriona Hilliard, Community &amp; Enterprise</b>
		<i>Sports Partnership Co-ordinator</i>	<b>Eamon Henry</b>

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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.

### DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014-2020

The Draft *Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020* went on public display on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 for a 12 week period up to and including 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

The draft plan comprises the following:

- Volume 1: Written Statement.
- Volume 2: Settlement Plans.
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- Record of Protected Structures (proposed additions).
- Wind Energy Strategy.
- Draft Environmental Report (refer below).
- Natura Impact Report.

The Managers Report on the submissions was circulated on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014.



### **Variations to the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015**

Variation No.3 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015 to remove Riverstown Village Plan from Volume 2 of the Plan was adopted on and effective from 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

### **Variation to the Birr Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016**

Variation No.1 of the Birr Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 was adopted on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013. This Variation included 2 Parts;

Part A: To include a Core Strategy in the Birr Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016

Part B: To insert Riverstown Village Plan into the Birr Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016

### **Variations to the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan - 2010-2016**

Variation No.2 of the TTEDP 2010-2016 was adopted on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013 by Tullamore Town Council and on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013 by Offaly County Council.

The Variation came into effect on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

Variation No.2 comprises 2 parts:

- Part A: the inclusion of a Core Strategy and
- Part B:
  - The inclusion of development standards for landscape buffer areas in Chapter 14;
  - The inclusion of the term and explanation 'Landscape Buffer' in Chapter 15, and
  - Reduction in width by 50% of a portion of land zoned Open Space to the South of Tullamore at Clonminch, providing for an increase of Business/Employment zoned lands

### **STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

During 2013, five meetings of the committee were held and the Committee considered the following matters:

- Review of Co. Development Plan 2009-2015;
- Review of the Development Contribution Scheme;
- Updates on the 2013 Peatlands Survey;
- Progress Report in relation to Quarries;
- Update on Birr and Tullamore Core Strategies;
- Update on Tullamore & Environs Development Plan and Birr & Environs Development Plan;
- Retail Planning Guidelines;
- Update in relation to completion of Unfinished Housing Estates;

- Update in relation to Taking in Charge of Estates;
- Draft Guidelines on Development Contributions;
- Updates on Planning & Development Legislation; and
- Consideration of initiatives to promote and support Economic Development and Tourism in the County.

### 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:

#### Planning Applications

Year	No of Applications	No. Granted	No. Refused	Total Decided
<b>2010</b>	449*	332	54	386
<b>2011</b>	347*	293	27	320
<b>2012</b>	313*	238	14	252
<b>2013</b>	261*	191	15	206

(\*This figure includes applications which were invalid)

#### Extensions of Appropriate Period:

Year	No of Applications	No. Granted	No. Refused	Total Decided
<b>2012</b>	75	45	17	62
<b>2013</b>	52	48	6	54

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. All applications must be screened under Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, along with compliance with the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines.

The continued downturn in the economic activity, particularly in the construction sector, has been reflected in the number of planning applications received in 2013. 261 planning applications were received in 2013 which compares with 313 for 2012.

The downturn in the planning applications has afforded the opportunity to the Planning Department to focus on other areas of activity, such as the taking in charge of housing estates, the resolving of unfinished housing

developments and a more consistent and concerted effort in relation to enforcement, preplanning consultation meetings for economic development and compliance issues. There were 291 pre planning meetings held in 2013.

An application under the Strategic Infrastructure Act (Yellow River Windfarm) was received on 3rd December 2013. The Council will be required to input in detail into the application process during 2014.

#### QUARRIES ASSESSMENT:

Under Section 261A, 153 potential quarries have been assessed within the County, 28 quarries received a determination under sub-section 2(a), i.e. that an EIA or AA was required but not prepared. Quarry owners/operators were notified of the outcome and were afforded an opportunity to seek a review of this determination and the subsequent decision of the Planning Authority. The remaining 125 have also been assessed in terms of their planning status, enforcement action has commenced in many of these cases. Quarries in Offaly have been subdivided into the following categories.

**Table 1**

QUARRY CATEGORY	Status
With Planning Permission	16 (3)
Pre-1964 under S261 conditions	8
ABP – either SC or S261A decision pending	8
Unauthorised Quarry under Enforcement action.	18
Ceased through recent Enforcement	9
Abandoned	56
Reinstated	28
Never a quarry	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>

Of the 28 quarries which received a determination, 13 applied to An Bord Pleanala for a review of this decision, the up to date position of these reviews is detailed below in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Outcome of Section S261A decisions reviewed by An Bord Pleanala				
	Number reviewed	ABP Confirm decision	ABP overturn decision	ABP decision pending
<b>Section 261 Decision</b>	13	9	1	3

Seven quarries, to date, have been invited by An Bord Pleanála to apply for Substitute Consent, as illustrated in Table 3 below

**Table 3**

<b>7 Quarries which were invited by ABP to apply for Substitute Consent.</b>					
	Invited to apply for SC	SC applied for	SC Pending	S154 Enforcement	Quarry Abandoned
<b>Section 261 Decision</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

Of the 4 quarries that are classified as "**SC Pending**" have specific dates by which to submit an application, only one of these quarries have consulted with the Planning Authority regarding the appropriate content of the Substitute Consent application. This would indicate that it is unlikely that the other 3 quarries will apply for Substitute Consent.

### **2013 DoECLG PEATLAND'S SURVEY**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) wrote to the Council in connection with Petition 755/2010 currently before the European Parliament.

Petition 755/2010 alleges that, outside of protected sites, Irish authorities are not enforcing environmental impact assessment rules in respect of large-scale peat extraction. In particular, it is alleged that extraction activities are of a scale that exceeds the threshold for mandatory environmental impact assessment (EIA) without the competent authorities having required any peat extraction operator to undertake an environmental impact assessment pursuant to Directive 85/337/EEC as amended (now codified as 2011/92/EU).

The Commission has requested that Ireland submit detailed information on the questions raised in their correspondence and comment on how the overall position in relation to industrial peat extraction can be considered compliant with Directive 2011/92/EU, especially in light of judgment in Case C-215/06.

#### **PEATLANDS SURVEY**

In order to address the Commission's specific concerns as comprehensively as possible the Department has developed a baseline GIS compatible map of the location and distribution of industrial peat extraction in Ireland.

In its approach, the Department has distinguished between:

- (1) Bord Na Móna lands; and
- (2) other potential industrial peat extraction areas.



Category (1) above was excluded from the survey. In relation to category (2) the DECLG identified **126** potential industrial scale peat extraction sites, 32 of which are located in County Offaly. The Planning Authority was requested to forward to the Department information in relation to the planning status of these sites, specifically whether they are operating with permission, comprise exempted development, unauthorised development, etc.

The objective is that the returns will be used by the Department in the formulation of a conclusions paper which will be shared with the Commission and used to inform the next steps in relation to any needs for, variously, better enforcement, regulatory change, as well as raising awareness.

The survey was completed for County Offaly and forwarded to the DECLG on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

### **DERELICT SITES**

There were 11 Derelict Sites on the Register of Derelict Sites at the end of 2012. Following site inspections, 2 were removed from the Register during 2013. Demands for the 2013 levy were issued. At the end of 2013, there were 39 open files, 9 of which were on the Register of Derelict Sites.

### **STRUCTURES AT RISK FUND**

The Conservation Grants Scheme was 'paused' in 2011 and replaced with the Structures at Risk Scheme. Under this scheme, two applications were invited from each Local Authority for possible approval by the Department. Offaly County Council made 2 applications for grant aid. One was approved by the Department:

- SRF 13/45: Summerhill House - €5,500 for repairs towards the roof.

In late December it was announced that a new scheme called the Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme would commence in 2014, to assist owners of Protected Structures.

### **UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES**

The findings of the National Housing Development Survey 2013 (Nov. 2013) showed that Co. Offaly has one of the lowest levels of unfinished housing developments and vacant residential units nationally. Work is continuing to remove as many unfinished estates as possible from the 2014 Survey.

### **SCANNING PROJECT**

During 2013, the scanning project continued, whereby planning applications can be viewed on-line. This allows members of the public to view planning applications at a

time and place of their choosing rather than being restricted to office hours.

All current applications are scanned and made available for viewing on a daily basis, and to date, previous years planning applications from 2009 to 2013 have been scanned and are now available for viewing on the website.

### **GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**

Planning were involved in the pilot stage of a replacement GIS called ArcGIS Online from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ERSI). This software enables the creation of Online interactive web maps for internal and public use.

### **COMPLIANCE/ENFORCEMENT**

Warning Letters	104
Enforcement Notices:	31
District/Circuit Court Cases:	9
Prosecutions Initiated:	16

During 2013, 65 enforcement files were opened. 104 warning letters and 31 enforcement notices were issued. Regular meetings are held with the Council's legal advisers to ensure that all cases which proceed to the courts are pursued in a timely manner. The recovery of costs where the Council is successful in prosecution continues to be difficult.

## 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 2012 – Nov 2013.	
<i>Receipts</i>	€000's
Balance Available – November 2012	3515
Reserved for Current Water Projects – not yet allocated	2866
<i>Contributions Received Nov 2012 to Nov 2013 (as follows):</i>	
Development Contributions – Customers	685
Water & Sewerage: Dev. Contributions - Town Councils	252
Disbursements Dec 2012 – Nov 2013 (see below)	330
Revised figure re Reserved for Current Projects / Irish Water	3320
<b>Balance Available at November 2013</b>	<b>3668</b>

Allocation of Funds – since last report to Council, November 2012	€000's
Block Grant 2013	185
Amenities – Clara Community Playground	6
Amenities - Kinnitty Community Playground	5
Infrastructure - Offaly Innovation & Design Centre	50
Kilmurray Precast - Special Contribution	20
Edenderry Power - Special Contribution	64
Reserved for Current Projects/ Irish Water	3320

**OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR DISBURSEMENT  
AS AT NOVEMBER 2013:**

<i>Job Description</i>	<i>Funds Available €000's</i>
Dev. Cont. Scheme – Amenities	271
Dev. Cont. Scheme – Infrastructure	2183
Dev. Cont. Scheme – Wastewater (now Irish Water)	0
Dev. Cont. Scheme – Water (now Irish Water)	0
TTC Special Development Contribution – now Irish Water	0
Spl. Dev. Cont. Scheme 2004 Car Parking	443
Spl. Dev. Cont. - Windfarms	158
Spl. Dev. Cont. - Scheme Clara Quarry	4
Spl. Dev. Cont. – Road Imp & Main Drumcraw	25
Spl. Dev. Cont. Scheme Communication Masts	491
Spl. Dev. Cont. - Rd Imp Tullaroe Clareen	8
Spl. Dev. Cont. - Rest Road Down Park Daingean	4
Spl. Dev. Cont. - Rd Improvement to N80 Clara	26
Spl. Dev. Cont. - Passing Bays at Derrygollin	5
Spl. Dev. Levy Kilmurray Precast Concrete	42
Spl. Dev. Cont. - Rest Roadway Springfield	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3668</b>



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Offaly County Council has committed significant resources in delivering the Action Plan for Jobs at a local level. Coupled with this and in partnership with local stakeholders we have developed a number of innovative projects to promote entrepreneurship and highlight Offaly as the perfect location to 'do business'.

