



**Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council**

CUNTAS BUISÉADACHTA 2016

DRAFT BUDGET 2016

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CHUIG GACH BALL DEN CHOMHAIRLE
DRAFT BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 2016

To: The Cathaoirleach and each Member of Galway County Council

Re: Draft Budget for financial year ending 31st December 2016

Submitted in accordance with Section 103, Local Government Act 2001 (as amended)

Dear Member,

I enclose, for your consideration, the Draft Budget for 2016, together with a report detailing the main provisions outlined therein and a summary report from the Directors of Service in respect of activities in their respective functional areas which is submitted as an annual progress report in respect of the Corporate Plan.

In accordance with the statutory requirement issues relating to the preparation of the Draft Budget were considered at meetings of the Corporate Policy Group held on 17th July, 23rd September & 16th November 2015.

The Council considered and made its determination on the Local Property Tax adjustment at its meeting held on 28th September 2015 and each of the Municipal Districts considered the Budgetary Plan for each Municipal District at a series of meetings held between 2nd November 2015 and 10th November 2015.

The Council may by resolution amend the Draft Budget but shall adopt the Draft Budget, with or without amendment, and determine, in accordance with the Budget so adopted, the annual rate on valuation to be levied and where appropriate have regard to the base year adjustment – determined in accordance with Section 29 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

The Council is required to complete the statutory process within a period of 14 days. This allows, for the adjournment, if necessary of the statutory meeting which is scheduled for 27th November 2015, provided the process is completed by 11th December 2015.

Base Year Adjustment

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 made statutory provision for the bridging of any gap between the County rate and the rate that was applied in any former Town Council area. The methodology was by means of a Base Year Adjustment and the merging of the two rates over a period of time not to exceed 10 years.

There is a further provision which prohibits the Council from raising the County Rate for the period of the adjustment. Given that it is 7 years since the County Rate has increased the retention of this position for a further extended period would be unsustainable.

This aspect of the budget issue was highlighted during the budgetary process and in the budget report last year and was discussed with the Corporate Policy Group on a number of occasions.

The budget for 2016 includes a base year adjustment for the Ballinasloe town rate. As previously stated the County rate cannot be increased during the adjustment period. In 2016 the rate being proposed for the County (excluding Ballinasloe) is €66.59 which is still the same as the rate applied in 2009 while the rate in Ballinasloe will increase from €52.00 to €55.00 which is the rate that applied in the County generally in 2004 (54.12). The affect on Ballinasloe business will be that for almost 50% of business the increase will be less than €105 per annum (€2 per week) , for 60% of business it would be less than €152 per annum (€3 per week) while for almost 75% of customers it would be less than €266 per annum (€5 per week).

Budget 2016

The funding derived from the Local Government Fund in recent years is replaced by the proceeds from the Local Property Tax / Equalisation Fund. The funding from this source in 2016 will be the same as received in 2014 and 2015. The decision of the Elected Members to retain the level of the Local Property Tax has maintained the level of income from that source but with little or no revenue buoyancy in other areas, and despite some new valuations, a significant reduction in the global valuation for utilities together with significant additional non-discretionary costs in 2016 has resulted in a very constrained budget for 2016.

The budget for 2016 includes an income from the NPPR of €500k which includes income from the agreements put in place, by those with a liability to discharge the amount due, to do so over a period of years. The level of income from this source will not be maintained into the future.

The Members will be aware that much of the budget in any year is comprised of non-discretionary costs such as loan charges, payroll, statutory demands, Insurances, pensions etc or is comprised of expenditure that is assigned to the delivery of particular services

Given the funding available and the number of additional demands it has not been possible to provide for the desired level of service and it is recognised that additional funding could be utilised effectively under almost every budget heading but the allocation of further resources has not been possible.

There are a number of aspects of budget 2016 worthy of noting.

- Reduced income from commercial rates due to a revised global valuation.
- Average increase of 4.79% in insurance premium including a 10% increase in the Public Liability premium.
- Increase costs of CAMP West due to the withdrawal of the HSE from the service.
- Full annual cost of the operation of the fire station in An Cheathru Rua.
- New operational arrangements of our Leisure Centres in Tuam & Ballinalsoe.
- Reduced recoupments such as the Water Framework Directive or additional fees such as the Road Management Office.
- Increased cost associated with our new Ballinasloe Library
- Increased costs arising from the Lansdowne Road Agreement
- Reduced level of recoupment of Pension Related Deductions.
- Additional statutory demand from Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees.
- Increasing costs of public lighting.
- Reduced Central Management Charge recoupment.
- Commemoration programme for 2016.

In order to balance the draft budget for 2016 it has been necessary to maximize the projected income from various sources and to effect expenditure reductions in some areas. It is of concern that a desired level of budgetary provision has not been possible in a number of areas including, but not limited to, roads maintenance, economic development, housing maintenance and public lighting. While it is understood that discussions are taking place nationally with a view to compensating local authorities, at least in part, for the loss attributable to the revised global valuation we have not been notified of any decision in this regard. Should further funding become available the above areas are worthy of further consideration.

Keeping within budget in 2016 will require very careful monitoring by all units throughout the year.

Local Authority Structures

The Council and the sub county structures of 5 Municipal Districts have been in operation for just over a year and the respective roles of each will continue to evolve. Work will be on-going over a period of time to ensure that there is no duplication of work between the County and Municipal District structures and that functions are carried out and discussions take place in the most appropriate forum.

Other revised structures such as the Local Community Development Committee, and the Public Participation Network require resource commitments either directly or indirectly in order to fulfil their role. While the roll out of the SICAP Programme has not yet been possible in Galway the Local Community Development Committee will shortly consider the draft local Economic and Community Plan which is a Statutory plan intended to guide all relevant publicly funded activity. The LCDC will consider the community elements of the plan while the Strategic Policy Committee for Enterprise and Economic Development will be responsible for the economic elements. The entire Plan will in due course be considered by both the Municipal Districts and full Council. The LCDC together with Galway Rural Development and Comhar na nOileán have applied to become the Local Action Group for the next round of Leader funding. The proposals would see the LCDC having a key role in the development of the strategy and oversight of the programme with the Local Development Companies continuing to undertake the delivery of the programme. Forum Connemara have sought to be the LAG for the Connemara Municipal District Area and are developing a programme to this end. It is understood that the Department will select one of the proposals for implementation.

Economic Development

The Galway Local Enterprise Office is now accommodated in County Hall meaning easier access for the public and greater integration of activities between relevant units. An additional resource has been allocated on a 50/50 basis with Community and Enterprise and other staff provide necessary support to this function as required.

The Members have had recent discussions on the Carnmore site in the context of the Feasibility Report. Discussions have been ongoing regarding the possibility of Galway County Council entering into a further short term lease of between 6 and 12 months during which time a formal tendering process would be undertaken for the formal lease of some or all of the site for a longer period.

Progress has continued on the Galway City Transportation Project and the emerging preferred route has been the subject of detailed discussions with those directly impacted by same. The relevant environment reports are nearing completion and consideration is being given to the statutory processes required to bring this project through the necessary consent(s) and on to construction. The provision of this piece of infrastructure is considered vital to the economic development of both the City and County.

Galway County Council has continued to work with DAHG, Udaras and the OPW on the development of a Visitor Centre adjacent to Pearses Cottage in Rosmuc including facilitating the proposed development through the Part 8 planning and land acquisition processes. Substantial ground works have been undertaken and the main elements of the proposed development are advancing through the tendering process.

The Members have been briefed on a number of occasions on the bid for European Capital of Culture 2020. The first bid book was lodged on 16th October 2015. The presentations to the adjudication panel by each of the four Irish bids took place on the 12th & 13th November 2013 in Dublin Castle with the shortlisted entries announced on 13th November 2013 and as you will be aware the Galway bid has been shortlisted. The level of funding required for this initiative will require consideration over the coming period. We also need to ensure that we take full advantage of the opportunities presented by Galway's designation as Unesco City of Film.

Galway County Council together with Galway City Council and GMIT are preparing a bid for Galway City and County to be named European Region of Gastronomy in 2018. This has been well received by all involved in the food business. This is very complementary to the recent agreement between Galway County Council, Teagasc and SCULL enterprises to pursue the development of a Food Hub at the Teagasc Campus in Athenry.

The Ballinasloe library building has been completed and it is intended to utilise the two upper floors for enterprise purposes. The approach to this is currently being examined and the opportunity for the development of an incubation space and/or an innovation cluster are being examined as well as potential partners that might be able to provide necessary experience and expertise with its operation and management.

The Members will be aware that Galway County Council has been working with Galway City Council on the preparation of an Economic Strategy for Galway with the assistance of the Whittaker Institute in NUIG. At this point an Economic Baseline Summary Overview has been prepared for both the County and City together with Sectoral Overviews for areas such as Marine, Food, Retail, Tourism, Agriculture, Education, ICT, Medical Devices and the Creative Sector. Before continuing with the preparation of the Economic Strategy the proposed economic Advisory Group and Economic Development Inter-Agency Forum will be convened in the near future.

The Members very much appreciate the important role that Galway County Council like all local authorities must play in the economic development of their areas and the investment that is required for this to be successful. Adequate provision in the area of economic development has not been possible in the budget for 2016. This heading incorporates all relevant areas including the above and areas considered to be worthy of specific attention such as, the Creative Sector and Tourism, Food and serious consideration needs to be given as to how this important area of work can be adequately financed into the future.

The Members will be aware that particular concern in the context of economic development is the future of our town centres. Consideration is currently being given to how town centres can be supported and in particular how development on town centre zonings can be encouraged and facilitated. In this regard consideration is being given to the inclusion of specific provisions in the forthcoming draft Development Contribution Scheme. In addition in the context of commercial rates the prospect of introducing an initiative to encourage the re-use of commercial/retail properties that have been vacant for a period of time is also receiving attention.

Efficiency

Galway County Council now operates with a budget that has reduced by 33% and a staff complement that has also reduced by approximately 33% since 2008. Despite such significant reductions in resources the business of the Council and the delivery of services have not witnessed an equivalent reduction in output. Much credit must be given to the staff of the Council for the flexibility shown to ensure that services are maintained. Galway County Council has undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years to reduce costs, accrue savings and deliver efficiencies and these efforts continue. In particular the areas of public procurement, energy efficiency and shared services have been pursued with great effect. These initiatives have been in addition to savings achieved under the Croke Park, Haddington Road and Lansdowne Road Agreements.

Further to the above there has been very significant progress in the area of procurement with many products/services already being procured regionally or nationally and in other cases plans are in place for this to happen in the forthcoming period. Some examples of areas which are now the subject of national or regional procurement include: Office furniture, Personal Computers, Interpretation Services, Pickup Trucks, Bulk Liquid Fuels, Personal protective equipment (PPE) & clothing, Voice and Network Equipment, Electricity, Advertising in the Print Media, Stationery and Office Supplies, Purchasing Cards, Photography Services, Vans, ICT Consumables, Natural Gas, Fuel Charge Cards, Road Marking Services, Plant Hire, Road Making Materials, Footpath, Roadway Restoration and Ancillary Works, LABitumen, Plumbing, Electrical, Cleaning Products and Equipment, Security Services, Telecoms, Print shared service facility, Pest Control, Cleaning Services, Employee Assistance Services, Health & Safety Training,

Waste, Document Management, Lift Maintenance, Fire Alarm Maintenance, Boiler Maintenance, Mobile Services (Telecoms), Cash in Transit.

Procurement within the public sector in general is migrating towards a more centrally driven model led by the new Office of Government Procurement (OGP). More national frameworks and contracts are now being put in place and all sectors are being encouraged to utilise them in order to generate savings and to improve administrative efficiencies. The opportunities for cost savings based on price alone are diminishing however and therefore savings through other means such as process efficiencies must be examined. By utilising national frameworks and contracts Galway County Council has made savings across a number of categories. Efforts will continue to refine our product coding structure to assist in capturing more accurate analytical data.

General

It should be noted that the period during which staff can retire without further negative impact on their entitlements has been extended and therefore the number of retirements in 2016 are expected to be close to normal levels. The number of retirements will have budgetary implications arising from increased costs for pensions and gratuities and reduced income from the pension levy.

Significant work has been undertaken in recent years in order to keep our staff and the public safe as we carry out our functions. This has included new procedures, revised processes, investment in dealing with risks and the achievements of OHSAS accreditation for the Housing and Water Services Units. Work is continuing in this regard and the areas of roads and the Fire Service are currently progressing towards accreditation. It is intended that all Units of Galway County Council will have a unified and consistent approach to Health & Safety with the available funding being directed to the areas of greatest need from an organisational perspective. This area needs an ongoing commitment of funding in order to discharge our responsibilities and to provide adequate staff resources for this area of work.

The Members will be aware that there are a number of initiatives that are being progressed at National level such as the Housing Assistance Payments Scheme. The implementation process has now commenced and will progress throughout 2016. The main impacts are likely to be an increased staff resource required for HAPS which will be funded centrally in the short term.

Unfortunately, due to the limited funds available, I have been unable to make provision in the draft budget for any contingencies which might arise in 2016, for example costs arising from severe weather events or other unexpected incidents.

Roads funding

The level of resources available for road maintenance and improvement falls short of that which would be desirable and is less than the sum provided in 2015. The Council will continue to adapt in an effort to make the best use of allocations. The table below sets out the position in relation to funding in recent years.

In line with previous years, the budget includes a figure for road grants based on the original 2015 allocation as the 2016 allocation has not yet been received. Having regard to more recent discussions the budget is currently framed to include income from pay parking with a €100,000 reduction which assumes some element of free parking in 2016. The roads programme will, when presented to Members, reflect any decisions made on pay parking and the level of income available from this source. This is effectively treated as a contra item and ultimately the amount of funds allocated will be directly related to the income received from pay parking.

	Roads Grant Funding €m	Council's own contribution €m
2008	38.90	5.12
2009	35.39	4.09
2010	23.65	3.02
2011	21.80	2.71
2012	20.80	2.60
2013	18.40	2.50
2014	18.50	2.37
2015	18.50	2.37
2016	18.50	2.00

BUDGETARY TREND 2008 – 2016

2008 - Adopted Budget	€160 M
2009 - Adjusted Budget	€146 M
2010 – Adopted Budget	€149 M
2011 – Adopted Budget	€144 M
2012 – Adopted Budget	€136 M

2013 - Adopted Budget	€127M
2014 – Adopted Budget	€122 M
2015 – Adopted Budget	€105 M
2016 – Proposed Budget	€104 M

Local Government Fund

The Local Government Fund has been replaced by the proceeds of the Local Property Tax/Pension Levy which have been estimated to produce income of €14.5m. Given the extent of financial changes including those associated with Irish Water a direct comparison with revenue from the Local Government Fund is no longer meaningful.

Trends in Local Government Fund allocation is as follows: -

	<i>Allocation</i>	<i>% Reduction</i>
2008	€40.60m	
2009	€36.88m	9%
2010	€36.09m	2%
2011	€32.84m	9%
2012	€30.45m	7%
2012 (revised)	€27.67m	3%
2013 (LGF plus pension deduction)	€29.47m	3%
2014 (to include Irish Water and NPPR)	€29.52m	0%
2015 (to include Irish Water and NPPR)	€29.52m	0%

Expenditure proposals

The following tables set out the expenditure and income breakdown proposed for 2016:

Expenditure by Programme Group	2015 Budget	2015 Estimated Outturn	2016 Draft Budget
	€	€	€
Housing and Building	11,541,201	38,467	12,099,309

Road Transportation & Safety	32,887,196	11,494,848	32,400,291
Water Services	13,119,721	1,021,470	13,591,025
Development Management	7,474,108	5,448,279	7,693,720
Environmental Services	16,910,900	10,949,788	17,047,153
Recreation & Amenity	7,971,728	4,252,498	8,361,560
Agriculture, Education Health & Welfare	4,767,523	1,174,737	2,947,179
Miscellaneous Services	10,605,729	5,788,964	10,207,814
Total	105,278,106	40,169,053	104,348,051

In the Draft Budget, the estimated Revenue Income anticipated is as follows: -

Estimated Revenue Income	2015		2016	
	€	%	€	%
Local Government Fund / LPT	12,506,381	12	12,506,381	12
Pension Related Deduction	2,060,000	2	1,950,000	2
NPPR	350,000	0	500,000	0
State Grants & Subsidies	32,674,990	31	31,520,753	30
Irish Water Income	9,262,000	9	9,180,382	9
Local Determined Income	33,306,591	32	33,318,465	32
Other Income	15,118,144	14	15,372,070	15
	105,278,106	100	104,348,051	100

Conclusion

The preparation of the Draft Annual Budget for 2016 has been challenging. Notwithstanding this I believe that the proposed Draft Budget will allow Galway County Council to deliver a reasonable level of core services in 2016, having regard to available resources. However, there is no provision for contingencies included. The proposed gross expenditure of €104.348M together with the capital programme spend estimated at €32M, represents a very considerable investment of monies in the development of the County and the delivery of services throughout the County.

I wish to thank the elected members for their co-operation and support during 2015. I wish to record my appreciation to the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Peter Roche, and the former Cathaoirleach Cllr. Mary Hoade for their commitment to the special responsibilities of their office and their courtesy and co-operation in doing the business of the Council. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the Corporate Policy Group in the discussion on the draft budget.

I also want to thank the staff of the Council for their dedication and flexibility during 2015 and in recent years and their support has ensured the continued delivery of services in difficult circumstances.

I wish to thank the Council's Directors of Service and their staff for their rigorous examination of budget items for 2016 to identify areas for efficiency improvement and cost saving. In particular, I want to acknowledge the work of Mr. Ger Mullarkey, Mr. Michael McGovern, Ms Bernadette O'Connor, Ms. Caitriona Lusby and the staff in the Finance Unit and to thank all involved in delivering the draft budget.

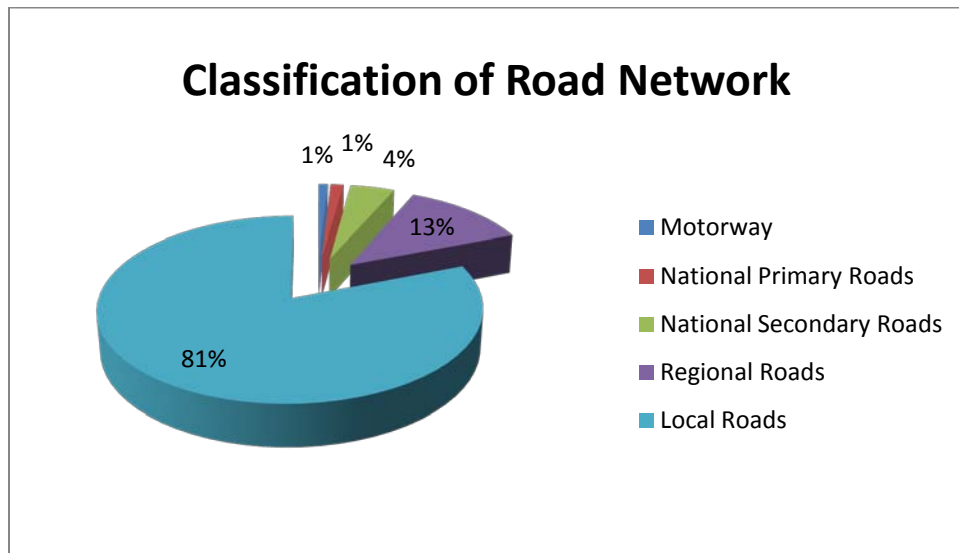
The year 2016 will undoubtedly bring new challenges for Galway County Council, but I am confident that with the support of the Members, Management team, and colleagues we will provide valuable services in 2016 to meet the critical needs of the people of Galway.

I recommend the Draft Budget to you for adoption.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Kelly,
Chief Executive (Interim)

**Divisional Reports (including Annual
Progress Report on the Galway County
Council Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019)**



The road grants for 2016 will be announced in February 2016. It is anticipated that there will be specific provision for bridges on non national roads. However, it is uncertain whether specific improvement grants for non-national roads will be made available. Funding from Transport Infrastructure Ireland for road maintenance and pavement and minor improvement schemes is likely to remain at 2015 levels.

In 2014 the Municipal Districts were set-up and there is a focus on ensuring the deployment of administrative and technical staff to the municipal district offices. Reorganisation of the duties of staff has been part of this process to ensure sufficient cover for annual leave, sick leave or any other absences. The level of customer service in these area offices has remained at a high level, due to this reorganisation, despite staff levels continuing to drop in 2015.

2016 will be another challenging year with further reductions in staff levels due to retirements and staff taking up vacancies in other organisations. The funding for local roads from the Councils own resources in 2016 is lower than 2015, and final funding availability will be dependent of income derived from pay parking. Funding allocations will continue to be made on a road length and classification basis.

Road Condition Survey

A road condition survey was carried out on the local road network by Galway County Council in 2012. The project benefits the management of the network and was also used to provide an updated inventory of the network. Each segment of the road has been assessed and a grading applied. The location is mapped using GPS and automatically logged. The road condition is graded from 1 to 10 with 10 being the best condition.

Following the local roads conditions survey which was completed in 2012, the road condition standards across the county are relatively uniform. The continuation of the local tertiary road repair programme is extremely beneficial and it is hoped to continue the programme in 2016.

The results of the survey carried out by the DOT/NRA on regional routes in County Galway are used as a tool to assist in setting out priorities for the Road Restoration and Reconstruction Programme. The results of the survey indicate which sections of road require surface upgrades; these amount to approximately 10% of the network. The baseline figures highlight a need to examine and improve skid resistance over approximately 8.5% of the regional network. This type of data is very valuable in determining areas of concern and in fine tuning programmes to maximize the effectiveness of scarce resources. Other factors outside the physical attributes of the road also contribute such as traffic volumes, accident history, regional importance etc.

National Roads

Indicative activities in 2015:

- Funding was provided in 2015 to facilitate the continued advancement and delivery of the Major Inter Urban Routes element of the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013. The following major projects are managed by the National Roads Project Office and the costs associated with this programme are recouped in full from Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

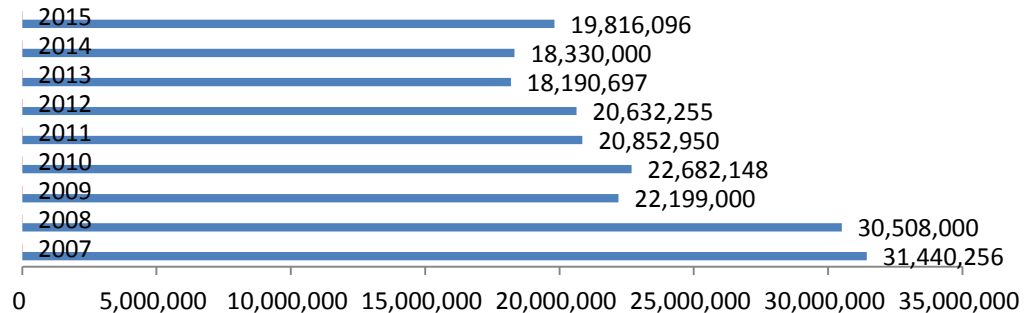
National Road No.	Route Section
N67	Ballindeereen to Kinvara
M6	Galway / Ballinasloe
M17/M18	Gort / Tuam
M18	Gort / Crusheen
N6	Galway City Transport Project
N59	Moycullen Bypass/Moycullen Online
N59	Maam Cross/Clifden
N59	Maam Cross/ Oughterard
N84	Luimnagh
N17	Carrownurlaur/ Ballindine
N63	Annagh Hill/Abbeyknockmoy
N83	Forty Acres
N63	Abbeyknockmoy to Annagh

- The M6 Galway/Ballinasloe and M18 Gort Crusheen Schemes are open to traffic with some minor landowner issues outstanding.
- Consultants have been appointed for the Galway City Transport Project and are based in the Project Office in Ballybrit. Necessary documentation for publication of the scheme will be available in the first half of 2016.
- Maam Cross to Oughterard has been granted Planning Approval and Advance works are programmed for 2016.
- Clifden to Maam Cross has been published and the Oral Hearing commenced on the 10th of November 2015 in Clifden.
- Contract Documents are being prepared for the N59 Moycullen ByPass. Works on the Moycullen Online Section are scheduled for completion by year end 2015.
- The annual resurfacing and maintenance programme for National routes was undertaken in accordance with the budget of €1,427,318 for maintenance works notified by Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

Proposals for 2016:

- M17/M18. Contracts have been signed. The contract is between the NRA and Direct Route. Major works are ongoing since Q1 2015. The completion date is scheduled for Feb 2018.
- Works commenced on the N84 Luimnagh in Qtr 3 2015 and Land Acquisition is now in progress, and will continue into 2016. Completion scheduled for 4th Qtr 2016.
- Works commenced on the N17 Carrownurlaur to Ballindine in Qtr 4 2015 and Land Acquisition is now in progress, and will continue into 2016. Completion scheduled for 4th Qtr 2016.
- N67 Ballindereen Kinvara - oral hearing commenced on the 10th November 2015.
- N63 Annagh Hill to Abbeyknockmoy Part VIII Planning was granted in September 2015 and approval to proceed to CPO is being sought.
- The annual resurfacing and maintenance programme incorporating ordinary maintenance, annual resurfacing, winter maintenance, bridge maintenance and traffic route lighting maintenance will be undertaken within the limits of available funding from Transport Infrastructure Ireland.
- In addition, a full programme of Pavement and Minor Improvement Works will be undertaken on the National Primary and National Secondary Road Network in the context of the 2016 grant allocations from Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

Regional & Local Road Grant Allocations 2006 - 2015 (€)



Indicative Activities in 2015:

The total grant allocation of **€19,816,096** for Regional & Local Roads divides as follows:

Improvement Works	€16,942,736
Maintenance Works	€ 2,823,360

The grant allocation can be classified under the following broad headings:

Grant Category	2015 Allocation
Improvement Grant 2015	€10,030,462
Restoration Maintenance Grant	€2,823,360
Discretionary Maintenance Grant	€4,798,774
Specific Improvement Grants – Bridge Rehabilitation Programme	€405,000
Low Cost Safety Improvement Grants	€282,500
Strategic Regional & Local Roads (SNNR) Grant	€50,000
Training	€95,000
Severe Weather Repairs	€1,331,000
OVERALL TOTAL	€19,816,096

- The following bridges were allocated funding under the Specific Improvement Grant – Bridge Rehabilitation Programme during 2015:

Electoral Area	Bridge	Allocation
Athenry/Óran Mór	R348 Palmerstown	€15,000
Ballinasloe	R363 Ballyforan	€50,000
	R359 /Cloonahinch 2	€15,000
Conamara	R336 Crumlin	€50,000
	R336 Munterowen	€100,000
Loughrea	R352 Ballyshrul	€80,000
	R461 Inchaboy South 3	€25,000
	R350 Whites	€15,000
Tuam	R364 Annaghbeg	€20,000
	R347 Ballinderry	€20,000
	R333 Cohennaheen	€15,000
TOTAL BRIDGE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME		€405,000

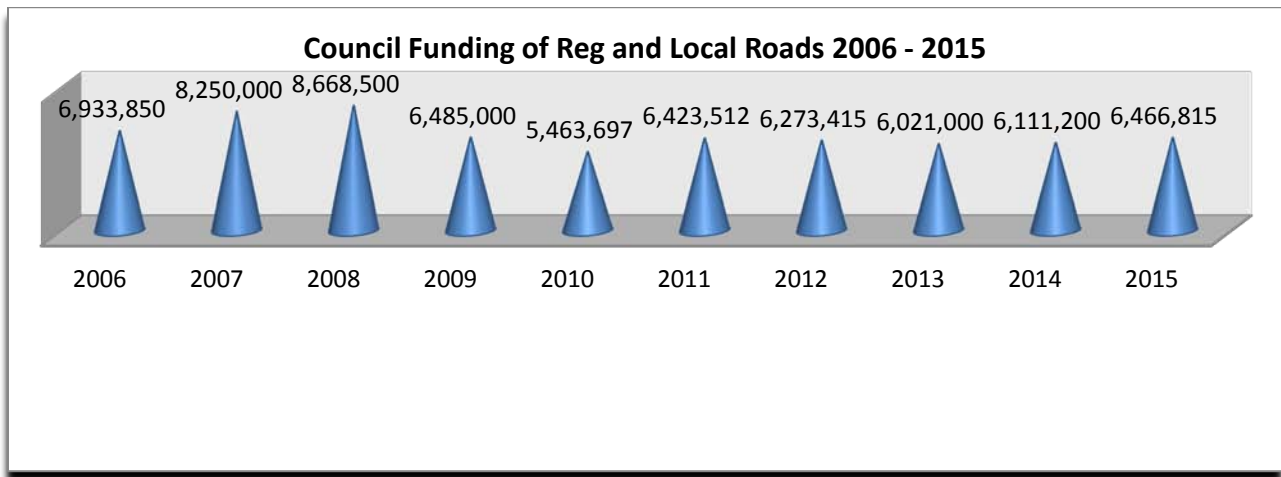
- The following project was funded under the Strategic Regional & Local Roads Grant Scheme:

SCHEME	2014 ALLOCATION
R336 Conamara Access Road (Bearnna to Ros a Mhíl)	€50,000

- Funding of **€395,000** was allocated from the 2014 Discretionary Grant for the repair of Regional and Local Roads Bridges, which maintained the total allocation spent on Non-National Road Bridges at €800,000. This included €10,000 for an advance ecology study. The following bridges were allocated funding:

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT	BRIDGE	ALLOCATION	TOTAL MUNICIPAL DISTRICT
Athenry/Óran Mór	Stradbally East	€5,600	€39,200
	Palmerstown	€7,200	
	Stradbally South	€3,200	
	Toberbracken	€3,200	
	Pollnacirca	€4,000	
	Clogh	€3,200	
	Shoodaun	€12,800	

Ballinasloe	Ballinamore	€28,000	€68,000
	Springlawn	€14,000	
	Island, New Inn	€14,000	
	Garbally	€8,000	
	Loughaunaavaag	€4,000	
Conamara	Tawnaghmore	€60,000	€120,000
	Formwheel	€60,000	
Loughrea	Tooloobaunbeg Bridge 1	€14,000	€69,600
	Tooloobaunbeg Bridge 2	€16,000	
	Magheramore/Lissaniska South	€14,600	
	Drumminnamuckla South	€10,000	
	Ballybackagh Bridge, Castleday	€10,000	
	Toor Ballylee	€5,000	
Tuam	Ower, Headford	€3,200	€88,200
	Abbert River	€3,200	
	Lodge Headford	€6,400	
	Ballinderry	€24,000	
	Pollaphuca	€14,300	
	Cloondahamper	€1,600	
	Moneenalley	€28,000	
	Sonnagh	€5,000	
	Flaskagh	€2,500	
TOTAL			€385,000



The sum provided from the Council's resources in 2015 is **€6,466,815**, to include provision for public lighting.

- Funding of €2,823,360 was allocated for Surface Dressing within existing fence lines. It was allocated as follows:

(1)	Ballinasloe Municipal District Surface Dressing	€ 540,800
(2)	Conamara Municipal District Surface Dressing	€ 567,840
(3)	Loughrea Municipal District Surface Dressing	€ 676,000
(4)	Oranmore Municipal District Surface Dressing	€ 242,360
(5)	Tuam Municipal District Surface Dressing	€ 676,000

Proposals for 2016:

- The Unit will prepare the 2015 Roads Programme in the context of available funding from the National Roads Authority, Department of Transport and the Council's own resources. The Programme will be presented to the Council for their approval in February/March 2016.
- The distribution of the Local Roads Budget 2016 will be presented to Council for approval in the context of the 2016 Roads Programme. The level of discretion that will be available to the Council in the allocation of funding in 2016 for Regional and Local Roads will be restricted by the requirements of the Memorandum on Grants for Regional & Local Roads as issued by the Department of Transport.

Marine Works

Indicative Activities in 2015:

Fishery Harbours and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme

- The Council carried out a safety and improvement works on Cé Sruthán which was 75% funded by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Cé Sruthán, An Cheathrú Rua	Development of slipway	€50,000
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Coastal Protection

- Coastal protection works were carried out at the following locations, West of the County, following severe storm damage –
South Facing Shore, Inishbofin
Inis Meain road network
Inis Oirr road network
Roundstone harbour

Proposals for 2016:

Strategic Piers and Harbours:

- Funding of €8million for the pier development on Inis Oírr was specified in the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Programme 2016 -2021. However, to date, no correspondence has been received notifying Galway County Council of the availability of such funding. This project will be considered when funding is made available.

Coastal Protection

- The Council will continue to submit proposals to the Office of Public Works for funding to facilitate Coastal Protection Works.
- Residual storm damage repair works on pre-identified sites, in conjunction with funding from the Office of Public Works of €500,000.
- The county-wide continuation of coastal protection works.

Arterial Drainage

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Council discharged its statutory responsibility for the maintenance of certain drainage works in the County through the Roads and Transportation Unit and the Council's Municipal District Offices. The Council has charge of twelve Drainage Districts

and there are two Drainage Districts in County Galway which extend into Roscommon and Clare County Councils.

Drainage Districts:

Ahascragh	Annagh	Boley
Dunkellin (Gort)	Dunkellin (Athenry)	Dunkellin (Loughrea)
Kellysgrove	Kilchreest	Lavally
Meelick Pollshask	Mountbellew	Oranhill

Joint Drainage Districts:

River Fergus Joint Drainage District

River Suck Joint Drainage District

- The functions previously performed by the Joint Drainage District Committees have, from the 01st January 2015, been exercised directly by each local authority in respect of so much of the relevant district as is within its own area, including joint arrangements that may be made by the local authorities concerned.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Unit will undertake a programme of maintenance on the drainage works under the remit of the Council during 2016; the works carried out will be dependent on the funding available.
- All available sources of revenue will be utilised to undertake remedial and improvement works on the drainage districts under the remit of the Council.

Flood Mitigation Works & Studies

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Galway County Council continued working in partnership with the OPW during 2015 to identify and progress works aimed at reducing the risk of future flooding.
- From 2010 to date a total of 188 Minor Works Flood Alleviation Schemes were examined with a view to determining whether an economically feasible solution to reduce the potential for future flooding existed.
- 17 applications for flood relief under the Minor Works Flood Alleviation Scheme were submitted by Galway County Council in 2015 and were approved by the OPW. A total grant of €268,909 has been provided for such schemes
- A Joint Steering Group comprised of representatives of Galway County Council and the Office of Public Works continued to meet during 2015 to progress works on the Dunkellin River & Aggard Stream Flood Relief Scheme and the Clare River (Claregalway) Flood Relief Scheme.

- The Dunkellin Scheme has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála for approval and an oral hearing was held in November. A decision is expected shortly
- The Clare River Flood Relief Scheme achieved statutory approval in October and works should commence in 2016.
- Galway County Council has continued working in partnership with the OPW on the Western and Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management studies during 2014/2015. Draft Flood Maps have been finalised and are being made available to the public for review.

Proposals for 2016:

- Outstanding works on all existing minor flood mitigation projects will be completed during 2016 and Galway County Council will liaise with the OPW with regard to minor works schemes that are under consideration with the aim of securing funding for these schemes.
- Progress the Ballinderreen to Kiltiernan Flood Relief Scheme in partnership with the OPW and TII.
- Applications for funding for any further schemes identified as offering appropriate potential to reduce the risk of future flooding will be advanced for submission to the OPW.
- Galway County Council will continue working in partnership with the OPW on progressing the Dunkellin River & Aggard Stream Flood Relief Scheme and the Clare River (Claregalway) Flood Relief Scheme.
- Galway County Council will continue working in partnership with the OPW on the Western and Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies during 2016.

Road Safety

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Road Safety Together Committee held meetings and continued its active role in the promotion of road safety.
- Road safety initiatives undertaken by the Council during 2015 included:
 - Promotion of the Drive for Life Programme for secondary schools.
 - In February, 2015, the Road Safety Officer, attended the 'Keep Safe' event in Gort in conjunction with the HSA and addressed over 100 pupils on road safety awareness issues – seat belts; walking and cycling safely; Safe Cross Code, etc.
 - Support for the Cycling Safety Training Programme in national schools
 - During 'Slow Down Day' in March and August, 2015, the Council erected variable messaging signs asking the public to slow down
 - Support for the operation of the Junior School Warden Scheme and competition held with 4 schools on 19th May, 2015, in Tuam.

- Regular road safety messages were on iRadio to raise awareness to the general public on Bank Holiday Weekends
- During the Bealtaine Festival in May, 2015, a High Visibility Vests Campaign took place and vests were distributed, free of charge.
- For the national Road Safety Week held in October, 2015, joint initiatives took place with NUIG where 500 bike lights and 500 high visibility vests were distributed to students and with GMIT, where 500 high visibility vests were circulated. Also, Advance Pitstop offered a free 5 Point Vehicle 'Health Check' to members of the public to ensure vehicles are in proper working order for the winter.
- Social Inclusion Week took place in October, 2015, and high visibility material and leaflets was distributed.
- During 2015, road safety awareness messages appeared in 'Aon Scéal', the Council's staff magazine, in order to continue raising road safety awareness to its staff members and also messages were sent to local press aimed at the general public and through social media.
- At the launch of the 'Directory of Services for Older People', in November 2015, hundreds of high visibility vests and armbands were circulated to Community Groups throughout the city and county.
- During 2015, high visibility vests, armbands and road safety awareness leaflets were distributed, free of charge, to schools, community groups and the general public.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Road Safety Together Committee is to meet regularly and continue its active role in the promotion of road safety.
- Road safety initiatives proposed by the Council during 2016 include:
 - Promotion of the Drive for Life Programme for secondary schools.
 - 'Think Twice' Road Safety Awareness Show for Teenagers will be held on 26th February, 2016 and all county and city secondary schools will be invited
 - Support for the Cycling Safety Training Programme in national schools
 - Support for the operation of the Junior School Warden Scheme in 4 schools
 - Continue to raise awareness of road safety to the general public by regular radio messages and through social media
 - Continue the distribution of high visibility vests, armbands and road safety awareness leaflets, free of charge, to schools, community groups and the general public.

Safety Improvement Works and Measures:

- An allocation of €282,500 was provided by the Department of Transport to enable low cost safety improvement works to be carried out on the following regional and local roads:

ROAD NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	MUNICIPAL DISTRICT	ALLOCATION
R336	At Tully Church	Conamara	€30,000
LP2108/LP2121	Cahermorris/Bunatober	Tuam	€25,000
R446	Cappataggle	Ballinasloe	€30,000
LP2115 & LP2128	Currans Cross	Tuam	€15,000
R347/LP2125	Doonbeg, Ballynastuckaun,	Tuam	€60,000
LP4501 at LS8580& LS8593	Dunkellin Junctions	Loughrea	€20,000
R344	Inagh Valley	Conamara	€ 7,500
LT31142 & LS7182 & LP3114	Junction of LS7182 & LT 31142 with LP3114 Carrowbaun to Kiltullagh	Loughrea	€25,000
LS8568 & LP4502 & R347	Junction of 8568 & LP4502 with R347 Craughwell to Ardrahan Road	Loughrea	€20,000
R358 & LP3406	Kilglass: T Junction	Ballinasloe	€20,000
R336	Tully National School	Conamara	€30,000
TOTAL			€282,500

Speed Limits

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- A programme of the installation of SLOW ZONE speed limit signage in housing estates has been commenced in 2015. Funding provided in 2015 for this programme of works was €32,250.
- A programme of the installation of rural speed limit signage has been carried out in County Galway; an allocation of €33,600 was received for these works from the Department of Transport.
- The Unit continued to implement Road Works Speed Limits; in consultation with the Gardaí and the National Roads Authority, as deemed necessary to facilitate the delivery of the Council's various work programmes.

Proposals for 2016:

- The programme of the installation of SLOW ZONE speed limit signage in housing estates is expected to continue in 2016, depending on funding being made available by the Department of Transport. It is anticipated that funding similar to the 2015 amount of €32,250 will be provided.
- A review of County-wide speed limit bye-laws is to be carried out in 2016, which will result in a programme of work installing and updating signage as per adopted bye-laws. An allocation of €50,000 has been set aside for this programme.
- The Unit will continue to implement Road Works Speed Limits; in consultation with the Gardaí and Transport Infrastructure Ireland, as deemed necessary to facilitate the delivery of the Council's various work programmes.

Public Lighting

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- A sum of €932,000 was provided in the 2015 Budget to fund the cost of the public lighting programme including the maintenance, energy and upgrade costs.

Proposals for 2016:

- A budget similar to the current years will be provided in the Budget for the 2016 Public Lighting Programme. This budget provides for the maintenance and energy costs associated with the existing public lighting network.

Community Involvement Schemes

Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Council continued to actively promote the Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme as a means of harnessing community support for road works on suitable local roads. A total of 72 applications were received for the 2015 scheme, for which funding of €428,248, was provided for 38 schemes by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

Proposals for 2016:

- The 2016 Draft Roads Programme will include provision of funding to facilitate the operation of the Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme. The Department of Transport has advised that the scheme is being reviewed on an ongoing basis and criteria for the scheme may change in 2016, details of which will be advertised when received.

Working in Partnership

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Galway County Council and the Office of Public Works worked together on the Joint Flood Working Group and the Steering Group for the Dunkellin & River Clare Flood Relief Schemes to advance suitable projects and measures to minimise the potential for future flooding.
- The Unit liaised with relevant stakeholders in advancing the preparation of the Winter Service Plan.
- Galway County Council continued to progress the proposed walking and cycling Greenway from Galway to Oughterard with support from the Department of Transport.
- Galway County Council continued to progress the development of the walking and cycling Greenway from Clifden to Oughterard, with support from Fáilte Ireland.
- Galway County Council in association with the Department of Social Protection has employed 68 people under the Gateway scheme, with many employed in the Roads Unit as a valuable resource, carrying out maintenance works which would not be carried out without their assistance.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Unit will continue to take a lead role in working in partnership with Galway City Council and the Galway Transportation Unit in advancing transportation related projects of mutual benefit to Galway County & City.
- The Council will continue to work with the Office of Public Works and other relevant stakeholders to address flood related matters during 2016.
- The Council will continue to liaise with the National Transportation Authority to develop best practice for public roads in rural areas.
- The Council will continue to progress all Greenway projects in the County, offering increased sustainable transport options to both residents and tourists.

Customer Service

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Unit made information available to the general public, in 2015, on our Winter Service Plan for 2014/2015 at www.galway.ie. The information sets out how the Winter Service for ice and snow conditions will be provided for in County Galway.
- The Unit is making increased use of Twitter and Facebook as the appropriate instant social media to advise the public of temporary roadworks, including ongoing updates on timeframes for the works.
- The Unit continues to publish public notices on www.galway.ie regarding planned, longer-term roadworks.