Some specific actions taken throughout the year include reviewing our Development Contribution Scheme. This is part of an overall initiative to reduce business costs complimented by other schemes such as the Business Incentive Scheme for the reuse and refurbishment of vacant units for certain commercial purposes and also our flexible payment options for business. Utilising all of our schemes and initiatives the Economic Development Office is committed to promoting the County as the ideal location for starting a business. We work with our partners in the IDA and Enterprise Ireland on a regional level and with the County Enterprise Board on a local level to achieve this. Some of the achievements during the year include

### **OFFALY INNOVATION AND DESIGN CENTRE**

Set to be open in April 2014 the centre will aim to provide extraordinary support to help local entrepreneurs build a remarkable business 'in Offaly'. The Offaly

Innovation and Design Centre will make new ideas and innovations happen by providing a location to impress, an entrepreneurial community and the flexibility to grow. Our experience will help local business develop the focus, confidence and skills you need to succeed  
Targeting those;

- *JUST STARTING OUT*
- *WE NEED TO GROW OR EXPAND FASTER*
- *WE WANT TO COMMERCIALISE OUR PRODUCT*
- *WE NEED TO GROW FASTER*
- *EXISTING ENTREPRENEURS IN OFFALY*

It is an exciting project being led by the Economic Development Committee and will be our flagship project for 2014.



### LAUNCH OF TULLAMORE DEW DISTILLERY

Offaly County Council played a key role in securing the distillery for Tullamore. The distillery, visitor centre and warehousing facility is currently being constructed on 60 acre site in Clonminch, Tullamore. The sod was turned in September of 2013 by Minister for Agriculture Simon Coveney and we expect distilling to commence in March 2014.



### PAINT FACTORY ANNOUNCED FOR PORTARLINGTON

The Magni Group, a US based company, has lodged the application for the factory which will be built at the Botley Lane Industrial Park, Portarlington, Offaly. **The Magni Group**, which operates an automotive coating business, will set up its new manufacturing plant and R+D laboratory near Portarlington. The new facility, which will employ 50 people, will include a purpose-built 40,000 square foot factory with room to expand to 80,000 square feet over five years.

A number of promotional projects were completed in 2013 highlighting the business opportunities available in Offaly. Among these were:

### PUBLICATION OF DOING BUSINESS IN EDENDERRY

In conjunction with Edenderry Town Council we published a comprehensive brochure highlighting the location, available infrastructure and opportunities and the family / community resources available to businesses locating in Edenderry. A copy of the brochure is available by contacting the County Council or download from [www.offaly.ie](http://www.offaly.ie) (Doing Business in Offaly)

### BUSINESS IN OFFALY ONLINE VIDEO

At the December Council meeting the 'Doing Business in Offaly' video was launched. The purpose of the video is to capture a glimpse of current successful businesses in the County from a range of sectors and integrate lifestyle and recreation shots that promote a strong image of the County. This will compliment the current work of the IDA who are filming a similar initiative for the wider ATM Gateway. The objective for filming this is to establish a strong online presence for the County through social media.



### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The Economic Development Sub Committee had a strong year in 2013. The committee has initiated a very exciting project outlined above getting funding and approval in 2013. The '**OFFALY INNOVATION AND DESIGN CENTRE**' will be Located in Axis Business Park, Tullamore the purpose of this centre is to provide a creative and flexible space that allows people the freedom to explore all concepts of business creation. The market place is no longer local and we need our citizens, particularly young people, equipped with the skills to compete for business and employment globally.

### **ACTIONS FOR 2014**

The role of Offaly County Council in business and enterprise support is set to change with significant resources being provided through the Local Enterprise Offices. The County Council will now develop and maintain relationships with local business throughout the life cycle of their growth, from pre-development through to advice and guidance and on to growth and expansion. Through our Economic Development Sub Committee 2014 will be dedicated to establishing the 'Offaly Innovation and Design Centre' in Tullamore. This facility will allow us to directly address entrepreneurship levels in Offaly by providing the space and resources for our citizens to explore business ideas / concepts. The LEO's will be essential in the management of this facility also. Alternative energy opportunities associated with the County will continue to be explored. Our Development

Plan has strong policies in relation to emerging energy markets and we are committed to maximising the renewable energy resource with minimal environmental impacts.

Finally the Economic Development Office intends conducting a strategic review of our role with the view to identifying key supports to larger employers in the County. This will include generating closer relationships with our major employers through site visits and exploring with them any assistance we can provide in the R&D area.

## HERITAGE

The Heritage Office works with the support of the Offaly Heritage Forum. This group of 15 is made up of people from state agencies, Council staff and NGOs. The forum's work programme is set out in the Offaly Heritage Plan 2012 – 2016. The forum meets four times a year with working groups meeting when necessary. The human resources of the forum are very valuable from providing advice, to contributing to projects or leading awareness events. The Heritage Council contribution towards the running of the Heritage office and also an allocation towards the delivery of the Offaly Heritage Plan has been crucial to facilitating project delivery. The work falls into three main categories of awareness, data collection and research and delivering projects.

### HERITAGE AWARENESS

This year three books published by Offaly County Council were launched; first in March, ***The Geology of Laois and Offaly***, researched and written by John Feehan, then in November ***The Marble of Clonmacnoise*** by Declan Ryan and finally in December ***Did you know? 100 quirky facts about County Offaly*** collated by the Heritage Office. All of these publications are selling well and are financially robust publications in this time of limited subvention.

The events programme continued with the Offaly Naturalists'

Field Club programme holding events throughout the year, 9 days of programming for Heritage Week in August, participation in Culture Night with the Arts Office in September and the Annual Seminar on 15<sup>th</sup> /16<sup>th</sup> November.



The annual Biodiversity Summer School was led by John Feehan in July focusing on the Slieve Blooms. For the first time, Caimin O'Brien of the National Monuments Service partnered with the Heritage Office to run a castle study week in May. Both weeks were fully booked.

The third year and final year of participation in the Engage with Architecture programme was busy with a



number of elements from Mapping Towns, to national school programmes, public lectures to Plein Air. This is a partnership project with the Art and Architecture Departments.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

**FOLLIES STUDY** A survey of ten architectural follies was undertaken by Howley Hayes conservation architects. This received 75% Heritage Council funding.

**DIGITISATION OF ARCHIVES** 80 volumes relating to the management of the East Offaly Digby estate held in Dorset are now digitized. In addition we worked in Birr Castle archive doing some sample digitising and also digitised the Charleville Estate Maps.

**OFFALY LEADER II** We assisted with the delivery of two major projects for Offaly heritage which received Offaly Leader II funding. We worked with the Offaly Community Forum who facilitated the comprehensive study of wildlife in 7 towns costing €28,000. The first phase of the conservation of Daingean Courthouse was also completed at a cost of €200,000. Further work will be needed but the work to the roof has secured the overall building.

Securing a special allocation of €20,000 from the Heritage Council Conservation Plan measure, resulted in the completion of the conservation of St Carthage's Church in Rahan which had been set out in the Rahan Conservation

Plan in 2008.

**TIDY TOWNS SUPPORT.** Information evenings and mentoring continue in partnership with the Community and Enterprise Section.

## **PUBLIC REALM PLANS**

The delivery of the Birr Public Realm plan 2009 continues with key projects in 2013 being Cornmarket Car Park, the shop front scheme, planning for Emmet Square enhancement and the installation of the sculpture on the Tullamore Road.

## **OUTLOOK FOR 2014**

While budgets continuing to be tight, it is planned to maximize outputs through working with the Heritage Forum partnerships and facilitating groups to develop heritage projects. The resources of in-house expertise will be utilized as much as possible. Depending on their budget allocation the Heritage Council has indicated their support for the Heritage officer programme in Local Authorities as a priority. Projects from the Offaly Heritage Plan 2012 – 2016 will continue to be the basis for activities.



*Viewing conservation works in Daingean Courthouse at Annual Offaly Heritage Seminar in November 2013*



*Viewing conservation works in Rahan Church at Annual Offaly Heritage Seminar in November 2013*

## ROADS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

<b>SPC Chair</b>	<b>Tony McLoughlin MCC</b>	<b>Director Of Services</b>	<b>Frank Heslin</b>
<i>Members</i>	<i>Sectoral</i>	<i>Senior Engineer</i>	<b>Charles McCarthy</b>
<b>Cllr. Noel Bourke</b>	<b>Mr. Hugh Farrell</b>	<i>Senior Executive Engineer</i>	<b>Joe Coleman</b>
<b>Cllr. Connie Hanniffy</b>	<b>Mr. Brian Kenny</b>	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	<b>Phyllis Hughes</b>
<b>Cllr. Ger Plunkett</b>	<b>Mr. Michael Kenny</b>	<i>Chief Fire Officer</i>	<b>Eoin O’Ceilleachair</b>
<b>Cllr. Danny Owens</b>		<i>Health &amp; Safety Officer</i>	<b>Dennis Gibbons</b>
<b>Cllr. Paddy Rowland</b>			

### ROADS; HEALTH AND SAFETY

The 2013 Initial Roads Budget was €8,297,895 and this included an NNR grant of €6,287,898, a National Road Grant of €909,807 and Own Resources funding of €1,100,190.

Additional funding was received as detailed in the attached table during the year from the DTTS and the NRA:

Therefore an allocation of €8,297,895 at the beginning of 2013 became a final allocation €10,796,993 resulting in a 30% increase in the original allocation.

Category Of Grant	Additional Funding Received
<b>CIR</b>	€200,835
<b>RIG</b>	€939,498
<b>RIG - Edenderry</b>	€67,200
<b>Minor Improvements on National Secondary</b>	€356,000
<b>Restoration of Surface Texture/Skid Resistance</b>	€108,231
<b>Route Treatment on National Secondary</b>	€150,000
<b>Safety Barrier on National Secondary</b>	€17,500
<b>National Secondary Ordinary Maintenance</b>	€199,000
<b>Re-surfacing on the N62 between Kennedy’s Cross and Galross</b>	€100,000
<b>Verge/Hedge Cutting on N62/N80/N52</b>	€19,000
<b>NRA Public Lighting (Requested)</b>	€50,000
<b>National Secondary Winter Maintenance</b>	€58,700
<b>Non National Roads Winter Maintenance</b>	€58,134
<b>NRA Distillery Roundabout on the N52 Tullamore By Pass</b>	€175,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€2,499,098</b>

Projects undertaken and completed during 2013 are detailed under the following Grant Categories: -

## 1. NATIONAL ROAD GRANTS

- Improvement of 500 metres of N62 between Cloghan and Ferbane
- Re-surfacing with super elevation of the N52 at Curraghmore Kilcormac
- Improvements at Pedestrian Crossing on the N52 at Scurragh Birr
- Route Treatment (chevrons and junction improvements) on the N52, N62 and N80
- Purchase of premises in Ferbane to allow for improvements to the junction of the N62 with the Ballycumber Road.
- The introduction of new speed limit warning signs on the approach to Killeigh village on the N80.
- Restoration of surface texture and skid resistance on the N80 at Scrubb Cross Killeigh, on the N52 at Derrydolney Kilcormac and Kennedy's Cross Birr.
- Re-surfacing of the N62 between Kennedy's Cross and Galross
- Provision of Safety Barrier at various locations on the N62.