- The Unit continues to operate an On-Line Payment Facility to allow for the payment of Fixed Charge Notices (Parking Fines).
- Notices advising the general public on issues relating to the Roads Act, which affect them, such as hedge cutting, unauthorised advertising etc were made available on www.galway.ie and have been advertised in the local newspaper.
- A nominated person within the Unit deals with all Customer Service queries from whichever source they are received, such as Fix Your Street, Customer Comments system, e-mail, Twitter etc. to ensure response are issued in a timely manner.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Unit shall continue to make use of www.galway.ie and other social media to advise and inform the public of Roads issues which affect them.
- The Unit will continue to train frontline staff on-the-job. This will ensure sufficient knowledge within the Unit, to enable it to continue to operate efficiently and effectively despite the reduction in staffing numbers.
- The option of extending the on-line payments facility for other services will be considered.

<p>Corporate Support</p>

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Unit continued to be responsible for the efficient operation and administration associated with the Municipal District of Tuam.
- The Unit set up and continues to provide support for the new Roads and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee with policy formation. Policies considered by the SPC included Skip Bye-Laws, Horse Drawn Hackney Carriages Bye-Laws and the method of allocation of roads funding.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Unit will continue to actively support the role of the Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee in policy formation, with a view to furthering policies previously considered in 2015 and also completing policies on advertising on public roads and traffic calming in built up areas.
- The Unit will continue to work with the Members to ensure that the Municipal District system is an efficient and effective model for addressing operational issues.

CORPORATE, HOUSING AND EMERGENCY SERVICES UNIT

1 Library Development Programme

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Library usage continued to increase in 2015. The Library Service of Galway County Council is one of the most heavily used services in Ireland and libraries are established cultural centres in their communities.
- Library Staff through innovation and local partnerships continued to ensure a vibrant and active service with many free events in 2015. More than 500,000 visits will have been made to branch libraries across the County in 2015. This makes the Council's branch libraries the most visited public spaces in County Galway, reflecting a service and place where diversity is welcomed and encouraged.
- The services, activities and usage of the Public Libraries reflect the goals of the service to retain the trust that the local community has in the Library as a quality and open public service. The Service is committed to providing access to books educational tools and resources that are proving expensive for individuals and families in the economic downturn.
- Works on the Ballinasloe Library Extension and Refurbishment have been completed.
- The Library re-opened in Oughterard following refurbishment work on Oughterard Courthouse
- Work on the Galway Library Development Plan 2015-2020 is progressing and will incorporate proposals in the National Public Library Strategy 2013-2017
- Planning for a new City and County Community Library has commenced and investigations on possible sites in Galway City are being carried out

Proposals for 2016:

- Every endeavour will be made to keep Branch Libraries open, accessible to every person, and to upgrade the book stock
- Steps to implement the Library Development Plan 2015-2020 will be undertaken
- Galway Library will endeavour to implement many of the proposals in the National Public Library Strategy 2013-2017. Work will continue to improve Library Services in Galway
- There will be further work on the new Galway Community/Cultural Library
- A Right To Read campaign will be spearheaded by the library Service
- There will be further expansion in the use of technology to improve the Library service and it is planned to complete the computerisation of all branch libraries in Galway.

- There will be further plans and training for library staff to ensure an improved library service.
- Galway Libraries will host many activities as part of the 1916 commemorative events in 2016.

2. Legal Advisory Services

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Department provided legal services for all programme areas, including the purchase and sale of properties, conduct of litigation including District Court Prosecutions, Circuit and High Court Litigation, including Judicial Review. In particular, District Court Litigation, Judicial Review and the completion of land acquisitions on inter-urban routes, were substantial areas of work.
- The Case Management System, which facilitates the use of templates to create work flows for the efficient and cost effective delivery of legal services, is constantly being updated and applied to further work areas. Work is continuing on the Register of Lands.

Proposals for 2016:

- Concentrate on providing advisory legal services and continue to provide legal services for all programme areas.
- The completion of any residual work arising from Compulsory Acquisition on inter-urban routes.
- Complete the Register of Lands using the Spatial Data on Folio Maps with the co-operation of IT and reconcile records with the physical land bank.
- Workflows for the Case Management System will continue to be rolled out, enhancing work delivery and capacity - availing of software assistance.
- Continue implementation of the Record Management Schedule and remove all non-current files from the office.

3 Recreation, Amenity & Play Facilities/ Outdoor Leisure Operations & Water Safety

Indicative Activities in 2015:

Water Safety Programme

- The **Water Safety Programme** involved the recruitment of a panel of over 40 trained Lifeguards to provide services at 10 locations in the County [including five Blue Flag Beaches] and at six locations in the City as part of a Shared Service Agreement with

Galway City Council. Induction Training and upgrading of some equipment supplies was undertaken. Services were provided from May 30th to September 13th 2015.

- A new Water Safety Development Officer (WSDO) was recruited on a part time basis and appointed in 2015. The role includes supervision of the Water Safety Lifeguard Programme, development of the service as well as commenting on the water safety aspects of applications to both County and City for events that involving use of water eg: Triathlons.
- Risk Assessments in line with the standards set out by the International Life Saving Federation of Europe (ILSE) for designated Bathing Areas were commissioned for 5 locations in 2015.
- Following approval by Council, Funding of €6,150 was advanced to the Irish Water Safety Council.
- Support was provided for maintenance of outdoor swimming areas in Loughrea and Portumna.

Indicative Proposals for 2016

- Implement Lifeguard Programme on a Seasonal Basis including induction training. Promotion of the Service using web-sites, social and local media.
- Commission a further five Risk Assessments with a target of having completed all 10 Risk Assessment for locations in the County. Progress works required under the ISLE Risk Assessments in line with available resources.
- Continue, subject to approval of Council, provision of a financial contribution to Irish Water Safety.
- Roll-out next phase of the Ringbouy Renewal Programme – including consideration of an inspection ‘app’ to build a record of sites within Council responsibility.

Parks, Pitches, Open Spaces and Playgrounds

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- **Rinville Park, Maree, Oranmore**, managed by Galway County Council is owned jointly by Galway County Council and Galway City Council. It is a designated location on the ‘Wild Atlantic Way’, promotional Brand for the West of Ireland. It is used extensively by local residents, visitors and local organisations such as Scouting Groups.
- The Parks’ Maintenance Programme continued to be delivered in partnership with local groups. In 2015, the Council commissioned a further digital map of Rinville Park.
- A Concession for the provision of refreshments at Rinville Park during April to September was continued.
- Expressions of Interest were invited to cut and retrieve haylage on lands in and adjacent to Rinville Park.
- An application under the Department of Agriculture (Forestry Section) Neighbourhood Scheme was advanced seeking additional resources to deliver on the Rinville Park

Woodlands Plan. The Woodlands Plan did not commence in advance of the March 2015 Bird Nesting Season due to early nesting herons on site. The Plan outlines Health and Safety needs to fell 2.75 hectares of the 18 Hectare Woodlands which comprise of over mature unsuitable Sitka Spruce. This work will allow replanting of native and semi-native broadleaf trees in the Park to sustain its future as a significant public amenity. Works will proceed late 2015 and early 2016.

- **Palace Grounds, Tuam** - Maintenance Programme for Palace Grounds Park, Tuam was implemented in association with a Council sponsored CE Scheme. Further upgrading of Paths was undertaken as part of a three year path upgrade programme.
- **Cowpark Clarinbridge** - It is proposed that by the end of 2015, the legal transfer of ownership of Clarinbridge Cowpark from the Trustees via the Department of Agriculture will be concluded.
- **Parks & Open Spaces, Ballinasloe** – Maintenance Programme was continued in Ballinasloe town for parks and open spaces in 2015.
- **Pitches / Running Track / Leisure Centres and Swimming Areas**
A Licence Agreement put in place with Tuam Celtic Football Club, to operate Galway County Council's All Weather Pitches in Tuam, was ongoing in 2015. A Liaison Committee is established to review operation of the facility. A website (www.tuamallweatherpitches.com) is available.
- Dunlo Recreational Park, Ballinasloe, Running Track was fully operational in 2015. Opening and closing of the facility is supervised in partnership with a Galway Rural Development (GRD) Tús Scheme. A Schedule is made available on www.galway.ie indicating public times and bookings by local clubs.
- **Leisure Centres** - An Interim Licence Agreement was issued for the ongoing management and operation of the Council's Leisure Centres at Tuam and Ballinasloe. The Centres include Swimming Pools and fully equipped gymnasiums.
- Concessions were continued in 2015 to permit applicants to sell ice creams and soft drinks at beach locations in the County for the summer season. One applicant was issued with a licence to operate at four beaches.
- Funding was provided for maintenance of swimming areas at Lough Derg Shannon Road, Portumna and Loughrea Lake.
- **Playgrounds** - In accordance with commitments previously given under the Play Policy, assistance was provided to playgrounds through direct funding and provision of insurance. To-date, a total of 61 playgrounds have been developed in the County, under this policy. The Smoke Free Playgrounds Policy launched in 2013 was ongoing in 2015. Information on all sites are available to download in the Council's Guide to Playgrounds – 'Lets Play' available on www.galway.ie and an interactive map on the Mapzone section of the web-site.
- Additional investments were advanced in 2015 for Loughrea and Palace Grounds Tuam Playgrounds through Department of Youth and Children. Funding which was matched by the Council.

- National Recreation Week was celebrated with a week long programme of activities in Tuam, in partnership with Youthwork Ireland. National Play Day (July 5th) was held in Rinville Park, attracting over 400 people to Rinville Park. The event was made feasible with voluntary support of young people from Comhairle na nÓg and support of Youthwork Ireland. An activity packed afternoon of games and art was held free of charge.
- A new 'app' to assist Community Wardens was developed with assistance from Information Systems to carry out Playground Inspections and was piloted in 2015. This allows the inspections to be filed immediately upon completion on site by an email. Reports are automatically filed providing a record of weekly inspections required for maintenance and insurance purposes.

Proposals for 2016:

- Parks maintenance programmes will be implemented in line with resources in Rinville Park and Palace Grounds Tuam and Open Spaces in Ballinasloe.
- Support for maintenance at Council owned and operated Playgrounds will be provided in line with resources. There will be further training and implementation of the Playground 'App' to undertake Playground Inspections in partnership with the Community Warden Service.
- In 2016 ROSPA Standard (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents) Playground Inspection Training will be provided for over 50 Community Volunteers that manage and operate Playgrounds as part of signed Agreements with Galway County Council. Weekly inspections, in accordance with the defined standards set out by ROSPA, is a requirement for the provision of insurance cover to Community Playgrounds as part of the Council's Play Policy. ROSPA Advanced Training on Playground Inspections will also be provided to Community Wardens. All those trained are registered with ROSPA for a period of three years.
- **Rinville Park.** In addition to annual maintenance activities, it is proposed to draft in partnership with users and other stakeholders an overall Management Plan for the Park that is in line with emerging international benchmarking standards for Public Parks. Park 'counters' will be installed at two main entrance Trails to the Park in early in 2016. These devices will provide information on the number of Park users.
- The Rinville Park Woodlands Management Plan will be ongoing in 2016. The purpose is to support the transition of the Woodlands into a semi-native broadleaf Woodlands for future generations. Public Information will be updated in early 2016 keeping Park Users and Residents up to date with all planned activities. Subsequent phases will involve the management of the re-growth and invasive species control.
- Continue to provide administrative and advisory support to community groups wishing to advance proposals for recreation and to access available funding.

4 Council Facilities for Local Economic & Community Benefit / Heritage/Interpretative Facilities Operations

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Historic Assets Group in line with resources and in partnership with Facilities Management undertook works in Gort Library, securing small scale conservation funding from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Structures at Risk Fund. Final Works on St. Mary's National Monument Medieval Church, in the ownership of the Council and adjacent to Athenry Heritage Centre were undertaken in January 2015 with support from Galway Rural Development and Athenry Community Council Trust Ltd. The works were to facilitate safe access to the heritage centre and conserve necessary sections. A financial contribution was provided to Athenry Heritage Centre for its maintenance and operational activities in 2015.
- The Battle of Aghrim Visitor Centre, managed by Galway County Council continued to facilitate additional School and Group Tours in 2015. A review of its operations and signage plan for the facility were undertaken.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Framework of Specialist Contractors for Small Conservation Works will be renewed in 2016, to support any works which may be advanced under the Historic Assets Strategy. This Strategy subject to resources seeks to manage and conserve key historic buildings in Corporate ownership that have the potential to be reused as community, social or economic assets if renovated and conserved. Staff will continue to support local projects in an advisory capacity.
- Galway County Council will implement a Signage Plan for the Battle of Aghrim Visitor Centre, and upgrade of some of the exhibition and facilities at the Centre subject to resources. The Centre will support events in the 1916 Centenary Programme for the County of Galway.
- Subject to Council approval resources will be provided for the operation of the Athenry Heritage Centre and promotion of the conservation work at the site will be advanced.

5. Community Warden Service

Indicative Activities in 2015:

Corporate Services supports the co-ordination of the Warden Service which delivers a range of services on behalf of the Council. Monthly workplans are compiled based on service needs.

- Litter Pollution/Derelict Sites Surveys were carried out, whilst regular inspections of Playgrounds, Parks, Local Authority Estates, Halting Sites, Piers, Beaches, Bottle banks etc. continued to be undertaken by the Wardens.

- The Wardens continued to assist with the operation of pay parking and the implementation of traffic management plans in a number of towns across the County.
- The Warden Service assisted Casual Trading through licence inspections and support for key events such as the Maam Cross Fair.
- Community Wardens continued to assist the Housing Section in implementing the Control of Horses Act 1996 among other duties.
- Environmental Enforcement including the issuing of Litter fines and notices under the Waste Management and Water pollution Acts continued to be undertaken by the Warden Service and this has Priority Action in 2015.
- Dog Licensing inspection campaigns continued throughout the year.
- The Wardens continued to implement the provisions of the Roads Act 1993, in relation to abandoned vehicles, with vehicles identified, reported and removed as necessary throughout the year.
- A pilot project was initiated with the Environment Section regarding the automation of task reporting and with Corporate Services in regard to use of software and an 'app' to undertake and file Playground Inspections using assigned smartphones.

Proposals for 2016:

- This Unit will continue to co-ordinate the allocation of functions to the Community Warden Service and review the impact of functions based on agreed service indicators.
- Work will continue on assessing how the Service can best assist in meeting the objectives and business priorities of the organisation.
- Phased replacement of the Community Wardens vans will be implemented as resources allow.

<h2>6 Disability Action</h2>

Indicative Activities 2015:

- Continued delivery of the Disability Action Plan 2007-2015.
- Installation of pedestrian crossing lights in Portumna.
- Advance the provision of accessible equipment for a number of Council Playgrounds.
- Agreed Accessible Actions as part of the Galway Age Friendly County Strategy.
- Contributed to the drafting of the Galway County Council Customer Service Strategy to ensure targets for physical access were integrated.

Proposals for 2016:

- Support implementation of the Customer Service Action Plan to continually improve access to services for persons with a disability and improved access at public counters in Áras an Chontae.

- Implement a Promotion and Awareness Project as part of the Transition Year Initiative with selected Schools in accordance with LGMA programme.
- Prepare new Disability Action Plan in compliance with Department Guidelines.

7 Promoting the Irish Language

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Scoil Samhraidh an Phiarsaigh/Pádraig Pearse Summer School was established as an annual event in July 2015 in Ros Muc as the opening event of the 1916 Centenary Programme for the County of Galway. The inaugural Summer School was very successful and well attended.
- Council continues to engage with An Roinn Ealaín, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta on Scéim Teanga Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae na Gaillimhe 2013 – 2016.
- Information and consultation continues to be provided to staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe regarding language duties, obligations and legislation.
- A detailed programme of Irish Language events was developed for the 1916 Centenary Programme for the County of Galway which has the largest Irish language strand of any programme in the Country.
- New website content approval procedure continued to be implemented in association with Customer Services and Information Systems.
- The email gaeilge@cocogaillimh.ie was promoted to customers as part of enhanced service delivery.
- The dedicated Irish language telephone service continued to be provided and the number of staff manning the service was extended in 2015.
- In March, a detailed programme for Seachtain na Gaeilge was implemented including engaging staff with competitions, events and exhibitions.
- Stéibh 2016 song competition was extended to include all schools in County Galway and launched in September 2015 for recording and compilation of a CD in early 2016.
- Irish language category was included in the Community Support Scheme with small scale grants approved for projects and activities that increase the use of Irish language in communities throughout the County.
- Scoláireachtaí Gaeltachta Phádraig Mac Piarais Chomhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe/Galway County Council Pádraig Pearse Scholarship was launched in collaboration with Summer Colleges in Conamara with applications to be invited in late 2015.
- Scoláireacht Éamonn Ceannt/Éamonn Ceannt Scholarship for Galway County Council employees was launched to assist staff in attending Gaeltacht & Irish courses which will assist the Council in increasing the services it provides in the Irish Language.
- The Council continued to co-operate with An Coimisinéir Teanga, in dealing with issues raised by members of the public, regarding Irish language services and legislation.

- An Award for the Irish Language continued to be included in the Cathaoirleach's Awards for Gaeltacht and Non Gaeltacht communities and Schools.
- Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe continued its support of the promotion of Irish in communities throughout the County through the Glór na nGael Award which was presented to Forbairt Chonamara Láir Teo. in April 2015.

Proposals for 2016:

- Conduct a review of the implementation of Scéim Teanga Údarás Áitiúla Chontae na Gaillimhe.
- Continue to provide information to all staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe regarding language duties, obligations and legislation.
- Continue to support and deliver the Irish language strand of the 1916 Centenary Programme for the County of Galway in accordance with available funding.
- Continue to provide appropriate Irish courses, language awareness and language support material to staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe, to enhance the provision of services through Irish.
- Promote Irish language category for Gradaim an Chathaoirligh and community support grants;
- Review operation of Irish language phone service with a view to continual improvement.
- Continue to operate web-site approval process in partnership with Customer Services and Information Systems.
- Lead participation of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe in activities for Seachtain na Gaeilge in March 2016.

<p>8 Facilities Management – Council Properties / Health & Safety</p>
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Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Corporate Services continued to provide caretaking and facilities management services for the Council's network of offices, libraries and civic functions.
- Corporate Services continued to provide Project Management Services on behalf of the Library Service in the delivery of the new Ballinasloe Library Project and Conservation Repairs to Gort Library.
- The cessation of the Lease at Woodquay Court and the Relocation of the Local Enterprise Office to the first floor in County Hall.
- The reconfiguration & refurbishment of the Council Chamber to accommodate 39 Elected Members was completed.

Energy Management & Energy Reduction Initiatives

- Grant approved from SEAI for energy efficiency works in County Hall through Better Energy Communities Initiative. These works involved the installation of an additional 22Kw of Solar Photovoltaic Panels on the roof of County Hall. These panels along with the existing panels installed in 2013 and 2014 total 30Kw and will reduce the electrical consumption in County Hall by circa 9% on an annual basis. Also completed under this scheme was the replacement of CFL fittings to more efficient LED fittings.
- County Hall increased it's Building Energy Rating (BER), from D1 to C3 on it's Display Energy Certificate for 2015.
- The original boilers at Tuam Leisure Centre were replaced with more energy efficient boilers which will result in energy and cost savings.

Proposals for 2016:

- Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) will continue to be implemented using staff trained in this area in 2016.
- Maintenance contracts will continue to be the subject of ongoing review to achieve further reductions in costs where feasible. New tender documents will be prepared late 2016 for contract implementation in early 2017 for Lift Maintenance, Fire Alarm, Fire Extinguishers, Emergency Lighting, Access Control, CCTV, Intruder Alarm for all offices & library accommodation
- The Unit will continue to deliver actions in accordance with the Energy Management Action Plan, with a view to further reducing energy consumption.
- Revised Cleaning Contracts for Office and Library Accommodation will be undertaken.

9 Management of Records & Archives

The Archives Section works to ensure the care, preservation, management of and access to the Council's archives. Archives are valuable cultural assets which require specific care, and with growing interest in our past and in particular in family history and for The Decade of Commemorations, they are also important for cultural tourism. The Section also provides policy advice to the Council on the care and management of its records.

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Assisted with the development of a programme of events to mark for the centenary of the 1916 Rising,
- Conducted extensive research and preparatory work on various Archive projects to be delivered in 2016 to commemorate 1916.

- Continued to provide access to information on Galway County Council's archival holdings through its descriptive lists and also its on-line catalogue, and through various archival portals.
- Continued the programme of providing security backup and reference surrogates to collections¹ and of processing several small archive collections².
- Provided on-going reader services, such as access to collections for research purposes, assistance with research queries, and provision of research advice and guidance.
- Monitored the environmental conditions of the archives and endeavoured to ensure their continued protection, preservation and management, despite storage facilities not meeting internationally acceptable preservation standards
- Outreach activities included the
 - Display of various items from the Archives, together with social media notification of displays, particularly those to mark special events /centenaries, such as Seachtain na Gaeilge, the sinking of the Lusitania, the birth of Walter Macken, and the 50th anniversary of Galway Cathedral.
 - Press releases and radio interviews relating to additions to the Digital Archive.
 - Publication of article in *Galway's Heritage* on archives relating to bridge and river heritage.
- Provided advice on records management best practice and assistance to Sections within Galway County Council as required.
- Continued the management of non-current record transfers to storage & record retrievals and returns: 567 recall requests were processed from January to-date (11/11/2015). There are now 98,238 records on the ArLink records management database.

Proposals for 2016:

- Continue to work with the Decade of Commemoration Committee with the delivery of the 1916/2016 Centenary Programme of events.
- Complete and launch specific Archive projects for the County of Galway 1916/2016 Centenary Programme (e.g. *From Colonial State to Free State* and *Revolution and Recollection* exhibitions, and commemorative postcards).
- Additional archive collections will be processed, whilst continuing to provide access and advice to researchers.
- Continue the programme of providing security backup and reference surrogates to collections.