- Footpath Improvements on N52 in Kilcormac and drainage and footpaths on N62 at Roscrea Road Birr
- Completed the upgrade of salt storage and brine making facilities at Tullamore and Birr

## 2. NON NATIONAL ROAD GRANTS

- Completion of road schemes listed in the 2013 Road Works Programme under Restoration Improvement and Surface Dressing.
- Pavement Surfacing on the R402 Daingean to Edenderry Road
- Pavement Recycling and surfacing on the R357 Blueball Cross to Cloghan Road
- Pavement surfacing in Edenderry town
- Strengthening and improvements on 13 bridges as listed in the 2013 Road Works Programme.
- Installation of traffic lights on the R357 at Clonony Bridge
- Junction Improvements at Lemonaghan Cross
- Visibility improvements on the R491 at Kennys Cross Shinrone
- Improvements on the R437 at Broughal Cross Ferbane
- Safety Improvements on the R357 at Moystown Cross
- Improvements at Croghan Crossroads
- Installation of Pedestrian Crossing on the R402 at St Marys Road Edenderry



- Completion of the New Road/Church Road Roundabout Tullamore
- Complete upgrade of Traffic Lights in Tullamore
- 13 sections of the public local road network improved under the Community Involvement Scheme. Initiative.



*Pedestrian Crossing on the R402 at St Marys Road Edenderry*



*New Road/Church Road Roundabout Tullamore*

### 3. OTHER WORKS

- Design and installation of new roundabout on the Tullamore By Pass.
- Design and installation of right turning lane, surfacing, footpaths, drainage and associated works at Killane Edenderry.
- Design and Junction Improvements at Monasteroris Edenderry .
- Installation of new link road at Sr. Senan Avenue Edenderry





*New roundabout on the Tullamore By Pass.*

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety objectives were set out at the beginning of the year with the management team. The key objective set out was to continue to good work on the Health and Safety performance of 2012 - 2013 and ultimately provide a safer working environment for all employees of Offaly County Council and members of the public.

The second key objective was to ensure that communication between all levels of staff within the organisation relating to health and safety was improved. Every day staff need to be reminded of the risk they face and how to eliminate or reduce this risk. During 2013 alone, there were 45 fatalities, 10 of these in the Construction Industry (Up to the 29th of Nov). All work needs to be treated safely and a suitable Safe System of Work agreed and communicated to all staff prior to commencing the works.

There was an overall reduction in the accident ratio up to November 2013 when



compared to the same period in 2012. Senior management continued to provide leadership in order to raise the profile of safety within Offaly County Council. The management team and senior management carried out a number of inspections during the year and this will remain a key focus for 2014.

Safety Committee's in Offaly County Council met a number of times during the year to raise health and safety issues and more importantly to try and provide practical solutions to eliminate or reduce the risk to employees. The Safety Committee's have been a useful communication tool for employees from different departments enabling them to interact and learn how health and safety improvements can be achieved within their areas. These meetings will continue throughout 2014 in order to keep communication lines open and for all staff members to learn from each others input.

During 2013 a number of inspections have been carried out with the Health and Safety Authority. These inspections have been used to raise awareness in areas that need slight improvements, however overall the inspections reflect the improvements which have been made by all employees during the year. The focus for Offaly County Council in 2014 will be to continue to build a close relationship with the local Health and Safety Inspectors and take on board the valuable advice issued by them. 2014 will also involve the interaction with those involved with Irish Water and the process of liaison work

with them.

The Offaly County Council online health and safety system was updated on the '*I Portal System*' during the year. Improvements were carried out in conjunction with the suggestions made by staff members. This system has now become a valuable safety aid for employees when managing health and safety in their areas. One of the new additions during the year was a link to the data register, where staff can gain access to the legal documents relating to health and safety.

Internal health and safety inspections continue to be an integral part of Offaly County Councils system, and this has been well received by all employees this year. These inspections have helped to highlight areas for improvement and to prevent potential accidents from occurring. Additional internal inspection templates were developed and used by staff at all levels during the year. These inspections will continue throughout 2014.

Health and safety training continues to be at the forefront of improving health and safety awareness among staff and ensuring that staff are competent for carrying out the tasks in hand. In 2014 Offaly County Council will continue to ensure that relevant staff complete the statutory training they require.

The health and safety information, which is being developed at a national level, and new legislation such as

the construction regulations will continue to be examined at local level and where deemed appropriate, integrated into Offaly County Councils Health and safety.

## **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 2013 Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service were alerted to 616 incidents, made up of 495 fire calls and 121 non-fire emergencies. The response to these calls came from 5 stations located throughout the county.

### **SECTION 26 PLAN**

The Section 26 Fire and Emergency plan formed the basis for the Fire Service work program 2013. The 2013 budget of €2.9 million maintained the Fire Service.

### **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 an expected spend of €130,000 for training alone in 2013. 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. Income of €100,000 was generated in 2013.

### **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 80 licence applications. In total 270 fire safety inspections of public premises took place.

Offaly Fire service is actively involved in the Community Smoke Alarm Project and fire alarms were installed in 350 homes in Offaly during 2013. The Fire Service 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 69 buildings inspected, which represents 48% 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 Tullamore in 2013.

#### **CIVIL DEFENCE**

Civil Defence provided emergency response capability, and supported the community and events throughout 2013. Over 60 Civil Defence duties were carried out during 2013, 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 duty in terms of manpower and resources, were the Tullamore Livestock show. 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.



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

<b>CORPORATE SERVICES</b>		<b>FINANCE</b>	
<i>Director of Services:</i>	<b>Seán Murray</b>	<i>Head of Finance</i>	<b>Declan Conlon</b>
<i>Senior Executive Officer:</i>	<b>Monica Cleary</b>	<i>Financial Management Accountant:</i>	<b>Thomas Mawe</b>
<i>Partnership Facilitator/Administrative Officer:</i>	<b>Gerry Bruton</b>	<i>Administrative Officer:</i>	<b>Mary Gaughran</b>
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>		<b>INFORMATION SYSTEMS</b>	
<i>Director of Services:</i>	<b>Frank Heslin</b>	<i>Director of Services</i>	<b>Frank Heslin</b>
<i>Senior Executive Officer:</i>	<b>Ann Dillon</b>	<i>Head of I.S.:</i>	<b>Hugh O'Donoghue</b>
<i>Administrative Officer:</i>	<b>Paula Donovan</b>	<i>I.S. Project Leader</i>	<b>Eileen Jackson</b>
		<i>I.S. Project Leader</i>	<b>Ray Bell</b>

### **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 section 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, 17 council meetings were held in 2013.

At the Annual Meeting, held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013, Councillor Sinead Moylan-Ryan was elected Cathaoirleach and Councillor Constance Hanniffy was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

The May monthly meeting, held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013, was held in Moneygall Community Centre. Prior to the meeting the Members attended the official opening of the Moneygall Wastewater Treatment Plant.

### **CORPORATE PLAN 2010 - 2014**

Offaly Local Authorities mission statement and strategic priorities 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 2013.



*May monthly meeting held in Moneygall Community Centre, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013*

### **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 policy areas. The following Chairpersons were elected to chair the SPC's at the 2012 Annual meeting, for a three-year term:

- Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services – Cllr. N. Hogan
- Planning, Economic and Local Development – Cllr. S. Dooley
- Transportation and Emergency Service – Cllr G. Plunkett
- Environment and Water Services – Cllr. J. Leahy

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

The *Local Government Reform Bill 2013* was considered by the Houses of the Oireachtas during 2013. The Bill provides for the establishment of three Municipal Districts in Offaly, namely the Municipal District of Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore. The Bill also provides for the abolition of the Town Councils of Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore.

#### REGISTER OF ELECTORS

The Register of Electors was produced on the 1<sup>st</sup> February and came into force on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013. The total electorate for County Offaly for the 2013/2014 Register of Electors was 56,332 broken down over the local electoral areas as follows:

<b>Birr</b>	<b>10,559</b>
<b>Edenderry</b>	<b>15,478</b>
<b>Ferbane</b>	<b>11,766</b>
<b>Tullamore</b>	<b>18,529</b>
<b>Total on the Register</b>	<b>56,332</b>

A Supplement to the Register of Electors was produced in 2013, i.e., for the Seanad and Court of Appeals Referendum held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The total number of Presidential Electors (eligible to vote in a Referendum) on the Register of Electors on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013 was 53,945.

#### *Referendum on the Thirty-second Amendment of the Constitution (Abolition of Seanad Éireann) Bill 2013\**

Constituency	Electorate	Total Poll	% Turnout	Invalid Ballot Papers	Valid Poll	Votes in Favour	Votes Against
Laois-Offaly	106,057	39,616	37.35	446	39,170	18,062 (46.11%)	21,108 (53.89%)

\*Above data from [www.referendum.ie](http://www.referendum.ie)

### Thirty-third Amendment of the Constitution (Court of Appeal) Act 2013\*

Constituency	Electorate	Total Poll	% Turnout	Invalid Ballot Papers	Valid Poll	Votes in Favour	Votes Against
Laois-Offaly	106,057	39,600	37.34	600	39,000	24,416 (62.61%)	14,584 (37.39%)

\*Above data from [www.referendum.ie](http://www.referendum.ie)

### JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

The Joint Policing Committee met on four occasions in 2013. At the January meeting of the Committee, it was agreed to extend the *JPC Work Plan 2010 – 2012* for a further two years.

A number of presentations were made to the JPC including the following:

- Mr. Brian Pey, Administrative Officer and Mr. A. O’ Connor, Veterinary Inspector gave a presentation on “Procedures for impounding of horses under the Control of Horses Act 1996”, and “Control of Horses Bye-Laws 1998”
- Ms. Lynn Farrell, Development Worker Midland Regional Drugs Task Force, gave a comprehensive presentation on the *Midland Regional Drugs Task Force*



Members of Offaly County Council and Mr. B. Cowen, TD at the Civic Reception, held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2013, to recognise the outstanding achievements of Ms. Catherine Walsh, Ms. Francine Meehan and Mr. Mark Rohan at the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

### SWIMMING POOLS

Corporate Services administer the Council’s support grant schemes for community swimming pools.

On 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013 the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport approved grant-aid of €784,000



towards the refurbishment of Clara Swimming Pool.

Edenderry Swimming Pool Committee's Preliminary Report seeking funding for the development of Edenderry Swimming Pool was submitted to the Department in August 2014.