¹ Backup preservation copies obtained for collections /items such as TTC/1/16 -24; GS15/01; GP4; GC/Env2/, 5 volumes, and GC/Env1/, 1 volume.

² Also includes, but not limited to GC/CSO/6, GS15/01, GC/CSO/7, GS15/02

- Galway County Council will continue to avail of commercial storage for its non-current records, and manage the retrieval and return of records held in off-site storage.
- Continue to liaise with Sections to develop and implement file classification & record retention schedules, and provide advice on records management best practice.
- Galway County Council to provide suitable accommodation for the Archives, meeting required international standards.

10 Register of Electors

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Register of Electors for 2015/2016 was published on the 1st February, 2015 with a total of 134,169 on the register.
- Actions were implemented to promote the Register and to add new Voters to the Supplementary Register of Electors for the Marriage Equality Referendum and the Presidential Age Referendum which were held on 22nd May, 2015.
- Outgoing mail from County Hall carried a promotion message to support the Ensure Your Vote – www.checktheregister.ie campaign.
- The Draft Register of Electors for 2016/2017 was on Public Display from the 1st to 25th of November, 2015, with Revision Courts taking place in December 2015.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will publish the Register of Electors in accordance with the relevant statutory timeframes and undertake a promotional campaign to increase voter registration.
- Actions will be implemented to promote the Register and to add new Voters to the Supplementary Register of Electors for the General Election.
- The Draft Register of Electors for 2017/2018 will be put on Public Display from the 1st to 25th of November, 2016, with Revision Courts to follow.

11 Corporate Planning & Support / Local Representation/ Civic Leadership

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Five meetings of the Corporate Policy Group have been held to date in 2015.
- A Civic Reception was held on 15th April, 2015 to honour the achievements of the following: Students from the College of Tourism & Arts, GMIT on their recent success at CATEX 2015; Mr. Derek O'Connor, Gort, who has won 1,000 point-to-point races; Seamount College Kinvara Camogie Team, All-Ireland Senior A Schools Camogie Champions 2015; Ms. Olivia Lane, Turloughmore, who captured 4 world records at the

Powerlifting World Championships in Moldova this year; Mr. Evan Molloy represented his daughter Claire who was part of the Irish team who won the Women's RBS 6 Nations Rugby Championship 2015; the Corofin Team, All-Ireland Senior Football Club Champions 2015; Ms. Geraldine Cronnelly, Athenry, All-Ireland Indoor Archery Tournament winner 2015.`

- On Tuesday 21st April, 2015, the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Hoade, hosted a Reception in honour of the Rose of Tralee 2014/2015, Ms. Maria Walsh, at Áras an Chontae.
- A Civic Reception was held on 11th November, 2015 to honour the achievements of the following: Glenamaddy Community School who won the All Ireland Senior A Football Title; Letterfrack National School, who were the SAP First Lego League Champions in 2015; Ms. Lorraine Hession, medal winner at the Special Olympics World Games 2015; Ms. Niamh Heffernan, Quadruple Handball Champion and Ms. Olive Loughnane, World Champion 20km Race Walk at the 2009 World Championships.
- Administrative services were provided to the Chief Executive and Cathaoirleach and Elected Members, Corporate Policy Group and Council Meetings.
- Support was provided for meetings outside of County Hall.
- The official opening and Ecumenical Blessing of the reconfigured Council Chamber took place on Tuesday 26th May, 2015.
- Corporate Services arranged for the publication of the 'Public Register of Attendance and Payments to Elected Members' on-line on the Councils website in line with new regulations.
- Corporate Services continued to manage process for receipt, storage and opening of tenders and management of the postal services.
- Assistance was provided to elected members in order to facilitate attendance at Training and Conferences.
- In-house Training was delivered to the Members
- A new Joint Policing Committee was established in April in accordance with the new guidelines issued by the Department of Justice and Equality. The Joint Policing Committee (JPC) is made up of Local Authority elected members, members of An Garda Síochána, members of the Oireachtas and community & voluntary representatives. Its function is to serve as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the local authority's administrative area. A 6 year Strategic Plan was adopted by the JPC in July and three sub-committees were formed to facilitate delivery of the strategic objectives. A JPC Public Meeting was held in the Athenry – Oranmore Municipal District on 9th November.
- Implementation of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) and Competency based Review was ongoing in 2015.
- The following Strategic Policy Committees were established in 2015:
 - Housing, Corporate & Recreation SPC,
 - Roads, Transportation & Marine SPC,
 - Planning & Community SPC,

- Environment, Water Services, Fire & Emergency SPC,
- Economic Development & Enterprise SPC.

The Decade of Commemorations 2013 – 2023 Commemorative Strategy for the County of Galway & 1916 Centenary Programme for the County of Galway:

- During 2015, a range of events and initiatives across various Units were delivered under the Galway Commemorative Strategy for the Decade of Commemorations 2013 – 2023. A particular focus in 2015, was the development of a balanced, inclusive and comprehensive range of events and initiatives to mark the centenary of 1916.
- Community Consultation Workshops were held in Tuam, Oughterard, Loughrea and An Cheathrú Rua to facilitate direct input by individuals, communities and stakeholders in the development of the 1916 Centenary Programme.
- The Galway County Council Centenary of the 1916 Rising Community Commemorative Grant Scheme was launched to facilitate communities in their preparations for the Centenary of the 1916 Rising. A total of 28 projects were approved by Council for funding under the scheme in July 2015.
- The 1916 Centenary Programme for the County of Galway was approved by Plenary Council in July 2015. An overview of the Programme was presented to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government in July 2015.
- The opening event to mark the Centenary of the 1916 Rising in the County of Galway was held in Ros Muc on the 31st July 2015, to mark 100 years to the date that P.H. Pearse left his summer residence and summer school for students of St. Enda's in Ros Muc to travel to Dublin, to deliver the graveside oration at the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa. The inaugural Irish language Pádraig Pearse Summer School was hosted by Galway County Council in Ros Muc to mark this historic event and in recognition of the strong ties of Pearse with the County of Galway.
- The Galway County Council Pádraig Pearse and Éamonn Ceannt Scholarships were launched in September 2015 with applications to be invited in late 2015.
- The national launch of the Programme attended by the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government was held in Dublin in October 2015, with the local launch of the Programme held on the 16th November 2015 at Áras an Chonate.
- The significant role of women in the events of the 1916 Easter Rising will be acknowledged with the publication, by Galway County Council, of *Cumann na mBan: County Galway Dimensions*, to be accompanied by a specially commissioned CD featuring *The Soldiers of Cumann na mBan*. The launch of the Galway County Council publication and CD will be held on Thursday, 3rd December 2015.

Proposals for 2016:

- Corporate Services will continue to support the Cathaoirleach, elected members and the organisation of Council meetings.
- The Council will update Staff & Members Ethics Register.
- The Unit will publish the Public Register of Attendance and Payments to Elected Members.
- The Unit will actively support the role of the Strategic Policy Committees and the Corporate Policy Group in policy formation.
- Continue Co-ordination of the Joint Policing Committee on behalf of the organisation
- Continue to support the implementation of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) and Competency based Reviews in the organisation
- Joint Policing Committee to hold Quarterly Meetings, an AGM, and one Public Meeting.

1916 Centenary Programme for the County of Galway:

- The delivery of 1916 Centenary Programme for the County of Galway, in partnership with our communities and stakeholders, over the seven programme strands, state and local ceremonial, historical reflection, the living language, cultural expression, community participation, youth and imagination, global and diaspora, based on available resources, will be a priority during 2016.
- The opening event of the Ceremonial Strand of the Programme will take place on the 1st January 2016 at 1.00 pm with a ceremony at Áras an Chontae.
- The County of Galway will host a State Ceremonial event on Easter Monday 2016, when Athenry in recognition of the historical significance of the town and the surrounding areas in relation to the events of 1916, will be one of only four locations outside of Dublin to participate in synchronised wreath-laying ceremonies. This televised state event will be held at 1.15pm - the time that the first shots of the 1916 Rising were fired.
- The Council will deliver the 1916 flagship projects, as approved by Council in 2013, in the adoption of the Decade of Commemorations 2013 – 2023 Commemorative Strategy for the County of Galway, including the specially commissioned bi-lingual publication '*Centenary Reflections on the 1916 Rising: A County Galway Perspective*', the Decade of Commemoration Website and Memory Mapping Project and the development of Irish language resource packs to enhance the use of the Irish language.
- A Civic Event will be held in May 2016 to recognise the special significance of the centenary year to the relatives of the volunteers, while the Emigration and Our Galway County Diaspora Conference, to be held in September 2016, will afford our emigrants and the Galway Associations the opportunity to actively participate in our commemorations.
- The Council will deliver a number of projects in collaboration with the Department of Heritage and Tourism, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, including the County

Galway 1916 Rising Heritage Trail and a Commemorative Map of the Rising in the County of Galway.

- Galway County Council in partnership with Teagasc will host a National 1916-2016 event, commemorating Farming and Country Life 1916-2016 at Teagasc, Mellows Campus in Athenry. This free national flagship event will take place on Friday June 10th and Saturday June 11th 2016 with themes to include the 1916 Rising, Farm Family and Rural Life, the Land, Education and Co-operation, Mechanization of Farming, Livestock and Sporting and Cultural Life of the period.
- The delivery of over 150 events and initiatives over the course of 2016, based on the themes of Remembering, Reconciling, Presenting, Imagining and Celebrating, will afford both our communities and diaspora the opportunity to play an active part, as we as a county collectively remember, reflect and commemorate the events of 1916 with pride and with respect.

12 Freedom of Information and Access to Information on the Environment

Indicative Activities in 2015:

There was a marked increase in the number of Freedom of Information Requests received in 2015. The total number of requests received in 2014 was 50, while 165 requests have been received up to 12th November, 2015.

- 165 FOI Requests were received up to October 2015 and decisions issued as follows: 72 granted, 37 part granted, 33 refused, 8 transferred/withdrawn, 15 remain to be decided.
- 6 Appeals for an Internal Review of FOI Decision received and decision issued as follows: 2 decisions upheld, 2 decisions varied, 2 remain to be decided.
- 1 Appeal to the Office of the Information Commissioner - The OIC affirmed the Council's decision.
- 15 Access to Information on the Environment Requests received and replies issued as follows: 7 granted, 7 part granted, 1 remains to be decided.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will continue to comply with our statutory requirements regarding Freedom of Information and Access to Information on the Environment legislation.
- The Council will prepare a Publication Scheme in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

13 Educational Support Services/Student Grants

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- A new single National Awarding Authority (Student Universal Support Ireland) was introduced by Government in 2012 and is operated by County of Dublin VEC. SUSI is responsible for all new applications.
- The Council remains responsible for 55 students and all first term maintenance payments were paid by mid October 2015.
- Dedicated email, www.twitter.com/galwaystudents, phone line and text service is ongoing for student queries.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will continue to administer the payments (Maintenance and Fees) and appeals procedure for existing students until their courses are completed. No new applicants will be dealt with by the Council in 2016.

14 Workplace Partnership

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Meeting of the Handling Significant Change through Partnership Forum meeting arranged for 3rd December 2015
- Publication of the organisation's internal newsletter Aon Scéal.

Proposals for 2016:

- Monitor implementation of the Public Services Agreement and relevant recommendations from the Local Government Efficiency Review Group Reports.
- Re-convene the Workplace Partnership Committee.

15 Customer Service

Indicative Activities in 2015:

Customer Services Plan and Customer Services Officers Group

- The Customer Services Officers Group (CSOG) continued to meet over 2015. The CSOG is comprised of staff representatives from all the main service areas.
- CSOG Action Plan 2015 was compiled, agreed and implementation commenced and was reviewed throughout the year.

- Customer Services Staff Resource Packs, based on the new Quality Customer Services Strategy were compiled and distributed to all Sections of the Council. The resource packs provide staff with easy access to all parts of the strategy and Scéim Teanga in order to be better informed when dealing with customers at public counters.
- The Customer Services Team continued to co-ordinate door access cards and car park fobs for staff and other in-house support services for staff.
- The email address, customerservices@galwaycoco.ie remains in operation. All Staff are asked to submit information on projects, campaigns, events, works etc. so that the Customer Services Team are aware what events are taking place across the Council and are better informed to handle queries. The general public can also email this address with general queries which are investigated and replied to appropriately.
- Customer Services continued to moderate and process **Fix Your Street** cases and follow up on outstanding cases with relevant sections. Fix Your Street is a national programme and is an on-line public forum where issues can be submitted by location to the relevant local authority.
- The centralised system for Public Notices continued in 2015 to enhance our Corporate Image in the Print Media, to generate savings through shared advertising space and also meet our requirements under National Procurement Framework. Advance copies of public notices prior to notices appearing in the various newspapers appear on Social Media and are sent to Elected Members with relevant contact details included.
- The weekly edition of **'What's Happening?'** continues to be published and circulated to All Staff every Friday to ensure improved internal communications and a total of 124 editions have been published to date

Customer Services Desk and Communications Centre

- The Customer Services Desk continues to be operated to provide efficient referral/query handling for customers as they enter Áras an Chontae. The phone service continues to be operated from the Customer Services Communications Centre on the first floor of Áras an Chontae.
- Corporate Services staff based in Customer Services are assigned to support the Mobile Phone Policy of the organisation and day to day administration of the account.

Communications and Social Media

- Increased use of Social Media (Twitter, FB) with over 1,500 likes on Facebook and over 6,500 followers on Twitter to date and this is continuing to grow on a daily basis.
- Social Media has been integrated with Advertising and other Promotional Campaigns of the Council and specific attention given to the use of Social Media during severe weather events which has been acknowledged by the OEP and Dept of Environment, Community & Local Government. There has been an increase in the posting of events

on behalf of staff with a focus on Road Works, Water Disruptions and any other day to day events happening throughout the County.

- Galway County Council participated in #OurCouncilDay on the 05/03/15. #OurCouncilDay was trending second to #WorldBookDay in Ireland on Twitter on the day.
- Over 150 application forms for all sections of the local authority were reformatted, translated, converted to fillable pdfs, coded and uploaded to website.

Proposals for 2016:

- Co-ordinate implementation of the Customer Service Action Plan 2016 in line with agreed targets and goals in the Quality Customer Services Strategy.
- Continue to facilitate the Customer Services Officers Group bi-monthly meetings, information sharing and joint actions across all sections.
- Research Customer Service Models to apply to local needs and implement benchmarking process to further develop our standards.
- Continue to implement 'Fix Your Street' to meet agreed targets.
- Facilitate updating of the Council Web-site in both languages and maintain a central deposit and coding system for all County Council Application Forms available via the web-site.
- Continue to focus on the development of the County Council's use of Social Media as a source of information and an efficient communication channel for our customers.

16 Operation of Coroner Expenses

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Council continued to provide administrative support for the processing of all payments of fees for the City and County Coroners Service.

Proposals for 2016:

- Monitor and review the implementation of the Agreed Scheme for Funeral Directors/Undertakers in accordance with available resources and maintain updated information on the Panel.
- Continue administration of payments for implementation of the Coroners Service including Pathology, Removal, Coroners Courts and other duties in line with Agreed Schemes and Statutory Instruments.

17 Operation of Markets & Casual Trading and Requests for Filming in County

Indicative Activities 2015:

- Casual Trading Licenses are issued annually for a fee for a number of towns and villages throughout the County including Athenry (5), Ballinasloe (13), Clifden (9), Dunmore (1), Gort (10), Loughrea (2), Mountbellew (6), Headford (1), Tuam (5); in line with the Casual Trading Bye-Laws.
- Special Event Licenses are issued for various festivals and fairs which take place throughout the year, e.g. Maam Valley Fair (39) and the Clifden Pony Show (23) as well as the Ballygar, Dunmore and Kinvara (Cuckoo and Cruinniu na mBád) Festivals. Litter Deposits are sought from providers for the Maam Valley Fair and the Clifden Pony Show.
- Requests from film makers to use the public property for filming were processed.
- Requests from Cinemobile and Funfair Operators to park at various towns and villages are also processed including those formerly dealt with by Ballinasloe Town Council.
- The Unit was also involved with the co-ordination of trading at the Fair Green for the Ballinasloe Horse Fair in October. In addition to trading, the Unit worked with the Municipal District office with regarding to parking, security and access to the trading area. The Unit also worked with the Community and Enterprise Section and local Committees in the promotion of the activities throughout the Festival.

Proposals for 2016:

- Continue to issue Casual Trading Licenses in line with existing Bye-Laws.
- Progress on-line payment facilities for Licenses.
- Continue to facilitate queries and issue permissions as required to Media and Production Companies wishing to film in the County in support of the Film Galway Partnership.
- Co-ordination and operation of trading at the Ballinasloe Horse Fair in October in partnership with the Ballinasloe Municipal District Office.

18 Internal Audit Activity

The Internal Audit Unit is responsible for providing assurance to the Chief Executive of the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control and risk management systems

The Unit carries out audits and reviews through its annual Audit Plan, which is drawn up in conjunction with the Executive Management Team and the Audit Committee.

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- A total of 9 audits were completed from the 2015 Audit Plan with 5 presented to the Audit Committee
- An in depth review of 3 capital schemes was undertaken in compliance with the quality assurance measure of the Public Spending Code
- 2014 Audit Report recommendations were reviewed.
- Random checks were undertaken on the invoicing of Development Contributions.
- Monthly checking of the cash office, quarterly checking of revenue collector's receipts and lodgements, together with weekly checking in the motor tax headquarters office in County Hall. In addition, periodic checking and stock taking was undertaken in the motor tax sub offices in Ballinasloe and An Cheathrú Rua.
- Periodic examination of plant hire record sheets was carried out to establish compliance with LA tender rules.
- Attendance at tender openings.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Internal Audit Unit will continue to facilitate the work of the Audit Committee
- Reviews of recommendations made in the 2015 audit reports
- The 2016 Audit Plan will be risk based with recommendations rated
- Completion of audits as per the 2016 Audit Plan.
- Compliance with the Quality Assurance requirements of the Public Spending Code
- Continue work on Policy compliance testing.
- Bi Weekly, monthly, quarterly and periodic checks on the various income collection streams.
- Periodic checking and stock taking in the motor tax sub offices in Ballinasloe and An Cheathrú Rua.

Legal Advisory Services

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Department provided legal services for all programme areas, including the purchase and sale of properties, conduct of litigation including District Court Prosecutions, Circuit and High Court Litigation, including Judicial Review. In particular, District Court Litigation and Judicial Review were substantial areas of work.
- The Case Management System, which facilitates the use of templates to create work flows for the efficient and cost effective delivery of legal services, is constantly being updated and applied to further work areas.

- In relation to the Register of Lands – Largest Omnibus Folio GY23906 is very near completion.
- A significant number of old files were reviewed and archived under the Record Management Policy.

Proposals for 2016:

- Concentrate on providing advisory legal services and continue to provide legal services for all programme areas.
- Continue to provide Legal Services for the *Galway City Transportation Programme*.
- New Keyhouse Upgrade for the Case Management System - concentrating on Brief Building.
- Complete the Register of Lands Database.
- Work is still in progress in relation to the registration of some old Roads/Water Services and Housing Files.
- Continue implementation of the Record Management Policy i.e remove all non-current files from the office and also concentrate on files being returned to Review/Dispose of them.

<p>Housing and Emergency Services</p>
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- Funding was made available in 2015 for bringing vacant houses back to use and the Council carried out works on 72 houses.
- An Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme continued to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock throughout 2015 and works were completed on 290 houses.
- Funding was provided for Disabled Persons Grants and it is anticipated that 38 Local Authority Houses will have work carried out to improve the quality of life for tenants
- CCTV cameras are in place in three Local Authority Estates. The pilot sites chosen;- Gortbride, Loughrea, Bridge Court, Ahascragh and Cullairbaun, Athenry - has proved to be a great success and an additional four sites have been identified for rolling out CCTV camera installation for 2016.

Social Housing

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The provision of Social Housing is met through the Rental Accommodation Scheme, the Voluntary Sector and the traditional Council Housing stock. In addition, the Housing Assistance Payment will be rolled out in Galway County Council from November 2015. It is considered that an allocation of social housing through any of these channels meets the housing needs of the applicant.
- The Council completed the purchase of 28 units in 2015. A further 41 units are at contract stage. The Housing Unit is actively endeavoring to source additional good quality homes in areas of demand as determined by our Housing Waiting List.
- There are currently over 4,000 applicants on the housing waiting list.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will continue its progress in the provision of Social Housing for persons on the Social Housing list and will endeavour to reduce further the number of vacant Council units subject to funding and allocate them in a timely manner.
- The Council will seek to optimise the supply of housing units through all available channels.

Homelessness

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- There has been a marked increase in the demand for homeless services and in particular for Homeless families. The Council is considering proposals for transition housing. Some families will need assistance with tenancy sustainment.
- The Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) is the shared client support and bed management system for all homeless services and accurate & timely population of this database has proved very useful between colleagues and other agencies for case history and statistical purposes.
- The increased emphasis on care and case management and “move on options” for service users is useful but limited by the scarcity of move on options either in private rented sector or supported accommodation. Demand for Homeless services continues to increase in numbers and complexity. A cohort of applicants have lost their rented accommodation through no fault of theirs and simply cannot get alternative accommodation. They do not need supports apart from a home.
- Developed the Homeless Action Team / Homeless Steering Committee
- The aim of Homeless Strategies of providing long term accommodation with all the necessary supports has been successfully achieved with 7 families and 4 single applicants this year.

Proposals for 2016:

- Progress transition accommodation for families in cooperation with Voluntary bodies and with supports tailored to needs.
- Progress step down/ transition accommodation for single people needing some supports in cooperation with Voluntary bodies and with supports tailored to needs.
- Work with Voluntary & Statutory bodies to prevent Homelessness (e.g. Threshold, Tusla etc.)
- Continue with case management with emphasis on move on to appropriate accommodation.
- The Homeless Action Team / Homeless Steering Committee to meet quarterly.
- To continue to provide long term accommodation with all the necessary supports for both families and single homeless applicants

Voluntary Housing

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Council is continuing to engage with the Voluntary sector so as to maximise the number of units being made available to us through the funding schemes **CAS** (Capital Assistance Scheme) and **CALF** (Capital Advance & Leasing Facility).
- The following projects are progressing with CAS funding :
 - Construction of 12 units at Dunlo Hill, Ballinasloe by Cluid Housing Association and St Vincent de Paul
 - Construction of 13 units in Letterfrack by Cluid.
 - A further 41 units have been approved in 2015 in Mountbellew, Claregalway, Gort, Inverin, Carraroe, and Oranmore.
 - Payment and Availability agreements commenced in 2015 for 35 units under the Capital Advance & Leasing Facility (CALF). The Council has full nomination rights on these units which are located at Clifden (14 units, Ballinasloe (10 units) and Loughrea (11 units) for a period of between 19 and 30 years.

Proposals for 2016:

- It is proposed that the Council will continue to engage pro-actively with the AHB's in the provision of housing under the current options available. It is anticipated that a significant number of units will be provided under available schemes and all options will be examined with the sector. The Council is continuing to engage with the AHB's in relation to the sourcing of further units under CALF and it is anticipated that a number of units will be acquired under the scheme in 2016.

Mortgage to Rent Scheme

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Mortgage to Rent Scheme was introduced by the Department of Environment Community and Local Government in 2012. Under this scheme, people who are having trouble paying their mortgages can switch from owning their home to renting their home as social tenants. If you take up a mortgage-to-rent scheme, you will no longer own your home or have any financial interest in it. The household pays rent, according to their income, to the Housing Association.
- To qualify for the scheme the property owner must have participated in their lender's Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP), a process which the lender and the owner must take in order to try and resolve their difficulties. The mortgage must be unsustainable and the family must be eligible for social housing in the area where they live. The property must be considered suitable for purchase by a Housing Association. Approved applicants will voluntarily surrender possession of their home to their mortgage lender who immediately sells it to a Housing Association who will then rent it back to the family. The proceeds from the sale of property will go towards the mortgage debt and the applicant makes an arrangement with their lender for any remaining payments owed. There is potential to buy back the home after a period of 5 years if the household's financial situation improves. The status from owner to renter will remain confidential. To date the Council have completed 1 private mortgage application and 1 Local Authority mortgage application and have 7 approved cases which are progressing. There are 19 active applications under this scheme.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will continue to liaise with the Housing Agency and the applicants to further their applications, and to assess new Mortgage to Rent submissions.

Housing Grants

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The number of applications for Housing Aid for Older People paid in 2015 was 132 with the number of Mobility Aids Grants & Housing Aid Grants totaling 118.
- The total budget for 2015 was €2,057,454 of which €411,491 was to be provided from the Councils own resources.

Proposals for 2016:

- Commitment to continue administration of the grants schemes subject to the availability of the necessary funding.

Housing Construction

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Under the Social Housing Strategy, approval has been granted by the Department of Environment Community & Local Government to Galway County Council to proceed with the construction of 54 new social housing units (25 units at Weir Road, Tuam, 10 units at Garbally Drive, Ballinasloe, 3 units at Esker Hills, Ballinasloe, 10 units at Gort Mhaoilir, Athenry and 6 single rural dwellings at various locations). Procurement for design teams has been carried out by Galway County Council and a framework is in place. Preliminary designs are being prepared and the Council expects to commence the statutory planning process before the end of 2015 with procurement and commencement of construction to follow in 2016.

Proposals for 2016:

- Progress the construction projects given funding approval in 2015, and seek approval for additional payments.
- Identify strategic opportunities based on the council's land bank and other available options.

Extensions to Local Authority Houses

Indicative activities in 2015:

- The Council continues to examine all options to meet the needs of housing applicants and existing tenants where needs have changed. This includes the provision of extensions to existing local authority dwellings in order to address overcrowding or to meet other special needs of individuals/family members.
- No extensions were carried out in 2015.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will continue to examine all options available to meet the needs of its tenants including the option of providing appropriate alternative accommodation. Extensions will be considered in priority cases where it is seen as the best solution and subject to availability of funding.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) & Leasing

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Government has allocated funding for local authorities and approved housing bodies to lease or rent private residential properties for applicants on the housing list. Traditionally RAS is aimed at persons who are in receipt of rent supplement for a period in excess of 18 months. Since the 1st April 2011, any housing applicants that are in RAS type accommodation are deemed to have their housing need met.
- The RAS Unit carried out an extensive media campaign on local radio and newspapers trying to increase housing supply through the private rented market.
- At the end of Quarter 3, 2015 there were 1041 applicants in receipt of rent supplement for 18 months or more.
- There are 437 households accommodated currently through the RAS Scheme.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will continue to administer the RAS Scheme as well as working to progress supply options under the Social Housing Expenditure Programme Element of the Social Housing Strategy.

Void/Vacant Houses & Energy Efficiency Retrofit

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Funding was made available in 2015 for returning vacant houses back to productive use and the Council carried out works on 72 houses .
- The housing unit has completed energy efficiency works on over 60% of our stock since the 2013 programme was introduced.
- Derelict house funding was announced during Quarter 4 of 2015. A submission has been made to the Department and should funding be made available in 2016, the Housing unit will endeavour to return derelict units back in to use.

Proposals for 2016:

- Further energy efficiency works are proposed for 2016 depending on available funding.
- We will continue the trend of reducing the number of vacant houses in our stock. Progress will depend on the availability of adequate funds.

Tenancy and Estate Management

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Housing Unit continues to work with its vulnerable families in assisting them in maintaining their tenancies.

- The Tenancy and Estate Management Unit/ anti-social Behaviour Unit was established in 2013.
- An Anti-Social Behaviour Officer was appointed to the Unit in March 2014 and is working intensively in a number of areas.
- The Council's Tenancy and Estate Management Strategy involves active community engagement/participation at local level on an ongoing basis with an emphasis on the early identification of anti-social behaviour and breaches of tenancy agreement. The Council continues to engage with the Gardai and the unit meets regularly with the senior management in the Gardai to discuss problem areas and how both organizations can work together to address anti-social behaviour.
- CCTV is in operation in three sites and a further 4 sites will be rolled out.
- The Housing unit worked on an inter-agency level to tackle anti-social behaviour and to assist tenants to sustain their tenancies.

Proposals for 2016:

- As part of the interdepartmental and inter-agency strategic approach, the Housing Unit has identified target housing estates which will be the focus of extensive estate management activity over the coming year.
- CCTV will be rolled out in further Council estates in 2016.

Control of Horses

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Council continued to implement its protocol in conjunction with the Garda Siochana on the Control of Horses during 2015. The number of stray and abandoned horses has reduced significantly in 2015. The following are the statistics of horse lifts undertaken:
 - 2011 – 52 horses collected
 - 2012 – 243 horses collected
 - 2013 – 331 horses collected
 - 2014 – 240 horses collected
 - 2015 – 87 horses collected (to date 12/11/2015)
- In addition to the issue of wandering horses on public roads the Local Authority deals with stray and wandering animals on Council property and housing estates. The Council has undertaken a number of exercises to raise awareness and reduce the instances of keeping of animals on estates. Such exercises include public notices, letters to residents as well as Community Warden visits.
- Funding is provided by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine at the rate of €375 per horse seized and euthanized or €200(max) where a horse is seized and

rehomed. Whilst the Council makes every effort to operate within the fee limits set exceptional situations may arise resulting in greater costs.

Proposals for 2016:

- A Services Contract was put in place in July 2015 and will remain in place for 12 months with the option to extend the contract for a further 2 x 6 month periods bringing the contract term to 2 years. Galway County Council will continue to work with the Gardaí in tackling the issue of stray and abandoned horses on public roads. Furthermore we intend to build on the campaign of education and prevention measures undertaken to date on our estates with the support of the Community Wardens, Housing staff and Residents Associations.

Private Residential Tenancies Board - Registration of Rented Units

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Residential Tenancies Act 2004 came into operation on 1st September, 2004. Part 7 of this Act deals with the registration of tenancies with the Private Residential Tenancies Board. The published register is available on the Private Residential Tenancies Board website at www.prtb.ie
- Galway County Council inspected 72 properties up to 31st October 2015, to ensure compliance with standards for rented houses. A total of 72 Properties failed to comply with the current standards and Improvement notices were served on landlords requiring improvements to be carried out.

Proposals for 2016:

- On-going inspection of Private Rented Properties to confirm compliance with current Standards for Private Rented Properties. It is intended that an emphasis will be placed on increasing the number of inspections; however this will be dependent on resources available.

Housing & Emergency Services SPC

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Housing & Emergency Services SPC met on three occasions to date in 2015. Areas covered included Vacant Council Stock & Voids Management Policy, Estate Management, Social Housing Strategy, Capital Funding Programme, new Tenants Handbook, and the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme.

Proposals for 2016:

- In 2016, it is anticipated that the committee will examine, inter alia, the areas of choice for housing, the new Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme, the differential rent

scheme, the new planned maintenance programme, estate management plans, as well as closely monitoring progress on delivery targets under the capital and current programmes of the Social Housing Strategy, and the ongoing Housing Assistance Payment implementation.

CHES: MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MEM)

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Major Emergency Development Committee (MEDC) which was established by the Council as part of the New National Framework for MEM is ongoing and is chaired by Mr. Peter Gavican (Director of Services). Work is continuing by the committee in preparation of the Severe Weather & Flood Response Operational Plan.
- The MEM West Regional Steering Group continues to meet in its role of co-ordinating Major Emergency Management in the Galway, Mayo and Roscommon areas. The MEM West Working Group involving members of the Principal Emergency Services (PES's) in the West Region, i.e. Local Authority Fire Services, Local Garda Divisions and HSE West Ambulance Service, continues to operate, under the auspices of MEM West Regional Steering Group.
- Galway Co. Co. Headquarters continues as the location of the Local Co-Ordination Centre for the three Principal Response Agencies (PRA's) – Galway City/County Councils, HSE West and Galway Garda Division - for Major Emergencies in the Galway City and County area.
- The County/City MEM integration group, established between the PRA's in Galway City and County under the chair of Mr. Joe O' Neill Director of Services - Galway City Council to deal with issues in the City/County area and in particular large crowd events, continues to operate.
- A new external emergency plan for large Crowd events in Galway Racecourse -which is non statutory - was prepared by the relevant PRA's (City Council including Galway Fire & Rescue Service; Galway Gardai, & HSE West) and Galway Race Course consultants and was operational for Galway Races 2015
- Regional training is ongoing for relevant personnel in the eight PRA'S in the west region
- Galway County Council procured an Onsite Co ordination Centre (OSCC) Vehicle for MEM on behalf of the 8 PRA's in the West, MEM region .It is hoped to procure some capital support for this vehicle from MEM RSG in 2015.

Proposals for 2016:

- Both local and regional personnel will receive further training and testing in their various new roles as allocated in the Major Emergency Plan.
- Validation and updating of the existing County Council Major Emergency plan is envisaged to continue in 2016.

- Work on the Major Emergency Regional co-ordination plan is ongoing.
- Council personnel and Galway fire service personnel will continue to support Regional Steering Group and Regional Working Groups and local MEDC and the Galway County/City integration group.
- A Major Emergency exercise involving the 4 LCA's, including Galway Harbour Authority and Site operator TOPAZ involving an simulated incident at the Seveso II site in the Galway City Docks will be scheduled in 2016 as part of the testing and validation of the external emergency plan as required under SEVESO II regulations.
- Galway County council will procure a second tempoary mobile body storage unit for the 11 Local Authorities in the West North West And Midlands MEM regions to increase capacity in these regions respectively
- Work will continue on upgrading OSSC Vehicle, which will be stowed in galway City Fire Station and deployed using Galway City CD personnel

CHES: FIRE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Schools Fire Safety Program was rolled out again in primary schools in County Station Areas
- Self contained smoke alarms with long life batteries are been procured by GFRS for 250 households and continue to be issued to households in Galway City and County for installation by community groups as in previous years. This project was completed with the assistance of the Community and Enterprise Units in both Galway City and Galway County Councils as part of the ongoing National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) Programme.

Proposals for 2016:

- It is hoped to have the Schools Fire Safety Programme restarted in 2016 involving local fire officers visiting 4th class in a number of national schools in Galway City Brigade Area. This program delivers a national fire safety message but is subject to the availability of financial resources.
- Self contained smoke alarms will be issued in 2016 in both city and county from allocations received in 2014 and 2015.

CHES : FIRE OPERATIONS

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE (KCS)

A FRAMEWORK FOR FIRE SAFETY IN IRELAND

The Fire Service is subject to the same financial constraints and consequent scrutiny of expenditure as are all Local Authority services. Additional investment in Fire Services

beyond that already programmed will be challenging, given the impairment of public and local government finances.

The challenge – as reflected in the document title – “Keeping Communities Safe” – is to manage the available resources to achieve an optimal outcome for the public in terms of their individual safety, and to minimise loss and disruption to society.

Achieving the successful implementation of the main provisions in KCS by the end of 2016 will require commitment and endeavour from the Fire Service, the City and County Management Teams along with the City and County Elected Representatives. It will be necessary to prepare a Service Development Plan/ Action Plan which will be reflected in the form of a new Draft Section 26 Plan prepared by the Fire Service Management. The Draft Section 26 Plan has been presented for consideration to the County Council housing & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee in May 2014 outlining the background and content of the document and the associated proposed changes in the Fire Authority Policy as a consequence. The updated Draft Section 26 Plan will be presented to a full meeting of the Council in late 2015 or early 2016

All the work on KCS has been put on hold currently, until discussions between NDFEM and unions at national level are concluded, which is expected before end of 2015.

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- There are **10** Fire Stations in the City and County located at Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Galway City, Gort, Loughrea, Mountbellew, Portumna, Tuam and Inis Mór. All stations are resourced with retained personnel except Galway City, which is a mix of full-time personnel on shift and retained personnel.
- The Council employs approximately **150-155** personnel at full complement directly in the Galway Fire Service including full time and retained fire-fighters in the City and County and senior fire officers and civilian support personnel in the Galway City Fire station.
- During **2014**, the fire service responded to a total of **1,507** emergency incidents, **806** by the County Brigades and **701** by the Galway City Brigade in it's City and County fire ground. This represented a **3.6%** decrease in emergency calls when compared to **2014** see **FIG 1a** for Emergency calls attended by GFRS 2008-2014, and breakdown of calls for city and county in FIG1b respectively. The Fire Brigade continue to attend at emergency incidents in the City and County, as in previous years. The total number of incidents – approximately-in Galway City and County attended by all brigades to **1st September 2015** was **1,127**, of which **498** were in Galway City Brigade Area.
- The decrease in fire and emergency calls attended for first 3 quarters this year is marginal @ **1.6%** when compared to same period last year.

Fig 1b Galway Fire Service Calls Summary By Type 2008-2014

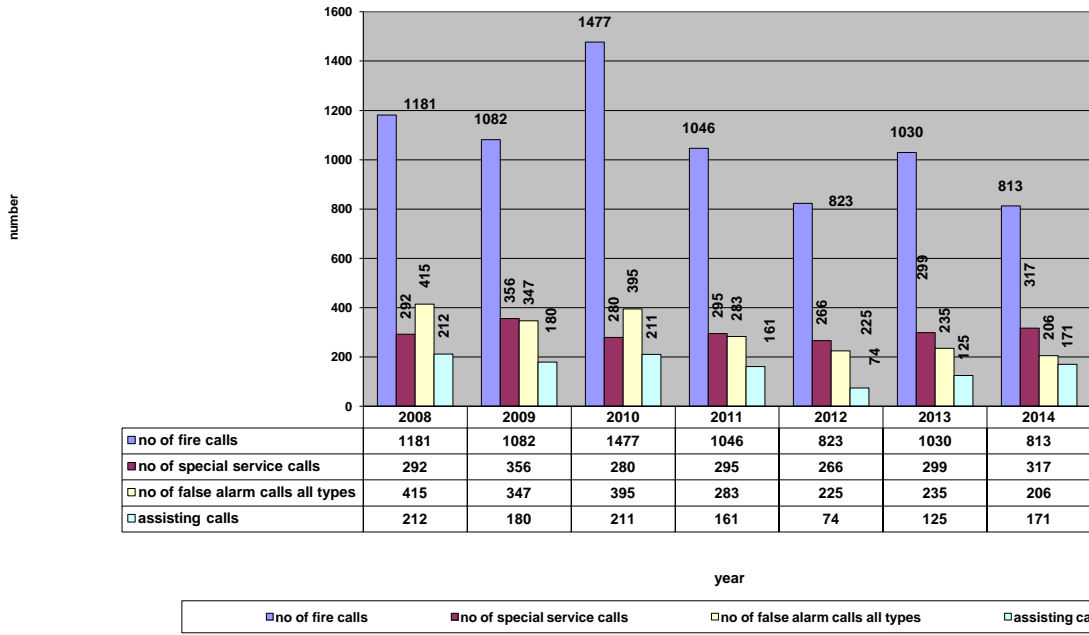
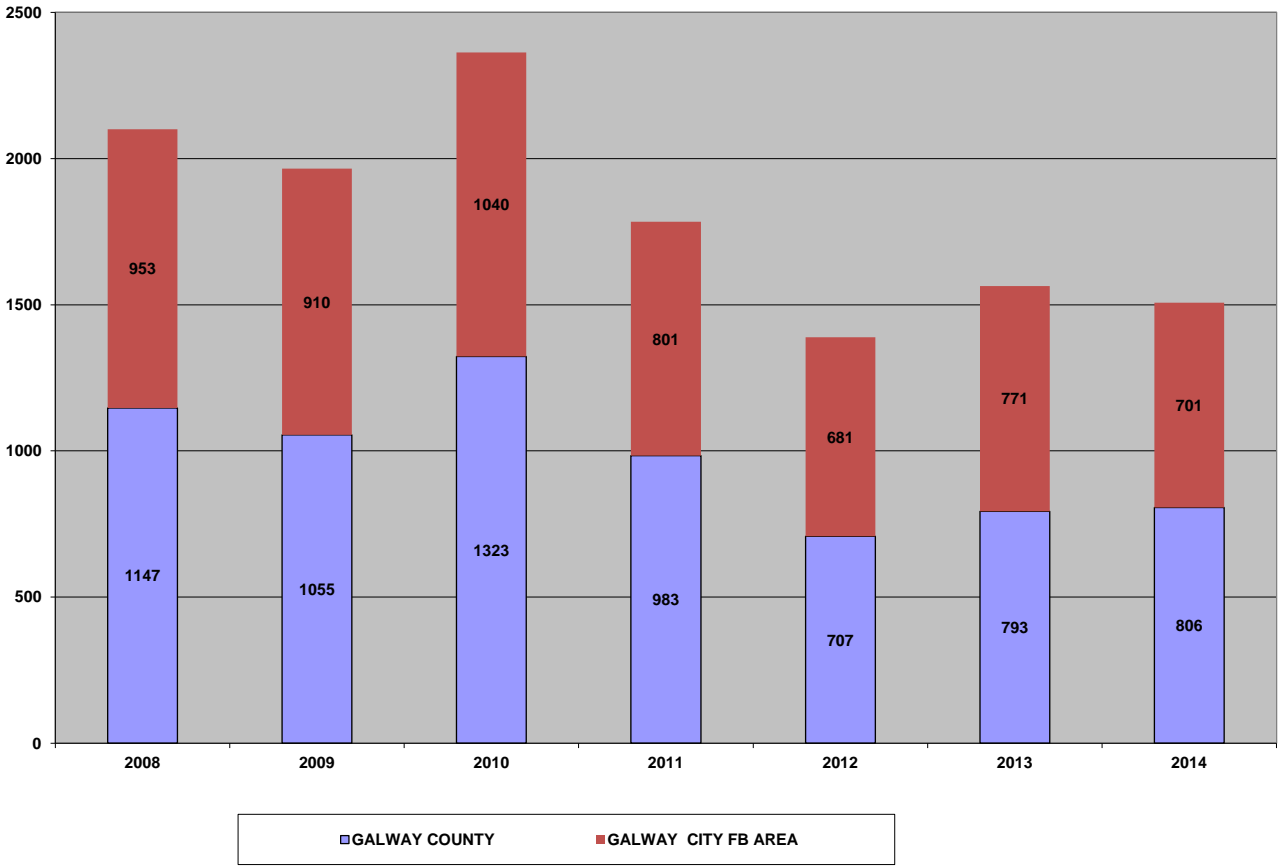


Fig 1a GFB TOTAL NO OF EMERGENCY CALLS ATTENDED 2008-2014



- The Council endeavored to ensure that all of its Fire and Emergency Services personnel received training as in previous years at local level. Senior and Junior Fire officer training with the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management (NDFEM) also progressed. Training was carried out as per annual training program for 2015 as per previous years.
- All county retained operational personnel are operating under the National Incident Command System since 2009 as per Fire Services Change Program under the Health and Safety remit. The roll-out of the NICS for the fire station personnel both f-t and retained in Galway City was implemented in October 2014
- The Council recruited and trained 1No. new full-time fire fighters for Galway City from existing retained ranks to replace f-t vacancies in 2014. Similarly the Council have recruited up to 20 retained personnel over last 3 years to replace vacancies as they occur.
- The Council intend to continue to prepare pre-fire plans for City and County risks, which is a statutory duty under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003.
- The Fire Service's Health & Safety Steering Group continued to meet in 2015 with monthly meetings to manage and drive the Health & Safety Management Plan throughout the fire services with the intention of obtaining OSHAS 18001 Accreditation
- National Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) that underpin generic risk assessments in the fire service Ancillary Safety Statement (ASS) will form the backbone for our training plans throughout the City and County for all fire personnel to the end of 2015.
- The Council has progressed the establishment of a new retained Fire Brigade in An Cheathru Rua, by training and recruiting 9 new retained personnel for a new retained crew in in An Cheathru Rua. Work on the leased Building from Udaras na Gaeltachta in an Cheathru Rua, has been completed, and building will be occupied before end of 2015. Two Pre owned Fire appliances have been procured and are been used as part of Training program. Training of retained personnel is ongoing in 2015.
- Unfortunately there have been 4 deaths due to accidental fires in Galway City and County in 2015 to date. While this is less than the 8 accidental fire deaths in 2014, it is still too high relative to average national figures.