*Áras an Chontae plays host to Santa, Mrs Claus and his helpers at the Social Club staff children's Christmas Party in December 2013*



*The large attendance at the Ecumenical Service held in Áras an Chontae on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013*



## OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

### BIRR ELECTORAL AREA:

<b>Carroll, John</b>	The Ring, Birr	(057) 91 20976; (087) 228 3772	<a href="mailto:cjlrohncarroll@eircom.net">cjlrohncarroll@eircom.net</a>	Non-Party
<b>Clendennen, Percy</b>	Kinnitty, Birr	(057) 91 37076; (087) 688 8682	<a href="mailto:percy.clendennen@gmail.com">percy.clendennen@gmail.com</a>	Fine Gael
<b>Ormond, Peter</b>	Kyleogue, Shinrone, Birr	(0505) 47079; (086) 212 1449	<a href="mailto:peter.ormond@gmail.com">peter.ormond@gmail.com</a>	Fianna Fáil
<b>McLoughlin, Tony</b>	Main Street, Birr	(057) 91 21376; (086) 364 3855	<a href="mailto:cclrtonymcloughlin@eircom.net">cclrtonymcloughlin@eircom.net</a>	Non-Party



### EDENDERRY ELECTORAL AREA:

<b>Bourke, Noel</b>	Killane, Edenderry	(046) 97 31295; -----	<a href="mailto:noelbourke@hotmail.com">noelbourke@hotmail.com</a>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Fitzpatrick, Eddie</b>	Benfield, Cloneyhurke, Portarlington	(057) 86 23261; (087) 258 0428	<a href="mailto:eddiefitzp@eircom.net">eddiefitzp@eircom.net</a>	Non-Party
<b>Foley, John</b>	Killane, Edenderry	(046) 97 32332; (087) 252 2882	<a href="mailto:cldr.johnfoley@gmail.com">cldr.johnfoley@gmail.com</a>	Non-Party
<b>Hogan, Nichola</b>	8 The Sycamores, Edenderry	----- ; (086) 384 0320	<a href="mailto:nhogan@lawlibrary.ie">nhogan@lawlibrary.ie</a>	Fine Gael
<b>Plunkett, Ger</b>	Ballycrystal, Geashill	(057) 93 43854; (087) 227 6688	<a href="mailto:gerardplunkett@hotmail.com">gerardplunkett@hotmail.com</a>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Quinn, Liam</b>	Edenderry Road, Rhode	----- ; (087) 916 3066	<a href="mailto:liamjq@gmail.com">liamjq@gmail.com</a>	Fine Gael



### FERBANE ELECTORAL AREA:

<b>Dooley, Eamon</b>	Na Tullaig, Aughaboy, Ferbane	(090) 64 54510; (086) 223 7058	<a href="mailto:eamondooley@hotmail.com">eamondooley@hotmail.com</a>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Hanniffy, Constance</b>	Doon, Ballinahown	(090) 64 30106; (087) 256 0876	<a href="mailto:connieh@iol.ie">connieh@iol.ie</a>	Fine Gael
<b>Leahy, John</b>	Glendine, Kilcormac	----- ; (087) 207 3226	<a href="mailto:info@johnleahy.net">info@johnleahy.net</a>	Non-Party
<b>Moylan Ryan, Sinead</b>	Woodbank, Shannonbridge	(057) 91 51113; (087) 675 9596	<a href="mailto:smoylanryan@gmail.com">smoylanryan@gmail.com</a>	Fianna Fáil



### TULLAMORE ELECTORAL AREA:

<b>Buckley, Molly</b>	Moylena, Clara Rd, Tullamore	(057) 93 41357; (087) 291 4302	<a href="mailto:mollybuckley@eircom.net">mollybuckley@eircom.net</a>	Fine Gael
<b>Butterfield, Johnny</b>	Ballincanty, Blueball, Tullamore	(057) 93 54027; (086) 378 0947	<a href="mailto:mudbutterfield@gmail.com">mudbutterfield@gmail.com</a>	Non-Party
<b>Dolan, Dervill</b>	10 Cormac Street, Tullamore	(057) 93 23530; (086) 825 7259	<a href="mailto:dervilldolan@eircom.net">dervilldolan@eircom.net</a>	Non-Party
<b>Dooley, Sinead</b>	Rahan Road, Sragh, Tullamore	(057) 93 51828; (087) 230 1525	<a href="mailto:sineadtdooley@gmail.com">sineadtdooley@gmail.com</a>	Fianna Fáil
<b>McKeigue, Thomas</b>	Spollanstown, Tullamore	(057) 93 41519; (086) 165 8359	<a href="mailto:tommymckeigue@eircom.net">tommymckeigue@eircom.net</a>	Fine Gael
<b>Owens, Danny</b>	Lugamarla, Mountbolus, Tullamore	(057) 93 54814; (087) 127 1526	<a href="mailto:dannyowens@eircom.net">dannyowens@eircom.net</a>	Fianna Fáil
<b>Rowland, Paddy</b>	Knockowen Road, Tullamore	(057) 93 52917; (087) 355 1935	<a href="mailto:rowlandpaddy@hotmail.com">rowlandpaddy@hotmail.com</a>	Fianna Fáil



### Payments Made to Members in 2013

Name	Representational Payment	Monthly Allowance	SPC Chairperson's Allowance	Expenses Conferences, incl. Conf. Fees, Telephone/Broadband	Chairperson's Allowance	Foreign Travel
Noel Bourke	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,354.28		€ 2,683.10		
Molly Buckley	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,413.96		€ 3,779.59		
Johnny Butterfield	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,413.96		€ 2,114.01		
John Carroll	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,589.36		€ 553.69		
Percy Clendennen	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,040.84		€ 3,238.51		
Dervil Dolan	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,413.96		€ 0.00		
Sinead Dooley	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,413.96	€ 6,000.00	€ 2,579.94		
Eamon Dooley	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,040.84		€ 2,769.72		
Eddie Fitzpatrick	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,727.40		€ 2,797.35		
John Foley	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,354.28		€ 0.00		
Connie Hanniffy	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,040.84		€ 3,315.52		
Nichola Hogan	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,432.64	€ 6,000.00	€ 3,201.43		
John Leahy	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,727.40	€ 6,000.00	€ 0.00		
Tommy McKeigue	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,413.96		€ 937.58		
Tony McLoughlin	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,432.64		€ 0.00		
Sinead Moylan Ryan	€ 16,724.00	€ 6,137.88		€ 979.01	€ 14,616.54	€ 647.50
Peter Ormond	€ 16,724.00	€ 6,372.96		€ 1,397.26	€ 12,647.47	€ 2,585.76
Danny Owens	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,413.96		€ 3,214.64		
Ger Plunkett	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,413.96	€ 6,000.00	€ 3,229.40		
Liam Quinn	€ 16,724.00	€ 5,197.56		€ 3,315.52		
Paddy Rowland	€ 16,724.00	€ 4,413.96		€ 3,076.84		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 351,204.00</b>	<b>€ 104,760.60</b>	<b>€ 24,000.00</b>	<b>€ 43,183.11</b>	<b>€ 27,264.00</b>	<b>€ 3,233.26</b>

Councillors supported and attended the following conferences in 2013	Date of Conferences	No. Delegates
"Budget Seminar 2013"	11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	2
Clare Tourism Conference	18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	2
"Debt Solutions – the new Personal Insolvency Legislation"	25 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	2
"Policy and Legal issues relating to Developing Wind Energy"	25 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	1
"Domestic Water Meters for Ireland"	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2013	2
AMAI Spring Seminar	15 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2013	3
24 <sup>th</sup> Colmcille Winter School	22 <sup>nd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2013	1
Mid-West Regional Authority Annual Conference	28 <sup>th</sup> Feb. – 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2013	1
"Water Quality"	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2013	1
Annual Conference of the Association of County & City Councils	7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2013	4
"Local Government supporting Volunteerism"	8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2013	2
"Local Authorities as drivers of Local Development"	8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2013	2
LAMA Spring Seminar 2013	5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	4
IPI National Planning Conference	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	2
Energy Bridge Conference	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	2
"Countdown to Local Elections 2014"	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	2
"Public Service Agreement 2010-2014"	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	1
"Local Tourism and the Councillor"	10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	1
"Flood Risk Assessment"	10 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	1
"Local Authority Compliance with European Law and Directives!"	24 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	1
"Standards for rented houses"	7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	1
"Supporting Enterprise, Local Development and Economic Growth"	14 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	1
"Local Elections 2014"	12 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	2
Seminar on Drug and Alcohol Abuse for Local authorities	12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	1
"How to access funding for community programmes relevant to Councillors"	26 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	1
"Food is Future"	26 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	1
Patrick MacGill Summer School	28 <sup>th</sup> July – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aug. 2013	1
"Homelessness in Ireland"	31 <sup>st</sup> July – 1 <sup>st</sup> Aug. 2013	1
"Rural Crime Prevention and Detection"	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2013	1
William Carleton Summer School	5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> August 2013	2
101 <sup>st</sup> AMAI Annual Conference	12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	3

Environment Ireland Conference 2013	12 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	1
Autumn Kerry Environmental Conference and Training Seminar	19 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> Sept. 2013	1
Epilepsy Ireland National Conference	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2013	1
"Community Living for Older People"	4 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	1
LAMA Autumn Seminar	11 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	5
"50 ways to access development funding for relevant to Councillors"	11 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	1
"Preventing and Reducing Alcohol Related Harm"	18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	2
"Future Energy Needs, Wind Turbines to Nuclear"	25 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	1
"Council Budgets: Preparation, adoption and amendments"	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2013	1
"Debt Solutions – the new Personal Insolvency Legislation"	22 <sup>nd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2013	1
SIPO and Councillors' Obligations	29 <sup>th</sup> Nov. – 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec. 2013	1
"Local Authority Employment Law, Practice and Procedure"	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2013	1
"Changing trends and approaches to drug and alcohol abuse"	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2013	2
"Preparing a Development Contribution Scheme"	6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> December 2013	1
"Putting people first – update on Local Government Reform to date"	13 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2013	2
"Improving Road Safety – Traffic Management"	20 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	1

In 2013 under the Freedom of Information Act, the total numbers of applications were as follows:

- 16 applications received by **Offaly County Council**;
- 0 applications received by **Birr Town Council**;
- 0 application received by **Tullamore Town Council**; and
- 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

2012/2013 academic year saw the introduction of online Student Grant applications to a single awarding authority, Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) through [www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie). Students who were currently in receipt of a student grant and who are progressing to the next year of the same course continued to be assessed and paid by Offaly County Council. If a student is changing their course or progressing to a new course they were required to apply to SUSI.

326 Student Grant renewals were awarded by Offaly County Council in the 2013/2014 academic year.

€1,725,785 was spent on 2013/2014 Student 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.



*Staff present a cheque to Offaly Hospice Foundation following a "Coffee Morning" fund raising event.*

### **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 2013 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 Chairperson, Cllr. Constance Hanniffy, Mr. Brian Gunning, Mr. Paddy Hughes and Mr. Tom Feighery. The Audit Committee met 4 times in 2013

### **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.

### **COUNTY CORONERS**

The total expenditure was €195,676.17 (including salary) in respect of coroners' inquests in 2013.



### EXHIBITIONS HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE

A number of art exhibitions were held in Áras an Chontae during 2013.

### PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Partnership Committee held 5 meetings in 2013.

Mr Declan Conlon, replaced Mr. Frank Heslin as a Management representative on the Committee and Management Joint Chairperson of the Committee.

During the year the Committee continued in its role as a forum to advise staff on the **Change Management Initiative**, which commenced in November 2012.

The Committee considered a number of important issues during the year, including reports on the establishment of Irish Water, the Service Plans and the Haddington Road Agreement. The Committee were briefed on proposed changes to the recording of working hours required under that Agreement. The Committee were briefed on the proposals for the updated PMDS Process.

The Committee were briefed on the proposed Municipal Districts in the last quarter of 2013.

The Staff Newsletter **Inside View** continued to circulate during 2013.



*One of the Paralympic Games medals at the Civic Reception held in January 2013*

# 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 and operate 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, Household Charges and other Fees.

## MAIN SECTIONS WITHIN FINANCE:

### FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING

Financial reporting is the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS), other statutory returns, reporting to external agencies and dealing with the Local Government Audit process. Management Accounting is the preparation of quarterly 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**

This section mainly deals with the recovery of Commercial Rates, Housing Rents, Housing Loans, Water billing, and other local charges - 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 for all Offaly local authorities.

### **PAYROLL**

The processing of the wages, salaries, pensions and the completion of statutory returns to Revenue Commissioners and other agencies. The consolidation of the payroll systems for all Offaly Local authorities was completed in 2013.

### **MOTOR TAXATION OFFICE**

The Council collects vehicle licence duties within its

functional area on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In 2013, responsibility of the issue of driving licences has transferred to the Road Safety Authority (RSA).



*A view of the Motor Tax queue on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013; approximately 750 customers were attended to on the day. Customers seeking to regularise the status of vehicles declared "Off the Road" joined the customers dealing with their motor tax and driver licence applications.*

### **GENERAL LEDGER/AGRESSOSUPPORT**

This group manage the Financial Management System (FMS) and ensure proper control over all the organisations assets and liabilities. Compliance with the national accounting code of practice and enforcement of DECLG circulars also falls within its remit.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Coordination of the Risk Management function within Offaly County Council.

### **SHARED 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 DECLG 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 details 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 are investigated in monitoring budgetary control.

### **DOECLG/IMF QUARTERLY REPORTING**

All Offaly Local Authorities report financial performance Quarterly to the DECLG. These reports consist of a quarterly Income and Expenditure Report, Capital Account report and Debtors report, and are presented to the council. In addition various reports are produced for budget holders in Offaly County Council relating to all aspects of the councils activities.

### **MOTOR TAXATION OFFICE**

This office issues vehicle 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. Payments are made at the counter,

electronically and through postal application.  
In 2013, this office generated approximately €10.0m in revenue, handled over 90,000 transactions (48% over the counter, 10% via post and 42% was processed online)

### **REVENUE COLLECTION SERVICE INDICATORS**

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

Rents	87%
Commercial Rates	94%
Housing Loans	60%
Non Domestic Water Charges	72%



**DRAFT INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2013**

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure

<i>Net Expenditure by Division €</i>	<i>Gross Expenditure</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Net Expenditure</i>	<i>Net Expenditure</i>
	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building	6,593,492	6,320,756	272,736	204,450
Roads Transportation & Safety	13,927,881	10,185,628	3,742,254	3,998,116
Water Services	10,696,034	3,617,097	7,078,937	7,718,594
Development Management	3,215,312	462,321	2,752,990	2,895,327
Environmental Services	5,998,508	2,093,003	3,905,506	4,661,710
Recreation & Amenity	2,627,434	460,403	2,167,031	2,335,858
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	2,125,112	1,846,581	278,531	265,758
Miscellaneous Services	6,786,850	4,014,706	2,772,144	2,814,915
<b>Total Expenditure/Income</b>	<b>51,970,624</b>	<b>29,000,496</b>		
<b>Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates &amp; Local Government Fund</b>			<b>22,970,128</b>	24,894,729
Rates			9,009,532	8,978,296
Local Government Fund - General Purpose Grant			12,374,435	12,404,208
Pension Related Deduction			1,019,812	1,118,375
County Charge			2,078,800	2,083,800
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers</b>			<b>1,512,451</b>	(310,051)
<b>Transfers from/(to) Reserves</b>			(1,108,354)	(990,683)
<b>Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year</b>			<b>404,098</b>	(1,300,734)
<b>General Reserve @ 1st January 2013</b>			(5,372,434)	(4,071,700)
<b>General Reserve @ 31st December 2013</b>			<b>(4,968,336)</b>	(5,372,434)

## Capital Account Summary

Extract from the Draft Annual Financial Statement for the Year ended December 31, 2013

	2013	2012
	€	€
Balance (Debit)\Credit @ 1 January	<b>4,389,082</b>	<b>10,284,358</b>
<b>Total Expenditure (Incl. Transfers)</b>	(14,150,833)	(17,528,344)
<b>Total Income (Incl. Transfers)</b>	10,462,196	11,633,068
Balance (Debit)\Credit @ 31 December	<b>700,445</b>	<b>4,389,082</b>

## HUMAN RESOURCES

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

### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Implementation of the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (Croke Park Agreement) continued in the first quarter of 2013 with the development of a Local Action Plan for the year setting out efficiency measures and reform practices which were agreed locally with trade unions.

In the second quarter in an unanticipated development Management and Unions were brought together by Government in order to agree a new National Agreement and effect more substantial cash savings in the public sector by year end in accordance with Government spending targets. The Haddington Road Agreement was published in mid-June and implemented from July 1st. The new agreement focuses mainly on pay and

productivity measures such as pay and pension reductions, freezing of increments, increased working hours and reduction in overtime. The administration of the agreement involves significant additional administrative effort locally on the part of staff in the payroll and human resources departments which is appreciated by local management.

The following HR initiatives in 2013 were either directly or indirectly related to the implementation of the Croke Park / Haddington Road Agreements and other necessary efficiency measures;

- Reduction in Pay
- Adjustment of individual incremental progression dates and annual leave allowances
- Introduction of additional working hours for all indoor staff
- Introduction of the recording of working time for all indoor staff
- Adjustment to overtime rates of pay for outdoor staff
- Preparation for the introduction in January 2014 for 50% reduction in paid illness leave (deferred to March 2014)

- Development of a new model for Performance Management and the provision of training for all staff on that model for introduction in 2014
- Consideration of workforce plans for outdoor and indoor staff
- Agreement on plan to expand the function of HR to Human Resources and Organisational Management & Development arising from a local change management initiative.



*Social Club Charity Walk 2013 in aid of JigSaw*

## **IRISH WATER**

There has been significant engagement with staff interests at a national level regarding the establishment of the new water utility Irish Water. Locally there has been engagement with staff interests on the carrying out of an Impact Assessment and the development of a Transition Plan. Offaly County Council has facilitated the secondment of 2 staff to the Irish Water programme in 2013.

## **TRAINING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Corporate level training was provided in response to service and organisational needs in 2013 insofar as was possible within the available budget. All staff were trained in the use of the new model of Performance Management Development in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. 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 other essential courses. Courses in 2013 included;

- Signing, Lighting & Guarding Update Course
- Pavement Surface Condition Course
- Occupational First Aid Refresher

- Location of Underground Services
- CORE BI Training
- CORE Personnel Training
- VDU Assessor Training
- Safe PASS
- Driver CPC Training
- CSCS Signing Lighting & Guarding - 3 day
- Managing Safely in Construction
- Chainsaw Training for Local Authority Operatives
- PMDS Line Manager Training
- PMDS Awareness Sessions
- CSCS Health & Safety @ Roadworks
- Advance Surface Dressing
- Mobile Elevated Platform

## STAFFING

Offaly County Council continues to comply with the moratorium on public service recruitment. This Council has had a policy of non-replacement of staff departing by virtue of retirement or contract expiry since September 2008 unless posts are essential and/or externally funded.

Offaly Local Authorities have sustained an almost 29% reduction in staffing levels since June 2008.

Staff who retired in 2013 were:

- ❖ Sean Forde, Light Equipment Operator
- ❖ John Joe Spain, General Operative
- ❖ Mary Hynes, Branch Librarian
- ❖ Maura Deering, Staff Officer
- ❖ Daniel Maher, Water & Sewerage Caretaker V
- ❖ Stan McKeon, Senior Executive Technician
- ❖ Donal Crowley, Foreman
- ❖ Brendan Dunne, Foreman
- ❖ Joseph Dwyer, Light Equipment Operator
- ❖ Benjamin Purcell, Roller Driver
- ❖ Joseph Connolly, General Operative
- ❖ Martin Aspell, Water & Sewerage Caretaker III
- ❖ Geraldine Flattery, Staff Officer

Geraldine Flattery, who was recently retired from Offaly Local Authorities, passed away in early 2014 and is sadly missed by their colleagues and friends in Offaly County Council.



Notwithstanding the moratorium sanction was successfully sought from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to fill the following vacancies;

- Retained Fire Fighter
- Resident Engineer
- Assistant resident Engineer
- Music Generation Development Officer
- Station Officer Fire
- Sports Inclusion Development Officer (part-time)

There were 152 applicants. 6 posts were filled.

### **STAFF WELFARE**

In the context of significant and rapid change and reduced staffing levels, HR has worked closely with the Employee Support Scheme to provide assistance to staff where required.

## INFORMATION SYSTEMS

In 2013 the Information Systems department continued implementing an energy and resource saving ICT strategy for the organisation.

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

- Continued deployment of a Green ICT policy which included:-
  - Completion of upgrade of all PCs/Laptops etc to latest Desktop Operating System and Office automation software – Windows7 and Office 2007. **At the end of the year Offaly was the only Local Authority in the country to have fully implemented both technologies.**
  - Continued 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.
- Deployment of secure backup communications link to Government Networks
- These initiatives will result in savings in communications, energy and maintenance costs in line with the National Energy Efficiency Plan and a reduction of the organisation's carbon footprint in the medium term
- Deployment of ARCGIS as the organisation's strategic GIS platform.
- Relocation of the Council's ICT Disaster Recovery facility from the Central Fire Station to the ICT room of the newly opened Library HQ.
- Completion of tender process regarding use of mobile telephony, resulting in ongoing savings for the organisation
- Continued development of online portal requirements for the National Waste Collection Permits Office, now based in Áras an Chontae

- ICT preparatory work for the deployment of national reform initiatives such as Irish Water, Shared Payroll, Amalgamation/Integration of Town Councils.
- Participation in the organisation's Change Management Initiative to develop improved business processes for implementation in 2014.



*IT staff in two teams completed the Cork Marathon in aid of the 3T's – Turn the Tide Charity in June 2013. The relay teams finished in 4hrs-42 mins and 4hrs-50 mins.*

# TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL

**Director of Services:** Declan Kirrane  
**Town Clerk:** Martin Daly  
**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 Laurence Byrne (Cathaoirleach to June 2013)
- Councillor Paddy Rowland (Mayor from June 2013)
- Councillor Sinead Dooley
- Councillor Molly Buckley
- Councillor Declan Harvey
- Councillor Brendan Killeavy
- Councillor Tony McCormack
- Councillor Tommy McKeigue
- Councillor Sean O'Brien

## 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:

<b>Laois &amp; Offaly Education &amp; Training Board:</b>	Cllr. Brendan Killeavy Cllr. Laurence Byrne
<b>A.M.A.I.:</b>	Cllr. Laurence Byrne Cllr. Sean O'Brien
<b>Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.:</b>	Cllr. Tommy McKeigue
<b>Tullamore Leisure Ltd:</b>	Cllr. Molly Buckley Cllr. Paddy Rowland Cllr. Sean O'Brien

<b>Offaly County Development Board:</b>	Cllr. Tony McCormack
<b>Tullamore Sports Link Ltd.:</b>	Cllr. Tommy McKeigue
<b>Tullamore/Chandler Sister Cities:</b>	Cllr. Molly Buckley Cllr. Tony McCormack
<b>Tullamore Arts Centre Ltd:</b>	Cllr. Tommy McKeigue Cllr. Declan Harvey
<b>Environment &amp; Water Services Strategic Policy Committee:</b>	Cllr. Brendan Killeavy
<b>Transportation &amp; Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee:</b>	Cllr. Paddy Rowland

- Progressment of Refugee Resettlement Programme, involving provision of social housing for 31 Afghan refugees.
- Supporting of community festivals & events - the Christmas Market, Cannonball Festival, The Gathering events.
- Provision of continued support to the Jigsaw Project.
- Hosting of civic receptions for the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Tullamore Credit Union; & Fr. Michael Kelly for his international contribution to education and health in the developing world.