Proposals for 2016:

Operational

- The revised Draft Fire and Operations Plan, which was approved by the Housing & Emergency Services SPC in 2014 will be revised in light of KCS. The new draft will be put before Council for formal approval in late 2015 or early 2016, and will take cognizance of the outcome of the city and west review and risk categorization process .
- The Council will Endeavour to ensure that all of its Fire and Emergency Services personnel continue to receive training as in previous years, at local level. Fire Officer training with the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Planning Training will be

carried out with as per annual training program for 2016 subject to budgetary provisions.

- National SOGs will continue to form the backbone of our training plans throughout the City and County for all fire personnel in 2016. The next set of SOGs will be rolled out in 2016 and Galway Fire Brigade continues to role-out with the national program as SoG's are issued by mid 2016.
- The National Framework 2010-2015 and Keeping Communities Safe", by National Directorate will inform the service of other work to be carried by Galway fire brigade in 2016.
- It is intended to commence operations with a new retained Fire Service in An Cheathru Rua
See FIGS attached showing old and New Fire Station grounds in Galway City and County pre and post 2016

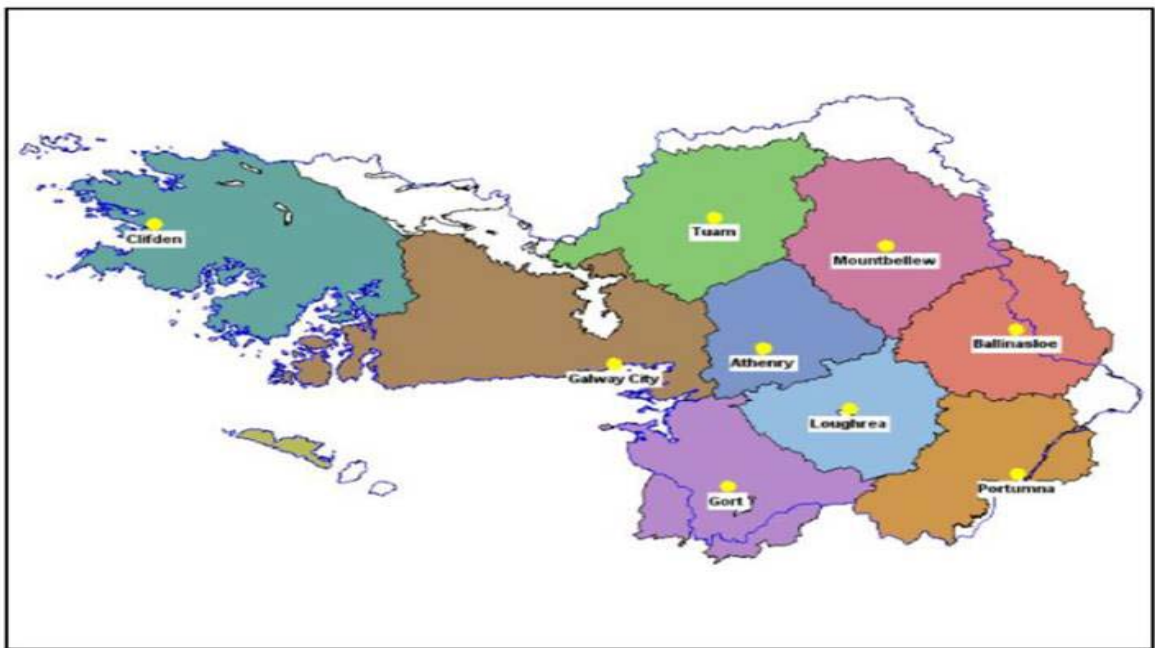


Fig Existing 10 Fire station grounds



- **Fig PROPOSED 11 FIRE STATION GROUNDS INCLUDING An Cheathru Rua GY22**

CAMP WEST

- The Fire Authorities of Connacht and Donegal and the HSE West are involved with this Central call-out and communications project, which is run by Mayo County Council as Contracting Authority from the Western Regional Communications Centre (WRCC) in Castlebar. HSE West Ambulance Service have withdrawn from the WRCC by end of December 2014. All Local Authority partners' contributions will increase accordingly in 2015-2017 to make up for the HSE contribution shortfall. All three regional Camp Projects are currently being reviewed by NDFEM as a part of a new CAMP II project. GFRS - along with all other LA Fire Services is migrating to a new national digital Private Mobile Radio (PMR) and mobilizing platform known as TETRA, similar to partner PES's e.g. Gardai and National Ambulance Service (NAS), who have changed already. Out station communications equipment will be changed over in Galway Fire stations in 2016 as part of CAMP II Project. The change over to Tetra system will have financial implications for all Local Authority Fire services in the future as there will be an annual fee for each Tetra device in use, to be paid to Tetra Ireland, who won the national digital communications project for all Emergency services in Ireland.

Regional Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Project

- Galway County Council is the Contracting Authority to roll out the CISM system to the 6 No. Fire Authorities of Connacht and Donegal. Provision is being made in 2015 budgets to continue this project, with Galway County Council acting as the contracting authority.

A new contract for 2013-2016 was issued by Galway County Council as contracting authority for the West to VHI as CISM service provider to Fire authorities in the WEST and Donegal after a tender competition in e-tenders in 2012-2013
 Currently there is national review of CISM systems used LA Fire services in Ireland, which is expected to report in early 2016

CHES : FIRE SAFETY CERTIFICATES AND FSA 1981 INSPECTIONS

Indicative Activities in 2015 (based on 2014/2015 data):

- In 2014, the Fire Service fire prevention staff carried out **285** inspections of premises as part of its Fire Prevention Function, under the Fire Services Act (FSA) 1981 & 2003, Licensing Acts, Planning Acts, Dangerous Substances Act and **256** inspections for the issue of Fire Safety Certificates (FSC's) under Building Control Act 1990 respectively. The Fire Prevention Department processed **246** public licence applications in 2014 and processed **240** public licence applications to date in 2015
 The Fire Prevention Department dealt with **126** planning applications in 2014 and dealt with **98** planning applications to date in 2015 from Galway City Council
- The Fire Prevention Department dealt with **231** Fire Safety Certificate (FSC) Applications in 2014 under Building Control Regulations, **132** in the County area and **99** in the City.
- The breakdown of the types of Fire Safety Certificate applications in City and County respectively were as follows for 2014;

▪ Standard FSC	133	Applications
▪ Regularisation certificates	54	Applications
▪ 7 day notice FSC	35	Applications
▪ Revised FSC	9	Applications

The Fire Prevention Department have received the following number of FSC Applications all types; 85 for the City and 132 in the County from January to October 2015.

- Fire officers processed **76** Disability Access Certificate Applications (**DAC's**) on behalf of the County in 2014 with **63** processed to date in 2015.
- Fire Officers continued the inspection of nursing homes in 2014 under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003 and carried out inspections of retail petroleum stores under the Dangerous Substances Act 1972 & Retail Petroleum Stores Regulations 1979.

See attached Figures no of FSC'S and fsc fees received received in city and County 2008-2014

fig 6b total no of fire safety certificates received 2008-2014

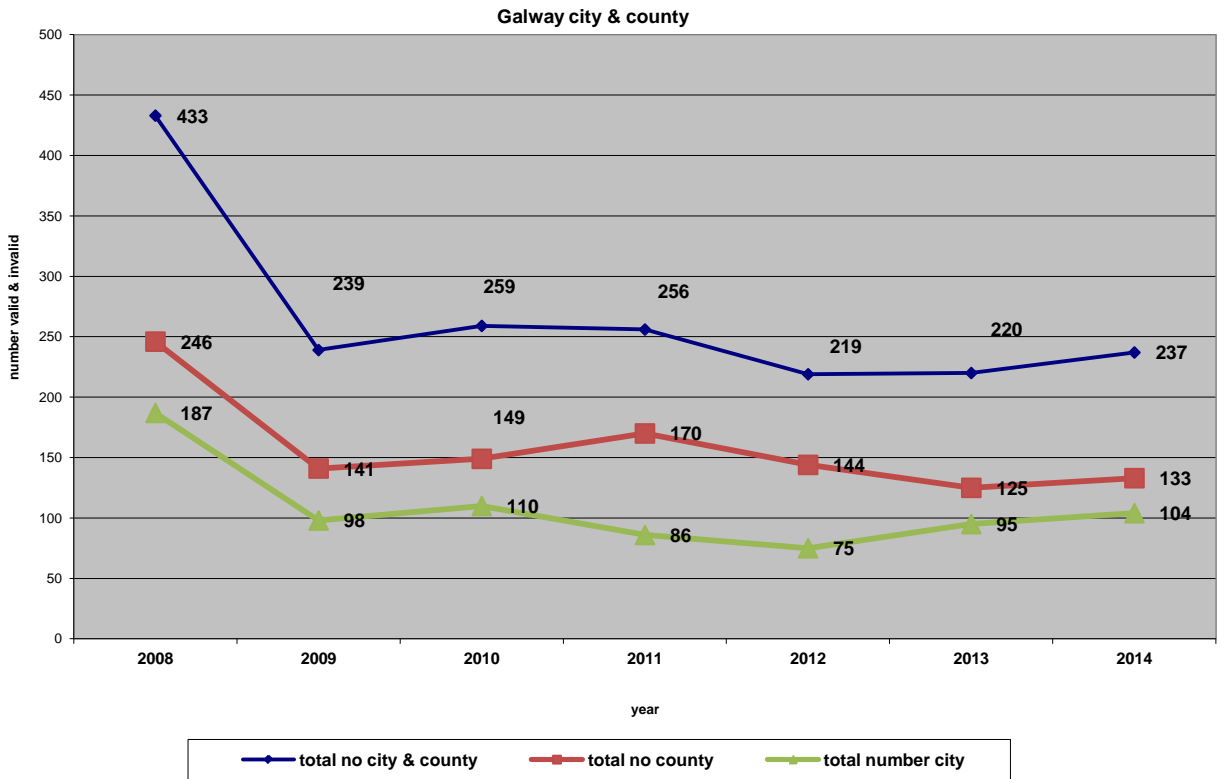
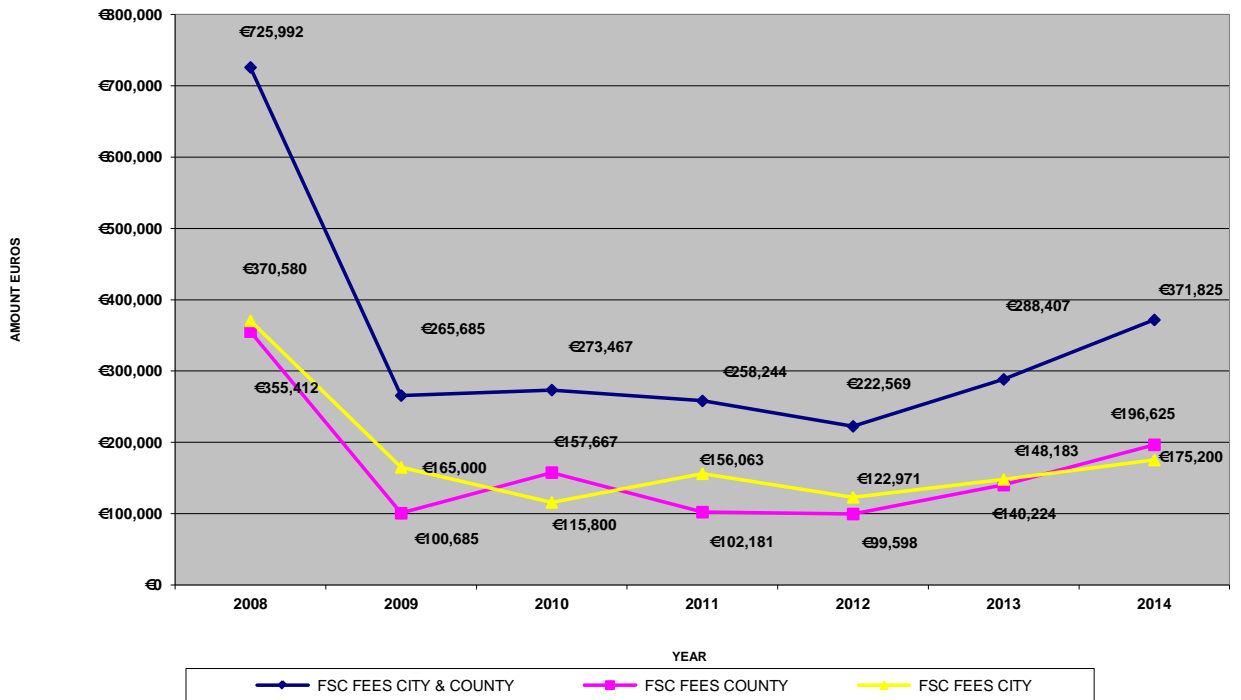


FIG 6C FSC FEES RECEIVED 2008-2014 GALWAY CITY & COUNTY



Proposals for 2016:

- Fire prevention staff will continue to process all FSC type applications on behalf of County and City and DAC certificates on behalf of County.
- Process licence applications and planning applications as received in 2015.
- Continue the program of inspection of retail petroleum stores in the city and county.
- Continue to process DSA licences of retail petroleum stores in the city and county as received.
- Continue to inspect nursing homes in the City and County.
- Commence an inspection program of hostels and hotels in the city and county.
- Carry out inspections in city and county on foot of complaints on a prioritized basis.

GALWAY CIVIL DEFENCE

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Galway Civil Defence, through their 5 training centres, Galway City, Oranmore, Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Clonberne have had an intensive year with duty activities and training, locally and centrally, through the Civil Defence College, Roscrea.
- A programme of training in Cardiac First Response, Occupational first Aid, Emergency First Response is currently ongoing
- All units will again be responding to their communities requests for assistance at local community events, providing first aid cover and other assistance that may be requested.

Proposals for 2016:

- Focus on training for 2016 will centre in developing the Search Management capability and Swift Water Rescue training with members partaking in courses rolled out by the Civil Defence College, Roscrea.
- New members are always welcome from their community and training will be provided to all members of the highest standard by our instructor core.

FINANCE UNIT

Value for Money, Shared Services and Public Procurement

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- A Centralised approach at Municipal District level was used for tender competitions on SupplyGov.ie for Road Making Materials and Plant Hire for 2015 and the results of the Mini Tenders were circulated to the relevant engineering areas.
- 133 RFT's and 54 RFQ's were raised on **SupplyGov** (LA Quotes) during 2015 YTD. There were also 44 Tenders processed through **eTenders**.
- There are some changes and additions to the SupplyGov Frameworks for 2015. Details were circulated to relevant staff. During 2015 Galway County Council engaged with the LGOPC on the following frameworks:
 - Plant Hire Services, Road Making Materials – Supply Only, Road Making Materials – Supply & Placement, Footway & Road Pavement Restoration, Ready-Mix & Concrete Additives (Supply only)
- Galway County Council also engaged with the OGP on the following National Contracts and Frameworks. Bulk Fuel, Electricity, Natural Gas, Fuel Cards, Stationery, Envelopes, Copying Paper, Personal Protective Equipment, Janitorial,
- During 2015 we continued to use the Lighthouse BCS Portal to process transactions to Agresso. There is now an annual flat rate charge of €6,000 to use this system. We currently have 167 Active Cards with 2015 YTD Spend of €759K and have processed 8,159 transactions YTD.
- There was a major delay with the new national contract for PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and Janitorial Supplies. The OGP is currently evaluating the responses to the RFTs and new contracts should be in place early in 2016. Galway County Council has agreed a temporary extension of the existing arrangements with the current national suppliers.
- Stationery: The current national contract collapsed in Sept. The OGP are currently engaged in running a new Competition. GCC organised a temporary arrangement following a competition process with three local suppliers and the existing supplier.
- Bulk Fuel: Galway County Council will continue to utilize the OGP national framework.
- Fuel Debit Cards: We currently have 219 active fuel cards with a YTD spend of €568K made up of 8,625 transactions across 70 Filling Stations. Based on an average of 5 Cent difference against pump prices when the discount is applied this represents savings of €24.5K YTD or €26.7K in a full year.
- Training/Information Session: The Procurement Officer organised a two day high level training course on procurement for the end of November. The course is designed for

senior and middle management staff. Achilles will be providing the training and approx 21 staff members have been selected to attend.

- Cash Collection: Galway County Council is currently operating on a rolling contract basis. The OGP (Office of Government Procurement) has recently published an RFT for CIT Services.
- Circular 16/13: In September 2013 the OGP (Office of Government Procurement) issued a Circular 16/13 in relation to utilising National Contracts. This has been incorporated in GCC Procurement Policies.
- Circular 10/14: In the context of the reform of the Public Service and the establishment of the Office of Government Procurement, it has been decided to update and strengthen measures aimed at facilitating SME participation in Public Procurement in order to reinforce their application across the public sector.
- Data Returns: All data returns required by the LGER and the OGP were completed and returned.
- Significant work has taken place at committee level and a new format of National Product Coding is now nearing completion. Galway County Council has gone live with the new coding structure. Further developments are taking place during 2016.
- SME's – LEO – Briefing: An information session in relation to Procurement and Winning Contracts was held in October and was attended by approx 50 companies. Feedback was positive and further information will be provided.
- Meet West: This took place on Nov 18th & 19th with over 400 companies registered. GCC's Procurement Officer provided 2 X 10-1 information sessions for participating companies.
- Contract Management System - LGSPC: Work is continuing on the development of a Contract Management System
- Public Spending Code: A new system of tracking each element of expenditure through its full life cycle has been put in place. It essentially replaces all value for money studies. The first report on the public Spending code was issued to NOAC at the end of September. This will be a requirement going forward.
- Circular Fin 07/2012: Under the Public Service Reform Plan – GCC have published a quarterly listing of Purchase Orders greater than €20k.

Proposals for 2016:

- SupplyGov.ie – organise additional training for all relevant staff.
- Expand the use of SupplyGov and eTenders across the organization.
- Monitor, Control and reduce non-compliance of National Contracts both OGP and LGOPC lead, particularly in relation to Circular 16/13.
- Carry out further staff training in relation to general procurement
- Engage with all stakeholders to ensure that all aspects of the Public Spending Code are carried out.

- Publish details of all new National Frameworks and Contracts; in this regard a new LGMA Procurement Extranet facility is now available for relevant staff members.
- Maximise the use of Fuel Cards to replace and reduce LVP Cards.
- Publish results of SupplyGov RFT's on the Intranet for wider use by staff
- Carry out a review of the Purchase Card system.
- Review the GCC Internal Financial Regulations in relation to Procurement.
- Introduce the new Product Coding Structure into Agresso; engage with the LGSPC on the introduction of a new Supplier Identification process.
- Continue to try and reduce the overall number of Purchase Orders generated by increased use of LVP's & Fuel Cards.
- Review the Corporate Procurement Policy Document and include a new Corporate Procurement Plan in line with the New Directives 2014/24 EU which will be transposed into Irish Law by April of 2016.
- Analyze the 2015 spend profile with a view to identifying possible Cost Saving initiatives in line with OGP and LAQuotes frameworks and contracts.
- Engage with the LGOPC and the OGP and ensure that all relevant Circulars, Guides and instructions are circulated and implemented.
- Review the maintenance and installation of Public Lighting in relation to LED replacement.
- Liaise with the new Project Team in relation to Milestone 4.

Discharge of Payments

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Continued implementation of electronic payment methods/upgrades to ensure compliance with ePayments
- Review and continue application of best practice within both the Accounts Payable & Payroll functions
- Continued implementation of Directives issued by the Revenue Commissioners
- Ensure Accounts function meets BPI requirements

Proposals for 2016:

- Co-operation with the implementation of Milestone 4 project
- Implement electronic initiatives such as eTAX Clearance & ePSWT

Revenue Collection

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Continued review of the Revenue collection function – to ensure best practice is achieved and any new income stream is incorporated efficiently.
- Consideration of the Debt Management Review Report for the Public Service-BearingPoint Ireland 2014.
- Utilisation of the ASCENDAS system in regard to the management of commercial rate liabilities and rent arrears.
- Implementation of the new Tenancy Warning system to replace the Notice to Quit procedure –as required by the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014.
- Consideration of new legislation which has an impact on revenue collection –Companies Act 2014 (in operation 1-6-2015), Civil Debt (Procedures) Act 2015, Personal Insolvency Acts 2012 & 2015 & the Valuation (Amendment) Act 2015.
- Consideration of the services provided by professional bodies /agencies which can assist in the collection of revenue due to the Council.
- Continued implementation of electronic payment methods e.g Billpay, Household Budget, EFT, online payment facility etc to facilitate customers.