*Bridge at Clontarf Road, part of the Grand Canal Project.*

### HIGHLIGHTS OF 2013:

- Completion of the Grand Canal Project.
- Maintaining street cleaning services, thereby contributing to the town reaching 8th place nationally and maintaining the town's 'Clean to European Norms' status in the IBAL Litter League.
- Retaining a silver medal in the annual Tidy Towns Competition, and achieving 300 marks for the first time.
- Launching of Business Incentive and Sponser Roundabout Schemes.
- Leasing of 20 social housing units.





*Pat Gallagher, County Manager Offaly Local Authorities; Paddy Rowland, Mayor Tullamore Town Council; Breda Flynn, President Tullamore Credit Union; & Martin Daly, Town Clerk Tullamore Town Council at Civic Reception in September 2013.*



*Tullamore native Fr. Michael Kelly speaking at Civic Reception in November 2013.*

### Payments Made to Tullamore Town Council Members in 2013

Name	Representational payments	Monthly Allowance	Conference Expenses - Home	Conferences - Fees	Conference Expenses - Abroad	Chairperson's Allowance	Mobile Phone Allowance
Molly Buckley	€ 0.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 485.00	€ 320.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00
Laurence Byrne	€ 4,161.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 421.00	€ 175.00	€ 0.00	€3,375.00	€ 0.00
Tommy McKeigue	€ 0.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 618.00	€ 490.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00
Sean O'Brien	€ 4,161.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 1,826.00	€ 495.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 347.00
Sinead Dooley	€ 0.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 293.00	€ 200.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00
Paddy Rowland	€ 0.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 952.00	€ 320.00	€ 0.00	€ 3,375.00	€ 0.00
Brendan Killeavy	€ 4,161.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 460.00	€ 175.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00
Tony McCormack	€ 4,161.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 537.00	€145.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00
Declan Harvey	€ 4,161.00	€ 2,036.00	€ 396.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 268.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 20,805.00</b>	<b>€ 18,324.00</b>	<b>€ 5,988.00</b>	<b>€ 2,320.00</b>	<b>€ 0.00</b>	<b>€ 6,750</b>	<b>€ 615.00</b>

Conferences	Date	Location	Attendees
Tourism Conference	17 - 19/01/13	Ennistymon	Cllr Sean O'Brien Cllr Declan Harvey
AMAI Conference	15 - 16/02/13	New Ross	Cllr Molly Buckley Cllr Tommy McKeigue Cllr Sean O'Brien Cllr Sinead Dooley
Local Elections 2014 Conference	03 - 05/05/13	Letterkenny	Cllr Paddy Rowland Cllr Tony McCormack
Local Elections 2014 Conference	12 - 13/07/13	Skibbereen	Cllr Sean O'Brien
Training Seminar on Homelessness	31/07 - 01/08/13	Claregalway	Cllr Molly Buckley
AMAI Conference	12 - 14/09/13	Clonakilty	Cllr Laurence Byrne Cllr Sean O'Brien Cllr Paddy Rowland Cllr Brendan Killeavey
Irish Council for Social Housing Conference	18 - 19/09/13	Wexford	Cllr Tommy McKeigue

# EDENDERRY TOWN COUNCIL

**Director of Services:**  
**A/Town Clerk:**  
**Senior Executive Engineer:**

**Declan Conlon**  
**Therese O'Meara**  
**Damien Grennan**

## MONTHLY MEETING

Monthly Meeting of Councillors are held on the second Wednesday of each month in the Town Hall, Edenderry at 7.30pm.

## ELECTED MEMBERS OF EDENDERRY TOWN COUNCIL

- Councillor Patricia Brady, Fine Gael
- Councillor Mary Breen, Fianna Fáil
- Councillor Noel Cribbin, Non Party
- Councillor John Foley, Non Party
- Councillor Liam Hogan, Fine Gael
- Councillor Fergus Mc Donnell (Leas Cathaoirleach), Non Party
- Councillor Jim Murrin, Non Party
- Councillor Finian O'Neill, (Cathaoirleach), Fianna Fáil
- Councillor Declan Leddin, Labour

## REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES

### A.M.A.I.:

Cllr. Fergus McDonnell  
Cllr. Liam Hogan

### Barrow Drainage Board:

Cllr. Finian O'Neill

## ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2013

### "DOING BUSINESS IN EDENDERRY"

The main achievement of the members this year was the development of a promotional brochure on Edenderry, called "Doing Business in Edenderry". This brochure was created with the help of David Minton, Offaly County Council's Economic Development section, Orla Martin, A/CEO, County Enterprise Board, the Area Manager/Director of Services and the Town Clerk. It is hoped that once the redevelopment of the R402 is fully completed in 2014 that Edenderry town will benefit from

being approx. a 14 minute drive to the Enfield motorway.

### **OUTREACH OFFICE - OFFALY COUNTY ENTERPRISE BOARD.**

Orla Martin A/CEO of Offaly County Enterprise Board has commenced an outreach office in Edenderry Town Council every Tuesday morning to provide support, advice and assistance to existing and potential business in the area. There has been significant take up on this service to date and in some cases Orla has visited premises in order to get a feel for the business in question.



*Left to right: Orla Martin, A/CEO, County Enterprise Board, Declan Conlon Area Manager, Cllr. Finian O'Neill Cathaoirleach, Therese O'Meara Acting Town Clerk and David Minton, Economic Development Officer, Offaly County Council*

Events organized with the help of the Outreach service; **Enterprise Focus/Enterprise Week**; events included a Business Breakfast for those seeking funding options for business. Finance and marketing clinics were available in the Town Hall where 50 minute mentoring sessions were offered. A networking event was held in the Courthouse section of the Town Hall, Edenderry where guest speaker **Pauric O'Maille** creator of **Smácht** gave a very motivational talk advising people how to achieve their goals faster and more effectively. This event saw the launch of "Doing Business in Edenderry". Edenderry Library services launched their library supports for businesses during this week which include a dedicated section of the library (part funded by OCEB) which included the use of ipads for researching, business books, e-books and e-resources free of charge. Enterprise Ireland's Denis Duggan provided an Export Business Clinic for those interested in exporting.

Other events during the year included:

**Procurement Workshop** for businesses who wished to tender for work with Offaly County Council and a **Retail Programme** which was run over three weeks providing assistance to local businesses in areas such as customer services and link selling, visual merchandising and social media.

### **LEINSTER FLEADH 2013**

July 2013 was a very exciting time for Edenderry with the arrival of the Leinster Fleadh which was last held in



Edenderry in 1963. There was an action packed week of events organized by the Fleadh committee which brought large crowds to the town. The members of Edenderry Town Council approved a donation of €1,000 to the committee to help towards running these events. The members would like to thank the staff of Offaly County Council for the time and effort that they also contributed to the events during that week.



*Christmas 2013 at Edenderry Town Hall*

### **CHRISTMAS IN EDENDERRY 2013**

It is a tradition for Offaly County Council to erect a Christmas tree, a crib and lighting around the Town Hall in Edenderry each Christmas. This year saw the planting of smaller trees to the front of the town hall and the installation of lighting in addition to their yearly work. This project was part funded by Offaly County Council, the Lions Club and Offaly Local Development Company together with a donation from Edenderry Town Council. There was a hugely positive reaction to the work and it is hoped that the trees and lights can be extended further down the town in the years to come. As usual the Council's own staff played a substantial role in bringing Christmas to the town hall again this year.

### **DONATIONS**

Edenderry Town Council continued to support all aspects of life in Edenderry; in this regard donations were given to Edenderry St Patrick's Day Parade Committee, Edenderry Community Enterprise Centre, Edenderry Shotokan Academy, Edenderry CCE, Edenderry Coarse Angling Club, Edenderry against substance abuse and Edenderry Christmas Lights committee.



*Donation to St Patrick's Day Parade Committee*



*Donation to CCE & Christmas Lights Committee*



*Back Row: from left to right, Cllr Jim Murrin, Cllr Noel Cribbin, Cllr Declan Leddin, Cllr John Foley, Cllr Patricia Brady, Cllr Mary Breen, Cllr Liam Hogan.*

*Front Row: from left to right; Declan Conlon, Area Manager, Therese O'Meara, Acting Town Clerk, Cllr Finian O'Neill (Cathaoirleach) and Cllr Fergus Mc Donnell (Leas Cathaoirleach).*

### Payments Made to Edenderry Town Council Members in 2013

Name	Monthly Allowance	Expenses Conferences, incl. Conf. Fees, and Travel	Chairperson's Allowance	Foreign Travel
Patricia Brady	€ 1,018.00	€ 639.33		
Mary Breen	€ 1,018.00	€ 658.38	€ 700.00	€ 2,234.00
Noel Cribbin	€ 1,018.00	€ 576.57		
John Foley	€ 1,018.00	€ 0.00		
Liam Hogan	€ 1,018.00	€ 1,381.30		
Declan Leddin	€ 509.00	€ 0.00		
Fergus Mc Donnell	€ 1,018.00	€ 1,312.25		
Jim Murrin	€ 1,018.00	€ 0.00		
Finian O'Neill	€ 1,018.00	€ 949.87		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 8,653.00</b>	<b>€ 5,517.70</b>	<b>€ 700.00</b>	<b>€ 2,234.00</b>



# BIRR TOWN COUNCIL

<b><i>Cathaoirleach:</i></b>	<b>Councillor John Carroll</b>
<b><i>Director of Services:</i></b>	<b>Frank Heslin</b>
<b><i>Town Clerk:</i></b>	<b>James Hogan</b>
<b><i>Town Engineer:</i></b>	<b>Anne Healy</b>

## 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

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 and 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.

## REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES:

### Vocational Educational Committee:

Cllr. John Carroll  
Cllr. Bernadette Fanneran



<b>A.M.A.I.:</b>	Cllr. Michael Campbell Cllr. Noel Russell
<b>Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.:</b>	Cllr. Michael Loughnane
<b>Offaly Strategic Policy Committee:</b>	Cllr. Michael Loughnane
<b>Oxmantown Hall, Theatre &amp; Arts Centre:</b>	Cllr. Bernadette Fanneran Cllr. Denis Tierney

- ❖ Road restoration in Woodlane Close Housing Estate.
- ❖ Drainage works on the Roscrea Road.
- ❖ Upgrading the footpath on the Roscrea Road.
- ❖ Repairing footpaths in Burkes Hill
- ❖ Repairing footpaths in Cappaneale.
- ❖ Realignment of kerbing at Spinners Corner.
- ❖ Realignment of kerbing at Cappaneale.
- ❖ Completed the enhancement works at Cornmarket Square - former Marian Hall Carpark.
- ❖ Repairing stone wall on High Street.
- ❖ Lowered the stone wall on the Railway road beside Oxmantown Bridge.
- ❖ Energy efficiency works on 61 houses in Mc Auley, Presentation Place, Ashbrook, Bulfin Park and Fairview estates.
- ❖ Pre-letting repairs carried out on 10 houses.
- ❖ Painted all OPD's in Mill street, Bulfin Park and Brendan's Villas

## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF 2013 ACTIVITIES

2013 was another positive year for both the Council and Birr town with a number of important projects completed and a continuation of the visual enhancement of the town.

Among the main highlights of the year were:-

- ❖ Road restoration at New Road East
- ❖ Road restoration on Back Lanes – The Crescent
- ❖ Road restoration in Woods Row.
- ❖ Road restoration in Woodlands Park Housing Estate.