Proposals for 2016:

- Monitor and update the Revenue collection function as regards best practice.
- Continue to review debt collection procedures including the services provided by professional agencies.
- Extension of the online payments option to include Planning Fees, Fire Fees, RAS, PEL etc.
- The unit will continue to offer the Bill Pay option to Rents, Loans, RAS and Rates customers.
- Provide further training to staff on the new legislation which has an impact on revenue.

Motor Tax and Driver Licensing Systems

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- As a result of an appeal to the Supreme Court in October 2015 which held that there was no legal framework to levy motor tax on the combined weight of the tractor and trailer units of articulated trucks, the Motor Tax Policy Unit advised all Motor Tax Offices that motor tax for these vehicles will be based on the tractor unit only and charged at general haulage tractor rate of €333 until further notice.

- 103,745 transactions were processed by Galway Motor Tax Offices up to the end of September 2015 at a value of €19.6m (over the same period in 2014, 115,859 transactions were processed at a value of €22m).
- 61% of total motor tax activity for the Galway area was carried out online in the year to date - an increase from 56% for 2014.
- 5,221 declarations of non-use were recorded in the year to date. The legal timeframe for a customer to declare non-use was increased from 10 to 21 days from date of registration of a new or imported vehicle, or date of purchase of a second-hand vehicle.
- Following discovery by Garda Traffic Corps that fraudulent change of engines may have been declared for certain luxury passenger vehicles over the last number of years, revised procedures for declaring engine changes were put in place nationally, and each Motor Tax Office was requested to review documentation on hand. Approximately 50 cases were referred by this office to An Garda Síochána and the majority of these cases are now resolved, with the correct engine details confirmed and under-declared motor tax repaid where a fraudulent declaration was proven.
- During the year, the Local Government Audit Service and Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General commenced a review of the motor tax system by circulating an electronic survey to all Motor Tax Offices. The stated objective of the review is to gather information on pay and non-pay costs, and the operating practices of local authorities when processing motor tax applications.

Proposals for 2016:

- A decision was made by the CCMA, after consultation with the Department of Transport and Road Safety Authority, that each local authority would consider whether to dispose of its driving licence files, and arrangements are now commencing to dispose of all files held by Galway County Council.
- Work is continuing on retrieving and collating vehicle records from storage to create an accessible register of vintage vehicle records.
- As announced in the national budget, from 1st January 2016, the rates for heavy goods vehicles will be reduced from 18 different bands to 3, and the maximum rate payable reduced from €5,195 to €900.
- All motor tax applications and services will continue to be processed in line with national motor tax policy and procedures.

Financial Management Systems

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Additional efficiencies achieved re: Budget drafting system (Budgeting / Forecasting by Account Element, additional controls).
- Additional efficiencies achieved re: claims system for travel & subsistence.

Proposals for 2016:

- Implementation of Agresso upgrade Milestone 4.
- Continuation of the development of the Debtor Module.
- Implementation of any further upgrades in the Financial Management System.

Information Technology Systems**Indicative Activities in 2015:**

- After the success of the initial Office 365 pilot rollout to the wider organisation has started. By the end of 2015 a number of sections will be migrated including IT, Councillors, LEO, and Housing.
- Work completed on a number of WAN link improvements including Gort, Clifden, Carraroe and Athenry.
- Upgraded a number of existing servers due to the end of life of the Microsoft Windows Server 2003 operating system.
- Hybrid Cloud was introduced. Microsoft Azure is currently being used to host our public facing website and extranet.
- Support was provided by the GIS and Development teams during the introduction of Eircodes.
- Tender for Core Switch upgrade completed and new infrastructure implemented.
- Provided IT support for a number of key projects including the renovation of the Council Chamber and Ballinasloe Library.
- Implementation of a Spatial Reporting System across the planning section for referrals
- Implementation of Galway County Council Open Data site with links to the national open data site
- Redesigned and launched the new Elected Members portal. The new portal allows for the administration and distribution of the supporting documentation required for Council and Municipal District meetings.
- Upgraded the existing intranet. The intranet was redesigned on the ideas/information gathered from interactions with a number of departments across the organisation.
- Developed a Corporate Business Planning/Reporting utility with integrated Risk Register. This system will be used for the 2016 business plan cycle. Assuming successful uptake the system can be further developed to manage PMDS documentation, monitoring and reporting.

Proposals for 2016:

- Finalize the migration of all remaining users to Office 365.
- Expand our public cloud infrastructure to streamline our in house and disaster recovery infrastructure requirements ahead of the next major hardware refresh.
- Continue the WAN bandwidth improvement programme targeting Nuns Island, Loughrea and other area sites offering feasible alternatives to current offerings.
- Upgrade the remaining servers relying on Windows Server 2003 operating system.
- Provide IT support for implementation of the Agresso Milestone 4 upgrade.
- Provide IT support for implementation of the National Library Management System.
- Begin migration to Windows 10
- Continue the roll out of Eircodes across the organisation
- Introduce Real Time location based reporting for Public and staff

PLANNING, COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Planning for Sustainable Development

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- 1365 Planning applications have been received to date (5 November 2015).
- The County Development Plan, Appendices and Environmental/Supporting documents was adopted on 26th January 2015 and became effective on 23rd February 2015.
- The Headford Local Area Plan was adopted on 28th September 2015 and became effective on 26th October 2015.
- The Ballinasloe Local Area Plan was adopted on 19th October 2015 and became effective on 15th November 2015.
- The Draft Local Area Plan for Portumna will be considered at the November Monthly County Council Meeting.
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and reports were prepared in-house for the Headford, Ballinasloe & Portumna Local Area Plans.
- Commencement of the Strategic Environmental Screening & Report for the Draft Local Economic Community Plan.

Proposals for 2016:

- To continue the implementation of the objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021
- To finalise the Portumna Local Area Plan and associated documents.
- To extend the life of or to commence the review of the Tuam Local Area Plan.
- To commence new Local Area Plans for Oughterard and Baile an Chláir to ensure that the objectives of the Local Area Plans are consistent the Objectives and Core Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan.
- To finalise the Strategic Environmental Report for the Local Economic Community Plan.
- To commence the Renewable Energy Strategy.
- To commence the Retail Strategy in consultation with Galway City Council.
- Arrange and manage the translation of all new policy (variations to the CDP, relevant Local Area Plans) in accordance with the Scéim Teanga.

Building Control / Taking in Charge

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- 351 commencement notices have been received to 5 November 2015
- A Building Control Officer continued to inspect commenced developments for compliance with the Building Regulations.
- This Unit has continued to monitor and process applications for the Taking in Charge of Housing estates under the new guidelines for 'Taking in Charge of Developments' which were adopted by Galway County Council.
- A database has been compiled of 398 estates in the County with a view to establishing the current status of each one and prioritizing estates for Taking in Charge.
- To date this year, 12 no. Housing Estates have been taken in charge.
- 9 new Taking in Charge applications have been submitted to date in 2015
- The Building Control staff continue to work with the Department of the Environment, Health & Safety Authority to eliminate safety risks on unfinished estates.

Proposals for 2016:

- It is proposed to continue to assess and process taking in charge applications within available resources in 2016 with a view to determining an overall approach to non-compliant and unfinished housing estates.
- To continue to liaise with Department and other relevant agencies regarding Unfinished Housing Estates.

Enforcement Measures

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- 147 Warning Notices/Letters served to 23rd October 2015.
- 55 Enforcement Notices served to 23rd October 2015.
- 16 Files have been referred for legal action to 23rd October 2015.
- 187 New Files opened to 23rd October 2015.
- 94 approx. Enforcement Files have been resolved/closed at 23rd October 2015.

Proposals for 2016:

- It is proposed to continue to provide resources to the Enforcement Team to ensure the implementation of the Planning Regulations in 2016.
- It is proposed to continue to examine old enforcement files with a view to closing same, where appropriate.
- To prioritise unfinished housing estates for enforcement action as necessary.

Heritage

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Lough Derg Heritage Project – Launch of ‘Go Wild in Lough Derg’ – natural heritage trail and associated seminar in the Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna on 30th April 2015. In the region of 100 people attended the launch and seminar. Heritage Week – Bus Tour ‘Go Explore: Lough Derg’ 27th August 2015 left from Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna and then travelled around the lake and returned back to Portumna. 44 people went on this bus tour. Working on a Cultural Trail for Lough Derg, procured services of a heritage Consultant to write up the text. Booklet will be printed in November/December 2015. Exploring the potential for a Lough Derg LIFE Project. Programming works for 2016.
- Ecclesiastical Heritage Trail for Ballinasloe Electoral Area– An ecclesiastical heritage audit was undertaken for the Ballinasloe Electoral Area documenting and creating a database of the rich artwork that is contained in the churches.
- Reading the Landscape Course Phase 2: Worked with several community groups who were involved in Part 1 of the Course as well as new people who are working on heritage projects in the county. They learned field skills and used same to upload content onto the new community heritage website. The ‘Reading the Landscape’ book was launched in Menlough in September.
- Community Archaeologist Project – The role of the Community Archaeologist is to provide advice and information on archeology in the county. The Community Archaeologist is undertaking community archaeology projects in the Slieve Aughty area of the County, Woodford, Tuam, Moycullen etc. A number of very successful seminars were held during the year.

- Biodiversity Project – The project operates as a partnership Project between the County Council through the Heritage Office and the Applied Ecology Unit, NUI, Galway in conjunction with Galway Rural Development and Galway County Heritage Forum supported by the Heritage Council and Galway County Council. Funding was sought for the payment of the salary and overheads for the Project Manager and to undertake projects such as producing further biodiversity Action Plans for towns and villages in the county, the development of an invasive species strategy, graveyard management conservation plan for a select number of graveyards and the provision of an education and awareness programme for the communities in the county
- Athenry Walled Towns Day – This event attracted over c.5000 people and took place on Sunday 23rd August. The aim of the day was to showcase the rich heritage of Athenry.
- Athenry Ireland’s Town Walls: Past, Present and Future Conference was held on 18th June 2015 in Athenry Community Centre. Over 80 people attended this event as well as the launch of the booklet entitled Athenry Town: Past, Present and Future.
- Athenry Town Walls Capital Works – Funding was received from the Heritage Council towards this project. Work for 2015 concentrated on the south tower and adjoining walls. Conservation works undertaken.
- Athenry Medieval Town & Loughrea Medieval Town 3 D Modelling project: The Heritage Office worked with Athenry Walled Town Day Committee and Loughrea Medieval Committee on the development of Phase 1 of a 3d model of both towns. This work was undertaken by Realsim.
- Loughrea Medieval Town Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plan. Applied for funding for this project to the Heritage Council, invited submissions, assessed submissions received. Working with Loughrea Medieval Festival Group and the consultants on developing the Plan.
- Loughrea Medieval Festival: This 3 day event was run by Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee with the Heritage Office from 28th – 30th August and over 15,000 people attend this 3 day event. Events were held throughout the town and aimed at creating awareness, knowledge and understanding of the rich medieval heritage of Loughrea
- Decade of Commemoration: Further development of a memory mapping project and a bi-lingual website for the Decade of Commemoration. Commence a publication on 1916 for 2016. Cumann na mBan publication produced and to be launched in December 2015. Working on Teagasc/Galway Co Co 2016 event, Ballymoe Commemorative Garden, Athenry 1916 Garden and various community groups who are working on 2016 projects. Provided assistance to RTE re. filming programmes in the County re. 1916.
- White-Tailed Eagle Trust and Project: Attend meetings and input as required re. White Tailed Eagles in County Galway in particular the Portumna site.
- Capital of Culture 2020 Bid – Attended meetings in relation to the Capital of Culture bid and organised a number of meetings and events with the heritage sector in the county and the Galway 2020 office.

- Community Events – Assistance, advice, and support was also given to numerous Town and Community events in 2015. In September, the popular ‘Feile na gCloch’ weekend was held in Inis Oirr with over 65 participants from all over the world attending the weekend stone wall workshop. Many heritage events were held during Heritage Week in August. Tours were arranged by the Heritage Section for Heritage Week: Discover Connemara, and the Loughrea Medieval Tour. Over 50 attended each tour. Working with Milltown Tidy Towns have developed a heritage audit for the area, working on producing a heritage brochure, app, brochure, mapboard etc. Assisting Tuam Tidy Towns in the development of a town trail. Assisting Killimor Heritage Group on development of a website and Facebook page for heritage and also with content of same. Assisting Ballygar Tidy Towns with various projects including street naming project and gates project. Providing advice and assistance to Oranmore, Cornamona, Maree, Bushypark, Letterfrack, Williamstown, Clontuskert, Inis Oirr, Killererin, Abbey, Ballinasloe World War1 Group, Ada English Group, St. Bridget’s Hospital Heritage Group, Moycullen Heritage Group, Old Tuam Society, Glinsk NS, and Clarenbridge Heritage Groups, Gortmore School, Rosmuc, Claregalway Museum and Heritage Group on local heritage projects and research.
- Galway County Heritage Forum: Convene meetings and set work programme and implement same.
- Placenames Committee: member of Galway County Council’s Placenames Committee and provide advice and assess proposals re. naming developments etc.
- Working with colleagues in other Departments of Galway County Council including Corporate Services (eg. Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre, Rinvilla Park); Roads (eg. Connemara Greenway, general heritage advice); Environment Section (eg. graveyards); Housing (eg. naming of estates); Planning (eg. inputs to plans and development management as required).
- Heritage Grants: Assessed grants, drafted conditions, administered grants.
- Cathaoirleach Awards: includes best heritage project, best heritage publication and best Irish/heritage schools project. Organised interview panel.
- Galway Local Economic and Community Plan, County and City Cultural Strategy, Culture 2025. Attended meetings and made submissions to plans and strategies.
- ‘Galway’s Living Landscapes Part 2: Trees and Woodland’ launched in Coole Park on 19th March 2015. Over 40 people attended this event.

- Oughterard Conference: 'Conemara: Famine & The Landscape' 23- 25 April Courthouse, Oughterard. This conference was developed by the Heritage Office in partnership with Oughterard Heritage Group. Over 250 people in total attended the various events which included local artists response to their landscape – they held an exhibition entitled 'M'áit Dhúchais - My Native Place'; a heritage conference and a bus tour with Michael Gibbons uncovering the landscape of Conemara.
- Galway's Changing Military History Landscape Conference 17th October 2015. Worked with Loughrea Memorial Group on developing and delivering this project. Over 40 people attended this event.
- Aran Farming for Life Project: Heritage Officer on advisory committee and attends meetings as required.
- NUIG- Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Board. Heritage Officer a member of the board and attends meetings of the board in NUIG as required.
- Next Stop: Stories for Galway's Railways. This is a series of 4 short 5 minute films that was developed in partnership with Galway Film Centre. The Next Stop shorts were shown at Sky Road Film and TV Festival at 12.00 on Sunday 11 October in the Station House Theatre Clifden.
- ICAN – Community Heritage website. The Heritage Office worked in partnership with the Museum of County Life Castlebar to develop a County Heritage website called www.galwaycommunityheritage.org . This project was officially launched in May 2015. Ongoing training is provided to the member groups and new members are being added. The website had 22,000 hits in its first 4 week period of existence.
- Tuke Emigration Scheme Project: Working with the Clifden 2012 Group and Oughterard Heritage Group, two emigration projects have been initiated re. Tuke and emigration in Connemara in the 1880s. Worked with Clifden 2012 Group on Connemara Descendants Gathering in September 2015.
- Burren World Tentative List- further work undertaken on this project.
- 'Come Here Til I Tell Ya!' – 6 week oral heritage workshop held in partnership with the Old Tuam Society from April to June 2015.
- Digital Mapping of Graveyards in the County continued with several graveyards being mapped and memorial inscriptions being recorded and up loaded to www.galway.ie
- The Beo Schools Project with DERI and Galway Education Centre is ongoing. The Cathaoirleach Awards are to be held in November and the Golden Mile Calendar to be produced in December and the Golden Mile Awards Ceremony is to be held in December. Advice and guidance was also given to individuals, Schools and groups throughout the year.

Proposals for 2016:

- Lough Derg Heritage Project –Training Programme for Heritage Guides, Bus Tours around the lake, publication on the white tailed eagle and possibly Lough Derg Life+ Project subject to funding.
- Ecclesiastical Heritage Trail for Tuam Electoral Area– An ecclesiastical heritage audit will be undertaken for the Tuam Electoral Area documenting and creating a database of the rich artwork that is contained in the churches.
- Community Archaeologist Project: The community archaeologist will work with various groups, schools and individuals in the county to increase awareness, knowledge and appreciation of the archaeological heritage of the county. He will also provide guidance and assistance on undertaking archaeological heritage based projects to best heritage practice.
- Audio Recording and Interviewing Techniques Programme. The aim is to hold a 6 week course that will be of benefit to those who are undertaking oral heritage projects.
- Reading the Landscape Course Phase 2: working with several community groups who were involved in previous courses, they will now learn field skills and use same to upload content onto the new community heritage website.
- Biodiversity Project – The project operates as a partnership Project between the County Council through the Heritage Office and the Applied Ecology Unit, NUI, Galway in conjunction with Galway Rural Development and Galway County Heritage Forum supported by the Heritage Council and Galway County Council. Funding will be sought for the payment of the salary and overheads for the Project Manager and to undertake projects such as producing further biodiversity Action Plans for towns and villages in the county, the further development of an invasive species strategy, graveyard management conservation plan for a select number of graveyards and the provision of an education and awareness programme for the communities in the county.
- Athenry Walled Towns Day – Funding will be sought from the Walled Towns Funds of the Heritage Council and if successful a walled town Day will be held in August 2016.
- Athenry & Loughrea Walled Towns Phase 2 of 3d modeling project.
- Athenry & Loughrea Walled Towns Educational Project.
- Athenry Town Walls Capital Works – Funding will be sought to undertake another programme of works for the Walls and an ensuing body of work will also take place if successful.
- Loughrea Medieval Festival: To hold a 3 day event in Loughrea in August 2016 in partnership with Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee.
- Decade of Commemoration: Further development of a memory mapping project and a bi-lingual website for the Decade of Commemoration. Commence a publication on 1916 for 2016. Seminar on Ceannt, Memorial Garden in Ballymoe, Cumann na mBan Conference, Diaspora Conference, Teagasc 2016 Event, 1916 Heritage Trail.

- Geological Audit of Part of County.
- Cathaoirleach Awards: includes best heritage project, best heritage publication and best Irish/heritage schools project.
- Ican – Community Heritage website. The Heritage Office will continue to work in partnership with the Museum of County Life Castlebar to further develop this website.
- Galway 3 D Training Project: This proposed training will offer a short course in the modern non-invasive recording technique of Photogrammetry for heritage. Photogrammetry is the process of recording 3D objects using digital photography. This simple method of recording 3D objects is fast becoming an important skill for those working the field of heritage and archaeology.
- Community Events, Conferences and Workshops – Assistance, advice, and support will also given to numerous Town and Community events in 2016 including Feile na gClogh, Heritage Week Events, heritage training and relevant local heritage conferences and seminars.
- ‘From Galway to the Somme’ conference in November 2016.
- Burren World Monument Tentative List: further work to continue on this project.
- Tuke Emigration Scheme Project: further work with the Clifden 2012 Committee and Oughterard Heritage Group on this project.
- Digital Mapping of Graveyards in the County continued with several graveyards will be mapped and memorial inscriptions will be recorded and up loaded to www.galway.ie
- The Beo Schools Project with DERI and Galway Education Centre will be ongoing.
- Placenames Committee, NUIG Arts Heritage and Cultural Advisory Board, Aran Life Project.
- Heritage Grant Scheme as part of Community Grants.
- The Golden Mile Competition and Calendar and awards ceremony will also take place during the year.

Conservation

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Consulted with the relevant department, state agencies, voluntary and international organisations on matters of architectural conservation including AACO and ICOMOS.
- Investigated European funding measures; URBACT
- Liaised with local communities regarding Tidy Towns and community initiatives
- Identified, evaluated and provided advice on structures, groups of structures areas and other features of architectural heritage significance. Provided advice to owners and occupiers of historic structures on good practice and on the availability of assistance, including financial assistance, for such conservation.

- Assessed structures on Record of Protected Structures (RPS) with a view to issuing Declarations as to works that require planning permission and provide pre planning advice to owners /occupiers. Reported and advised on planning applications where architectural heritage issues arise.
- Monitored the state of repair of structures on RPS, and as necessary, made recommendations on the need, if any, for the planning authority to take enforcement action.
- Historic Assets Framework: Ballinasloe library and exhibition space completed on schedule. Gort library spire made safe. Ongoing correspondence with community groups; Portumna and Kilconly.
- Structures at Risk Fund 2015: Advertised scheme , made recommendations from applications received. Gort Library successfully achieved funding and works were successfully brought to completion.
- Maintained the Architectural Inventory System (AIS) database of protected structures in liaison with GIS section.
- Input into Local Area Plans, as required. (Headford, Portumna and Ballinasloe)
- Processed proposals for inclusion and deletion on the RPS as part of the County Development Plan. The Elected Members considered and decided on these proposals at the July 2015 County Council Meeting.

Proposals for 2016:

- Continue to carry out the duties of Architectural Conservation Officer as set out in Circular 5/99 or as amended .
- Propose additions and deletions to the RPS and research and propose ACAs. Liaise with owners and occupiers.
- Promote opportunities to raise awareness of the architectural heritage and its appropriate conservation and reuse.
- Continue to promote traditional skills use and training. , including hosting Irish Georgian Society /OPW Traditional buildings skills open day in Portumna.
- Continue to contribute to the Historic Assets Framework .
- Promote any funding initiatives available, including Built Heritage investment Fund, Rural Towns and Village funding.