- ❖ Major refurbishment works were carried out on 1 house.
- ❖ Upgrading the old Workhouse Graveyard including hedge cutting, grass cutting, new fencing and repairs to the monument.
- ❖ Worked in partnership with Birr Tidy Towns and TUS on projects such as street cleaning, gardening and grass cutting.
- ❖ Maintaining the housing stock.
- ❖ Maintaining street cleaning services in the town.
- ❖ Sculpture erected on Tullamore road under the Per Cent for Art Scheme.
- ❖ Organised a presentation function to acknowledge all the Community groups in the town.
- ❖ Provided financial support to various groups in the town such as Birr Vintage Week Committee, the Offline Film Festival, Birr Leisure Centre, Birr Chamber of Commerce, Birr Theatre and Arts Centre and the Heritage Council.

- ❖ Hosted a Civic Reception to honour camogie player, Sheila Sullivan and rugby player Peter Dooley.
- ❖ Hosted a Civic Reception to acknowledge the link between Birr, The Leinster Regiment and Ledgenem, Belgium, and to mark the visit of a delegation from Ledgenem to Birr.



*Official Opening of Cornmarket Square*

# Service Indicators 2013

<b>Housing</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>H1</b>	<b>Housing Vacancies</b>		
	A. Total number of dwellings in local authority stock	1,749	1,737
	B. Total number of dwellings excluding those subject to major refurbishment projects	1,738	1,732
	C. Overall % of dwellings that are empty (excluding those subject to major refurbishment).	2.01%	1.27%
	D. % of empty dwellings unavailable for letting	57.14%	95.45%
	E. % of empty dwellings available for letting	42.86%	18.18%
<b>H2</b>	<b>Average Time Taken to Re-let Available Dwellings</b>		
	The average time taken (in weeks) from notification of date of vacation of dwelling to the date when all necessary repairs are carried out which are deemed necessary to re-let the dwelling.	9.26	8.28
	The average time taken (in weeks) from works (above) being completed to the date of the first rent debit.	4.66	4.52
<b>H3</b>	<b>Housing Repairs</b>		
Number of repairs completed as a percentage of the number of valid repair requests received.	97.87%	97.77%	
<b>H4</b>	<b>Traveller Accommodation</b>		
Total number of Traveller families accommodated as a percentage of the targets set in the local Traveller accommodation programme.	14.0%	57.89%	
<b>H5</b>	<b>Enforcement of standards in private rented sector</b>		
	A. Total number of registered tenancies	2,400	2,466
	B. No. of dwelling units inspected	40	62
	C. No. of inspections carried out	64	102
	D. Number of dwellings inspected as % of registered tenancies (i.e. B as a % of A)	1.66%	2.51%

<b>H6</b>	<b>Grants to adapt housing for the needs of people with a disability</b>		
	A. Average time taken (in weeks) to process applications under the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme, including any necessary inspection(s), from the date of receipt of a valid application to the date of decision on the application.	<b>69</b>	<b>28</b>
	B. Average time taken (in weeks) to process applications under Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability, including any necessary inspection(s), from the date of receipt of a valid application, to the date of decision on the application.	<b>75.2</b>	<b>51.09</b>
<b>H7</b>	<b>Pre-Tenancy Familiarisation Courses</b>		
	A. Total number of new local authority tenants.	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>
	B. % of new local authority tenants who have been offered pre-tenancy familiarisation courses.	<b>85.51%</b>	<b>93.42%</b>

<b>Roads</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>R1</b>	<b>Road Restoration Programme</b>		
	A. No. of kilometres of local & regional roads improved & maintained under the Restoration Programme per annum.	<b>143.1</b>	<b>87.452</b>
	B. No. of kilometres of local & regional roads constructed under the specific improvements grants scheme per annum.	<b>5.56</b>	<b>1.30</b>

**Motor  
Taxation**
**Indicator**
**2013**
**2012**

<b>M1</b>	<b>Number of Motor Tax Transactions which</b>		
	A. are dealt with over the counter	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>50,544</b>
	B. are dealt with by post	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>7,910</b>
	C. are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>31,886</b>
	<b>Percentage of motor tax transactions which</b>		
	D. are dealt with over the counter	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>55.95%</b>
	E. are dealt with by post	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>8.76%</b>
	F. are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>35.30%</b>
<b>M2</b>	<b>Time Taken to Process Motor Tax Postal Applications</b>		
	<b>Number of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) from receipt of the application</b>		
	A. On the same day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>7,087</b>
	B. On the 2nd or 3rd day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>722</b>
	C. On the 4th or 5th day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>12</b>
	D. Over 5 days	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>89</b>
	<b>Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) from receipt of the application</b>		
	E. On the same day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>89.60%</b>
	F. On the 2nd or 3rd day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>9.13%</b>
	G. On the 4th or 5th day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>0.15%</b>
	H. Over 5 days	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>1.13%</b>



<b>M3</b>	<b>Time Taken to Process Driving Licence Applications</b>		
	<b>Number of driving licence applications which are dealt with from receipt of the application</b>		
	A. On the same day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>2,646</b>
	B. On the 2nd or 3rd day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>1,690</b>
	C. On the 4th or 5th day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>694</b>
	D. Over 5 days	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>6,129</b>
	<b>Percentage of driving licence applications which are dealt with from receipt of the application</b>		
	E. On the same day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>23.71%</b>
	F. On the 2nd or 3rd day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>15.14%</b>
	G. On the 4th or 5th day	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>6.22%</b>
H. Over 5 days	<b>Not Available</b>	<b>54.92%</b>	
<b>M4</b>	<b>Public opening hours:</b>		
	Average number of opening hours per week	<b>27.4</b>	<b>29</b>

*Note: The national returns for M1, M2, and M3 will be forwarded by the VRU directly to the LGMA for onward transmission to local authorities.*

## Environmental Services

Water	Indicator	2013	2012
<b>E1</b>	<b>Unaccounted for Water</b>		
	Unaccounted water (UFW) as a % of total volume of water supplied under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for.	45.50%	47.40%
<b>E2</b>	<b>Drinking Water Analysis*</b>		
	<b>Percentage of drinking water analyses results in compliance with statutory requirements with regards to</b>		
	A. public schemes	Not Available	Not Available
	B. private schemes (where appropriate)	Not Available	Not Available

*Note: The national return for E2 will be forwarded by the EPA directly to the LGMA for onward transmission to local authorities.*

*The EPA report on Drinking Water Quality is published on an annual basis and reports on a retrospective basis. The data in the 2012 EPA report, where available, will provide the basis for the drinking water data to be included in the Service Indicator Report for 2013. That is, the data will be in respect of 2012 and a note to this effect will be included in the Service Indicator Report.*

*Extract from LG03-2014 L.A. Service Indicators Guidelines 2013, issued March 2014*

Waste Management		Indicator	2013	2012	
<b>E3</b>	<b>Waste Segregation</b>				
	<i>Percentage of households who receive a waste collection service and are provided with segregated waste collection for:</i>				
	A. Dry recyclables		<b>Not Available</b>	98.00%	
	B. Organics		<b>Not Available</b>	23.46%	
<b>E4</b>	<b>Household Waste Sent for Recycling</b>				
	<i>Household waste collected from kerbside which is sent for recycling</i>				
	A. Percentage		<b>Not Available</b>	31.58%	
	B. Tonnage		<b>Not Available</b>	4,561	
	C. Tonnage of household waste recycled, which arises from waste collected from recycling facilities (i.e. bring banks, civic amenity sites, transfer stations and other recycling facilities)			2,590	
<b>E5</b>	<b>Household Waste Sent for Landfill</b>				
	<i>Household waste collected which is sent to landfill</i>				
	A. Percentage		<b>Not Available</b>	68.40%	
	B. Tonnage		<b>Not Available</b>	9,880	
<b>E6</b>	<b>Recycling facilities</b>				
	The <b>total number of Bring Sites</b> in the local authority area		42	44	
	The <b>total number of Civic Amenity Centres</b> in the local authority area		3	3	
	<b>Glass</b>	The number of <b>Bring Sites</b> for recycling <b>Glass</b>		42	44
		The number of <b>Civic Amenity Centres</b> for recycling <b>Glass</b>		3	3
		The <b>total number</b> of facilities for recycling <b>Glass</b>		45	47
		The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population		2.93	3.06

<b>E6 cont./.</b>	<b>Cans</b>	The number of <b>Bring Sites</b> for recycling <b>Cans</b>	42	44
		The number of <b>Civic Amenity Centres</b> for recycling <b>Cans</b>	3	3
		The <b>total number</b> of facilities for recycling <b>Cans</b>	45	47
		The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	2.93	3.06
	<b>Textiles</b>	The number of <b>Bring Sites</b> for recycling <b>Textiles</b>	13	19
		The number of <b>Civic Amenity Centres</b> for recycling <b>Textiles</b>	3	3
		The <b>total number</b> of facilities for recycling <b>Textiles</b>	16	22
		The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	1.04	1.43
	<b>Batteries</b>	The number of <b>Bring Sites</b> for recycling <b>Batteries</b>	0	0
		The number of <b>Civic Amenity Centres</b> for recycling <b>Batteries</b>	3	3
		The <b>total number</b> of facilities for recycling <b>Batteries</b>	3	3
		The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.20	0.20
	<b>Oils</b>	The number of <b>Bring Sites</b> for recycling <b>Oils</b>	0	0
		The number of <b>Civic Amenity Centres</b> for recycling <b>Oils</b>	3	3
		The <b>total number</b> of facilities for recycling <b>Oils</b>	3	3
		The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.20	0.20
	<b>Other Materials</b>	The number of <b>Bring Sites</b> for recycling <b>Other Materials</b>	0	0
		The number of <b>Civic Amenity Centres</b> for recycling <b>Other Materials</b>	3	3
		The <b>total number</b> of facilities for recycling <b>Other Materials</b>	3	3
		The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population	0.20	0.20

*Note 1: The national returns for E3, E4a, E4b and E5 will be submitted by NWCPO directly to the LGMA for onward transmission to local authorities.*

*Note 2: Relating to the national returns for E3, E4 and E5, for 2012. All data for 2012 has been compiled directly by the National Waste Collection Permit Office from Waste Collection Permit Annual Returns. The methodology for calculating these Service Indicators has been standardised and may result in some variation from previous years. As a result, the quality of the data has improved but is not directly comparable with 2011 or previous years*

<b>Litter</b>		<b>Indicator</b>		<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>E7</b>	<b>Litter Prevention and Enforcement</b>				
	A. Number of full-time litter wardens			4	3
	B. Number of part-time litter wardens			2	2
	C. Number of litter wardens (both full and part-time) per 5,000 population			0.39	0.33
	D. Number of on-the spot fines issued			72	84
	E. Number of on-the-spot fines paid			25	31
	F. Number of prosecution cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines			5	4
	G. Number of prosecutions secured in cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines			0	4
	H. Number of notices issued (under sections 9,15,16,17 and 20 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997)			86	66
	I. Total Number of prosecutions taken (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)			5	4
	J. Number of prosecutions secured (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)			0	2
	<i>Percentage (%) of areas within the local authority that are:*</i>				
	K. unpolluted (i.e. litter free)			<b>Not Available</b>	12.00%
	L. slightly polluted with litter			<b>Not Available</b>	62.00%
	M. moderately polluted with litter			<b>Not Available</b>	24.00%
	N. significantly polluted with litter			<b>Not Available</b>	2.00%
O. grossly polluted with litter			<b>Not Available</b>	0.00%	

Note: For columns **K.** to **O.** information on the National Litter Monitoring Pollution Results will be forwarded by **TES Consulting** directly to the **LGMA** for onward transmission to local authorities.



<b>E8</b>	<b>Environmental Complaints and Enforcement</b>		
	A. Total number of cases subject to complaints concerning environmental pollution (relating to waste, litter, water pollution, noise pollution, air pollution)	<b>800</b>	<b>683</b>
	B. Number of complaints investigated	<b>800</b>	<b>756</b>
	C. Number of complaints resolved where no further action was necessary.	<b>681</b>	<b>671</b>
	D. Number of enforcement procedures taken	<b>447**</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>E9</b>	<b>Percentage (%) of Schools participating in environmental campaigns</b>		
	A. primary schools	<b>93.75%</b>	<b>93.75%</b>
	B. secondary schools	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**\*\*446** total letters issued by Offaly County Council, including warning letters and enforcement notices

Fire Service	Indicator	2013	2012
<b>F1</b>	<b>Fire Service Mobilisation</b>		
	<i>Average time, in minutes to mobilise fire brigades in respect of fire:</i>		
	A. Full-time stations	N/A	N/A
	B. Part-time stations	5.39	5.55
	<i>Average time, in minutes to mobilise fire brigades in respect of all other emergency incidents:</i>		
	C. Full-time stations	N/A	N/A
	D. Part-time stations	4.87	5.65
<b>F2</b>	<b>Percentage of Attendances at Scenes</b>		
	<i>Percentage of attendances at scenes in respect of fire where:</i>		
	A. First attendance is at scene with 10 minutes (0-10)	54.55%	54.18%
	B. First attendance is at scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes (10-20)	37.17%	37.69%
	C. First attendance is at scene after 20 minutes (>20)	8.28%	8.14%
	<i>Percentage of attendances at scenes in respect of all other emergency incidents where:</i>		
	D. First attendance is at scene with 10 minutes (0-10)	47.11%	34.45%
E. First attendance is at scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes (10-20)	42.15%	52.10%	
F. First attendance is at scene after 20 minutes (>20)	10.74%	13.45%	
<b>F3</b>	<b>Fire Prevention</b>		
	A. Total number of fire safety certificate applications received	47	46
	B. Total number of fire safety certificate applications processed (including cases deemed invalid)	39	38
	C. Total number applications deemed invalid	0	1

P1	Planning Applications - Decision Making			
	<b>Individual Houses</b>	<b>Number of</b> applications decided	61	81
	<b>Number of</b> decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	27	33	
	<b>Number of</b> decisions which required the submission of Further Information	34	48	
	<b>Number of</b> decisions where an Extension of Time was agreed to by the applicant [Section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000]	0	0	
	<b>Average length</b> of time (in days) to decide an application where Further Information was sought	73.41	77.66	
	<b>Percentage</b> of Applications granted	90.16%	93.83%	
	<b>Percentage</b> of Applications refused	9.89%	6.17%	
	<b>Percentage of cases</b> where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	0.00%	83.33%	
	<b>Percentage of cases</b> where the decision was reversed, by An Bord Pleanala	100.00%	16.67%	
<b>Housing Developments</b>	<b>Number of</b> applications decided	2	2	
	<b>Number of</b> decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	0	1	
	<b>Number of</b> decisions which required the submission of Further Information	2	1	
	<b>Number of</b> decisions where an Extension of Time was agreed to by the applicant [Section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000]	0	0	
	<b>Average length</b> of time (in days) to decide an application where Further Information was sought	79.50	78.00	
	<b>Percentage</b> of Applications granted	100.00%	50.00%	
	<b>Percentage</b> of Applications refused	0.00%	50.00%	
	<b>Percentage of cases</b> where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	0.00%	100.00%	
	<b>Percentage of cases</b> where the decision was reversed, by An Bord Pleanala	0.00%	0.00%	

<i>P1 cont./.</i>	<b>Applications NOT requiring Environment Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Number of applications decided</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>215</b>
		<b>Number of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>148</b>
		<b>Number of decisions which required the submission of Further Information</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>
		<b>Number of decisions where an Extension of Time was agreed to by the applicant [Section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000]</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>Average length of time (in days) to decide an application where Further Information was sought</b>	<b>73.56</b>	<b>75.87</b>
		<b>Percentage of Applications granted</b>	<b>93.64%</b>	<b>95.35%</b>
		<b>Percentage of Applications refused</b>	<b>6.36%</b>	<b>4.65%</b>
		<b>Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala</b>	<b>80.00%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>
		<b>Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed, by An Bord Pleanala</b>	<b>20.00%</b>	<b>33.33%</b>
	<b>Applications Requiring Environment Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Number of applications decided</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
		<b>Number of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1*</b>
		<b>Number of decisions which required the submission of Further Information</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3*</b>
		<b>Number of decisions where an Extension of Time was agreed to by the applicant [Section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000]</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>Average length of time (in days) to decide an application where Further Information was sought</b>	<b>108.75</b>	<b>88.00</b>
		<b>Percentage of Applications granted</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
		<b>Percentage of Applications refused</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
		<b>Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala</b>	<b>66.37%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
		<b>Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed, by An Bord Pleanala</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

*This increase in the time taken to decide on Further Information, is as a result of a change in regulations, which allows for an increase in the time allowed for a LA to consider FI in applications which have an Environmental Impact Assessment.*

<b>P2</b>	<b>Planning Enforcement</b>		
	A. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were investigated	<b>82</b>	<b>60</b>
	B. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were dismissed	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>
	C. Total number of cases subject to complaints that were resolved through negotiations	<b>54</b>	<b>21</b>
	D. Number of enforcement procedures taken through warning letters	<b>111</b>	<b>73</b>
	E. Number of enforcement procedures taken through enforcement notices	<b>33</b>	<b>19</b>
	F. Number of prosecutions	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>P3</b>	<b>Planning Public Opening hours</b>		
	Average number of opening hours per week	<b>32.50</b>	<b>32.17</b>
<b>P4</b>	<b>Pre-Planning Consultation</b>		
	A. Number of pre-planning consultation meetings held	<b>325</b>	<b>320</b>
	B. Average length of time (in days) from request for consultation with the local authority to actual formal meeting for pre-planning consultation	<b>7.61</b>	<b>7.44</b>
<b>P5</b>	<b>New Buildings Inspected</b>		
	Buildings inspected as a <b>percentage</b> of new buildings notified to the local authority	<b>47.54%</b>	<b>26.19%</b>



<b>P6</b>	<b><i>Taking Estates in Charge</i></b>		
	A. The number of residential estates for which the planning permission has expired, in respect of which formal written requests for taking in charge (from residents or developers), were on hands at the beginning of the year.	<b>43</b>	<b>50</b>
	B. Number of estates that were taken in charge in the year.	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>
	C. Number of dwellings in respect of estates that were taken in charge in the year.	<b>384</b>	<b>531</b>
	D. % of residential estates for which planning permission has expired (as above) not completed to the satisfaction of the planning authority in line with the planning permission.	<b>30.23%</b>	<b>46.00%</b>
	E. Number of estates in respect of which enforcement action was taken in the year in question and/or the bond was called in.	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>
	F. Number of estates in respect of which works were undertaken by the authority to bring the estate to taking in charge standard.	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

Revenue	Indicator	2013	2012
<b>Rev1</b>	<b>House Rent</b>		
	A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from House Rent	<b>84.79%</b>	<b>85.82%</b>
	<b>Percentage of arrears:</b>		
	B. Up to 4 weeks old	<b>4.18%</b>	<b>5.20%</b>
	C. 4-6 weeks old	<b>4.76%</b>	<b>4.80%</b>
	D. 6-12 weeks old	<b>7.35%</b>	<b>7.48%</b>
	E. More than 12 weeks old	<b>83.71%</b>	<b>82.52%</b>
<b>Rev 2</b>	<b>Housing Loans</b>		
	A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from Housing Loans.	<b>60.44%</b>	<b>59.23%</b>
	<b>Percentage of arrears:</b>		
	B. Up to 4 weeks old	<b>2.33%</b>	<b>2.32%</b>
	C. 4-6 weeks old	<b>1.13%</b>	<b>1.87%</b>
	D. 6-12 weeks old	<b>1.35%</b>	<b>1.34%</b>
	E. More than 12 weeks old	<b>95.19%</b>	<b>94.48%</b>
<b>Rev 3</b>	<b>Commercial Rates</b>		
	Amount collected at year end as a <b>percentage (%)</b> of amount due	<b>81.80%</b>	<b>81.80%</b>
<b>Rev 4</b>	<b>Refuse Charges</b>		
	<b>Percentage (%)</b> of households paying refuse charges (including waivers) at year end	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>Rev 5</b>	<b>Non-Domestic Water Charges</b>		
	Amount Collected at year-end as a <b>percentage (%)</b> of amount due	<b>62.36%</b>	<b>62.36%</b>

Corporate Issues	Indicator	2013	2012
<b>C1</b>	<b>Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through</b>		
	A. certified leave	<b>3.89%</b>	<b>3.80%</b>
	B. uncertified leave	<b>0.27%</b>	<b>0.33%</b>
<b>C2</b>	<b>Staff Training and Development</b>		
	Expenditure on Training & Development as a percentage of total payroll costs	<b>5.65%</b>	<b>2.83%</b>

Library  
Service

## Indicator

2013

2012

		2013	2012
<b>L1</b>	<b>Library Public Opening Hours</b>		
	A. <b>Average number</b> of opening hours per week for full-time libraries	37	38
	B. <b>Average number</b> of opening hours per week for part-time libraries (where applicable)	9	12
	C. <b>Percentage</b> (%) of full-time libraries that have lunchtime openings.	100.00%	100.00%
	D. <b>Percentage</b> (%) of full-time libraries that have evening openings.	100.00%	100.00%
E. <b>Percentage</b> (%) of full-time libraries that have Saturday openings.	100.00%	100.00%	
<b>L2</b>	<b>Library Visits</b>		
	Number of visits to full-time libraries per 1,000 population	3,489.14	2,848.70
<b>L3</b>	<b>Library Stock</b>		
	A. Annual expenditure on stock per head of population (county/city wide)	1.43	1.43
	<i>Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for:</i>		
	B. Books	3.21	2.81
C. Other items	0.67	0.43	
<b>L4</b>	<b>Internet Access through Libraries</b>		
	Number of internet sessions provided per 1,000 population	1,745.54	538.63

<b>Recreational Services</b>		<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Rec 1</b>	<b>Children's Playgrounds</b>			
	<i>Number of children's playgrounds per 1,000 population:</i>			
	A. directly provided by the local authority		<b>0.160</b>	<b>0.160</b>
	B. facilitated by the local authority		<b>0.104</b>	<b>0.070</b>
<b>Rec 2</b>	<b>Local Authority-Facilitated Leisure Facilities</b>			
	Number of visitors to local authority facilitated leisure facilities per 1,000 population		<b>1,081.80</b>	<b>1,547.13</b>

<b>Community Participation</b>		<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>CP 1</b>	<b>Participation in local Youth Council/Comhairle na n-Óg scheme</b>			
	<b>Percentage (%) of local schools and youth groups</b> involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na n-Óg scheme		<b>92.86%</b>	<b>85.71%</b>
<b>CP 2</b>	<b>Groups Registered with the Community &amp; Voluntary Forum</b>			
	Number of groups registered with the Community & Voluntary Forum		<b>435</b>	<b>435</b>