Customer Service

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Updated CEED section of Council website to provide up to date useful information for communities, businesses and citizens
- Participated in Customer Service initiatives within Galway County Council
- Extended PPN database to include other groups and contacts the section works with
- Age-Wise training incorporated into Elected Members Training plan, rolled out to Library Staff, Area Office Administrative Staff, including Elected Members and Community Wardens

Proposals for 2016:

- Continue to review CEED section on website to provide up to date useful information
- Implement agreed actions in Customer Service Action Plan and Irish Language Guidelines
- Increased engagement with Community across Social Media platform

Promoting co-ordination of agencies

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Facilitated the Galway County Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Facilitated the preparation of the Expression of Interest and Local Development Strategy for the LEADER programme on behalf of Galway LCDC.
- Organised Vision and Goal setting workshop for the County Galway Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) which was attended by over 80 participants from key stakeholder and community organizations.
- Organised Community Engagement Conference in conjunction with the Public Participation Network (PPN) in County Galway to identify actions that could be undertaken to address key issues faced by communities in County Galway.
- Developed the integrated Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for County Galway.
- Continued to support the integration of Rural Transport provision into a County wide service as Bealach na Gaillimhe, Transport Co-ordinating Unit (TCU) for County Galway. New service established under Service Level Agreement with Galway County Council.
- Partnered on the UNESCO City of Film 2015 programme.
- Supported Galway's application and bid to become European Capital of Culture 2020.
- Lead partner for the European Region of Gastronomy 2018 bid in partnership with Galway City Council and GMIT as well as a wide range of other public and private sector stakeholders.

- Participation and vice chair of the Children & Young People’s Services Committee and provision of direct support to the development of the Children & Young Persons Services Plan.
- Participated at the GRET Learning Networks and engagement with the networks in relation to development of the LECF

Proposals for 2016:

- Facilitate the Galway County Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and sub-committees to be established.
- Promotion of the new Transport Co-ordinating Unit (TCU) service and brand name of Bealach na Gaillimhe.
- Review of Rural Transport services and needs of agencies and target groups to direct services to meet needs.
- Partner on the UNESCO City of Film 2015 programme.
- Partner and support Galway’s bid to become European Capital of Culture 2020.
- Award the contract for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in County Galway and support the delivery and review of the programme in line with the funding agreement.
- Co-ordination of the Inter-Agency Committee for Resettlement, led by Department of Justice.
- Continue to develop and foster stronger partnerships with LEO and City Council in the areas of Economic Development.

<p>Promoting enterprise and supporting economic development</p>
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Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Partner for Meet West 2015 which took place in Roscommon in 2015. Over 250 delegates attending over 2 days.
- Further developed the Made in Galway initiative to support local enterprise to access markets. Held 4 Made in Galway EXPO events in Galway in 2015. This initiative was winner of the Public Sector Magazine Award for Services to Enterprise in 2015
- Lead partner in developing and supporting Galway’s collaborative bid to become European Region of Gastronomy in 2018. Officially announced as a candidate to become European Region of Gastronomy in 2018 at a consultative stakeholder briefing which was held in September and attended by in excess of 100 participants. Ongoing work in relation to the development of the key focus areas and consulting with stakeholders and communities to raise awareness of the project and secure support.
- Supported community enterprise projects and initiatives that are employment creating e.g. Headford Hot Desks, BACD Enterprise Centre, Clonberne Enterprise Centre
- Implemented actions assigned to Galway County Council in the Regional Action Plan for Jobs.

- Supported business start-ups through collaboration with the Galway Local Enterprise Office.
- Supported events that provide marketplace for Galway companies (Food Fairs/Farmers/Town Markets) i.e. Local Christmas market of Galway Producers, Producers market at Claregalway Garden Show, Galway Food Festival, Claregalway Christmas Market, Kinvara Farmers Market, Bia Bofinne, Bia Lover Festival, Connemara Mussel Festival.
- Supported the ongoing development of the Creative Sector as an employment generator for the County.
- Launched the Economic Baseline reports and accompanying website www.galwaydashboard.ie for County Galway & City with Galway City Council. Sectoral reports were prepared by the Whitaker Institute in NUI Galway for 10 sectors in Galway, outlining international, national and regional trends and highlighting potential opportunities for growth in the different sectors in Galway
- Continued to promote Galway as a location for investment and job creation.
- Compiled, published and circulated a brochure of Festivals taking place in the County for Tourism promotion.
- Maintained the on-line Calendar of Events on www.galway.ie promoting over 500 events taking place in the County as the point of information for visitors to County Galway.
- Continued to promote Galway through the destination programme of Fáilte Ireland.
- Supported the Galway Science and Technology Festival, SCCUL Enterprise Awards, Local Enterprise Office LOCAL Food & Craft Gift Fair and the Foodie Forum.
- The Unit co-ordinated the participation of Galway County Council in the ERDF BMW Gateways and Hubs Development Fund.
- 6 projects approved for funding under the pilot Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ) initiative with a total of €207,500 secured by the Local Authority from the DECLG
- Initiated research for the development of a Tourism Strategy for Galway and conducted consultation with a range of Tourism stakeholders, formulating a long term Tourism strategy approach for Galway.
- Initiated drafting of the Tourism Strategy, associated environmental assessment and formal consultation process.
- Secured funding of over €500,000 for Tourism infrastructure projects in Portumna and supported Tourism developments in partnership with the Lough Derg Marketing Strategy Group.
- Supported a number of overseas Tourism marketing and promotion events e.g. Milwaukee, Lorient.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SCCUL Enterprises and Teagasc to develop strategic collaborations. Initiated the development of a Food and Rural Innovation Hub including incubation units and supported SCCUL Enterprises with their

application for funding for the development of the Food and Rural Innovation Hub under the EI call for proposals.

- Facilitated the completion of the Feasibility Study by Future Analytics Consultants for the future economic use of the former Galway Airport site and provided ongoing liaison with leases as well as facilitating an Expressions of Interest process and various meetings with interested parties.
- Continued to work with GMIT in relation to a range of economic development areas including the food, tourism and creative sectors.

Proposals for 2016:

- Support Meet West 2016.
- Further the development of the Made in Galway initiative to support local enterprise to access markets and to allow for greater product development, marketing and attendance at events. The Unit will work with agency and industry partners to further develop the initiative to highlight the Food and Craft sectors in County Galway.
- Submit Galway's 'Bid Book' to become European Region of Gastronomy 2018 in January 2016 and present to international judging panel in March 2016. Continue to engage with stakeholders and communities on the project and deliver collaborative initiatives and projects across a number of key focus areas.
- Secure approval for the County Galway LCDC LEADER Local Development Strategy
- Support community enterprise projects and initiatives that are creating and supporting employment.
- Implement actions assigned to Galway County Council in the Regional Action Plan for Jobs.
- Support micro enterprise start-ups through the Galway Local Enterprise Office.
- Support the development of the Food sector in County Galway
- Publish an Economic Strategy for Galway and continue to focus on and support the Food, Tourism and Creative sectors in Galway.
- Facilitate the development of local markets throughout the County.
- Continue to support the Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ) concept and ensure the projects supported in the pilot phase drawdown the funding allocated.
- Develop a 10 year Tourism Strategy for Galway which will be implemented through a series of Action Plans in association with a range of stakeholders and implement key actions for Galway County Council.
- Establish and manage a Tourism steering group and sub-groups for specific actions and coordinate an internal Tourism group.
- Progress the development of the Food and Rural Innovation Hub in association with SCCUL and Teagasc.
- Continue to work with Teagasc in relation to supporting and developing key strategic projects in relation to the agriculture and food sectors. This will include a coordinated and collaborative approach to developing supports that will assist growth paths from

start- up to export and identifying and implementing means to assist to increasing the value added to primary production in County Galway.

- Ongoing role in the long term development options for the Former Galway Airport Site at Carnmore to secure optimum long term economic benefit for the Galway region.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

The County Enterprise Boards Dissolution Bill 2013 was enacted and the CEB's were dissolved on 14th April 2014. On the 15th of April 2014 the LEO Galway commenced operations within the Galway County Local Authority (as lead Authority for Galway County & City) structure under a Service Level Agreement (see summary Appendix A) between the Local Authority and Enterprise Ireland.

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Develop an excellent and effective First Stop Shop for businesses in Galway County & City
- Increase awareness of the services available to businesses locally and nationally and help develop relationships between businesses and these service providers.
- Generate awareness of the LEO brand and services
- Provide a suite of capability building supports and services that add value and bring benefits to business
- Support employment creation in the county through investment in eligible businesses
- Support economic development aimed at job creation in the county and region
- Engage with partners at local and national level to design and deliver enterprise creation and support initiatives.

Proposals for 2016:

- Information provision – First Stop Shop
- Business Advice, Mentoring & Networking
- Management development, Sectoral development programmes
- Training, workshops
- Funding (direct – limited eligibility, indirect – via Microfinance Ireland)

Summary Targets 2016

Summary Targets 2016	Numbers
Employment (Portfolio i.e. grant aided companies only)	
Jobs Created	25
Grants	
Feasibility applications approved (number & value)	Meet demand
Priming Grants approved (number & value)	Meet demand
Expansion Grants approved (number & value)	Meet demand
Cost per job (maximum)	€15,000
Start Your Own Business courses	
Numbers run	10
Management Development Programmes	
Numbers run	3
Lean for Micro	
Participant Numbers	3
Mentors / Business Advisors	
Mentor assignments	25
External one to one Business Advice meetings	40
MFI Loan Applications Assessed	
MFI applications received	18
Student Enterprise	
Schools participating (number)	12
National Enterprise Awards	
Number of clients participating	2

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Four communities (Ballinasloe Active Retirement Association, Ballinderreen, Headford and Inis Mór) entered into the 2015 Pride of Place competition.
- Continued to work with Tidy Towns groups to progress them within the National Tidy Towns competition. Commissioned particular expertise to work with Tidy Towns groups by organising half day workshops in each Municipal District to take place in early 2016
- Piloted Cleaner Communities initiative took place in 2015. 65 applications across four categories (Sweep your Street, Best Planted Area, Coast Boast and Burial Grounds). Judging took place over the Summer/Autumn period and an awards ceremony was held in November.
- Initiated the set up of the Public Participation Network (PPN) which is the successor to the Community and Voluntary Forum. Nomination and election processes were completed for the PPN Secretariat as well as PPN representation to the Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) and the Sports Partnership. Furthermore linkage groups aligned to the SPCs and the Sports Partnership were established and a training workshop for PPN reps in terms of their respective committee roles as well as their broader functioning responsibilities was held in October.
- Rolled out the second year of the Community Tourism Diaspora Fund to provide support to local and community event organisers and activities / projects that will harness Diaspora links for the benefit of local and community tourism. 27 projects supported in County Galway in 2015.
- Approximately €378,500 was approved for projects across 11 categories under the Community Support Scheme in 2015.
- €15,000 was approved in funding for 28 projects under the Centenary of the 1916 Rising Community Commemorative Grant Scheme.
- The Unit facilitated continued to facilitate 29 projects supported under the Ballinasloe Special Capital Grant Scheme with a total funding approved amounting to €1,175,682
- Following the dissolution of Ballinasloe Town Council the CEED Unit implemented a number of projects approved for funding in the 2015 Ballinasloe Municipal District budget. These included Ballinasloe Tidy Towns, Ballinasloe Town Hall, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Christmas Lights, Ballinasloe Town Twinning and the October Fair Dinner and Ballinasloe Town Benchmarking Team.
- Organised the Cathaoirleach's Community Awards 2015.

Proposals for 2016:

- Support communities in the County to participate in the Pride of Place competition in 2016.
- Support Tidy Towns groups in the County to participate in the Tidy Towns National Competition in 2016 and deliver half day workshops in each Municipal District
- Develop the Public Participation Network (PPN) by rolling out County and Municipal District plenaries and providing assistance to the voluntary Secretariat of the network.
- The Cleaner Communities initiative will be continued into 2016 building on the positive response to the 2015 campaign.
- Progress the third year of the Community Tourism Diaspora Fund
- Deliver the Community Support Scheme in 2016 and seek to support a number of community based Commemorative projects for 1916 related events as part of the Centenary Programme 1916/2016 for the County of Galway.
- Complete all projects under the Ballinasloe Special Capital Grant Scheme
- Organise the Cathaoirleach's Community Awards 2016 (in conjunction with Corporate Services Unit).

Supporting Social Inclusion

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Facilitated the re-establishment of the County Galway Traveller Interagency Group and secured €10,750 from the Department of Justice & Equality for same and to carry out Traveller Projects
- Supported other committees involved in Social Inclusion activities such as the LGBT Interagency Working Group and Strengthening Families Programme in Connemara
- Organised the Bealtaine Festival for County Galway
- Co-ordinated Traveller Pride Week on behalf of County Galway Traveller Interagency Group
- Organised Social Inclusion Week 2015
- Organised Culture Night for County Galway
- Worked with the Customer Service Officers Group to ensure Social Inclusion is embedded into Customer Service
- Co-ordinated and facilitated the Galway Age Friendly Programme, supported the Galway Age Friendly Alliance, Implementation Group and the Older Persons Council
- Supported the Galway Age Friendly Older Persons Council in updating and producing the Directory of Services for Older People in Galway City and County, which was launched by the Minister of State Kathleen Lynch T.D. in November 2015.

- Organised Age Wise training for Galway County Council staff, including Area Office staff, Library staff and Elected Members.
- Continued to support the implementation of actions under the Integration and Diversity Strategy for County Galway 2013-2017.
- Participated in the European Integration Fund – supporting the provision of training and capacity building to Third Country Nationals to complete an Essential Skills NQF Level 6 qualification; NQF Level 3 English as a Second Language qualification; supporting the provision of capacity building supports to Ethnic Minority community groups throughout the County.
- Initiation of a programme of lunchtime research seminars in conjunction with the Community Knowledge Initiative in NUI Galway, focusing on issues in Interculturalism and Integration (3 seminars held in 2015).
- Support for a day of celebration of achievements in relation to actions implemented under the Integration and Diversity Strategy for County Galway achieved during 2015, as part of Social Inclusion Week.
- Continued to provide support to Comhairle na nÓg on a Countywide basis
- Administration of funding and co-ordination of activities under the Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund including their Lets Go Mental campaign and other high profile events.
- Facilitated hosting of Comhairle na nÓg County Annual General Meeting and Let's Go Mental event in Claregalway Castle in October 2015 which was attended by over 220 young people.
- Co-ordinated a Comhairle na nÓg Adult Steering Committee which met 3 times during the year.
- Organised training sessions in filming with the Galway Film Centre as part of Galway UNESCO City of Film. Worked with Galway Film Centre to provide young filmmakers to record other activities during the year including filming Galway Capital of Culture Speak Out on Food in Claregalway Castle (May 2015).
- Facilitated attendance of young people from County Galway at events including Dáil na nÓg.

Proposals for 2016:

- Re-launch the Community Smoke Alarm Scheme targeting vulnerable people with no alarm or an alarm that has nearly reached its 10 year life span
- Facilitate the County Galway Traveller Interagency Group
- Support other committees involved in Social Inclusion activities such as the LGBT Interagency Working Group and Strengthening Families Programme in Connemara
- Organise the Bealtaine Festival for County Galway
- Coordinate Traveller Pride Week on behalf of County Galway Traveller Interagency Group in association with Housing Unit.
- Organise Social Inclusion Week 2016

- Organise Culture Night for County Galway
- Continue to work with the Customer Service Officers Group to ensure Social Inclusion is embedded into Customer Service
- Continue to support Galway Age Friendly City and County Programme
- Explore and develop projects with Galway Age Friendly Older Persons Council and Galway Age Friendly Interagency Alliance
- Ensure that Comhairle na nÓg is a key vehicle for consultation by various newly establishing bodies and committees in County Galway
- Continue to administer and deliver the Comhairle na nÓg development fund from the DCYA for purposes of supporting Comhairle in County Galway

Supporting RAPID areas - Tuam & Ballinasloe

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The RAPID Co-ordinators continued to provide ongoing advisory project management services to agencies and communities to progress Strategic Plans in Community Safety & Anti Social Behaviour, Education, Employment & Training and the Physical Environment and assisted in securing funding to deliver.
- 8 projects were supported in Ballinasloe for community and voluntary initiatives
- Actions prioritised by the Tuam Area Implementation Team (AIT) were supported under the Local Community Development Programme (LCDP) with projects having a strong emphasis on combating disadvantage in education, including continued support for after school programmes, art and play therapies and psychology supports for children and young people referred through the School Completion Programme.
- A joint public art and schools project was undertaken in Tuam with support from the Arts Office, the RAPID programme and co-ordinated by the School Completion Programme and linked with Youth Work Ireland.
- The Training Matters group continued to prioritise the delivery of a Level 8 outreach programme in Tuam to provide progression routes for those who have already achieved Level 6 and Level 7 qualifications.
- Supported an open information day on training and careers development support was co-ordinated by Training Matters in Tuam for people affected by Redundancy.
- An open careers training and information day and CV preparation workshops was held in Tuam for unemployed and those on employment schemes.
- Support continued to be given to the PEEP and Incredible Years programmes to support learning in families with younger children, while another successful Strengthening Families programme was run for 12 families with teenagers in Tuam.

Proposals for 2016:

- Agree a process for progressing the RAPID programme in light of Local Government Reform agenda given the continued RAPID national designation
- In line with the above, the RAPID Co-ordinators to continue to provide ongoing advisory project management services to agencies and communities to progress Strategic Plans in Community Safety & Anti Social Behaviour, Education, Employment & Training and the Physical Environment and assist in securing funding to deliver same.
- Work with the relevant agency(s) to ensure prioritisation for the Ballinasloe and Tuam RAPID areas in the implementation of agreed plans through the new SICAP programme
- Continued delivery of joint agency careers and jobs / training information days in Tuam
- Continued support for the priority actions of the Tuam AIT in the rollout of programmes for the support of Social Inclusion, and in all aspects of the Local Economic and Community Plan.

Promoting and developing Arts activity

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Invested in communities through the Arts Grants and Awards
- Supported development and promotion of new arts activity by Artists resident in County Galway by investing €16,650 on Individual Artists Bursaries
- Provided an information and advice service to community groups, individual artists etc
- Supported access and development of projects in Public Health Facilities, Schools, and Communities and with 'at risk' youth groups using film, visual arts, theatre in partnership with other public and community groups and Arts Council funding
- Delivered an Arts and Disability programme
- Delivered the Artist in Schools Scheme to 8 schools in County Galway
- Completed a full programme of Age Friendly projects for older people which included Bealtaine and Burning Bright projects (77 projects and events)
- Delivered Child Protection training (24 artists attended)
- Delivered an Amateur Drama Training Programme to drama groups in County Galway
- Delivered writing/storytelling/drama workshops to primary schools
- Hosted Culture Night for County Galway with over 90 events taking place in 31 towns and villages throughout the County in collaboration with the Social Inclusion Unit.
- Arts & Libraries Programme
- Delivered Professional Practice Seminars to Artists
- Supported the development of creative economy www.screenwest.ie
- Promoted the County as a location for film production
- Finale event of the Galway Music Education Partnership Composer in Residence Project
- Supported Aras Eanna (Arts Centre Inis Óírr)

- Supported Galway's bid to become the European Capital of Culture 2020 through the secondment of the Arts officer and wider participation of the Entire Unit at various events

Proposals for 2016:

- Implement the Arts Grants
- Administration of Individual Artists Grants as a valuable means of support within the creative sector in County Galway
- Professional practice seminars for artists
- Child Protection Training for artists
- Amateur Drama Training Programme
- Arts and Libraries Programme
- Establish and maintenance of projects with other agencies and institutions
- Manage a strong arts partnership programme within the county
- Arts and education programme in Schools
- Artist in Schools Scheme to 15 schools with an focus on the 1916 Commemorations
- Writers in Schools Scheme
- Film in Schools
- Continue the Arts & Health & Disability Programme
- Burning Bright - Artists in Nursing Homes Programme
- Bealtaine Programme - Creativity in Older People
- UCHG Arts Trust
- Arts Ability - Our Disability Arts Programme
- Manage and deliver a countywide programme of events for Culture Night
- Support the County's only professional Arts Centre in the development of a Cultural Programme with Economic and Tourism Impacts on the Islands (Aras Eanna, Inis Oírr)
- Support Screen Commission West
- Better international collective marketing for Film in Galway
- Enhance existing film programmes and projects and support the Galway UNESCO Film Office
- Secure potential funds to better support the business cluster of film businesses located here
- Collaborative film tourism promotions
- Support Galway's bid to become the European Capital of Culture 2020 and continue to work collaboratively on a number of projects for 2016 as part of the bid submission

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Draft of new Strategic Plan for the Galway Sports Partnership prepared.
- Operational Plan 2015 for the Galway Sports Partnership implemented.
- Sourced funding from the Irish Sports Council and local resources to fund the activities of the Partnership throughout 2015.
- Implemented the core programmes of the Irish Sports Council – Buntús, Code of Ethics, Women in Sport, Meet & Train, Walking Clubs.
- Continued to implement the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme throughout Galway, including Disability training through the Disability Inclusion Training programme from CARA, Tralee and new 'Judo Assist' sport for children with disabilities
- Organised and ran the Annual Galway Sports Partnership 10k.
- Assisted with the coordination of Galway Bike Week activities for 2015 and organised activities with local communities, clubs and organisations – assisted and coordinated 28 events in Galway City & County.
- Implemented pilot 'Men on the Move' fitness programme in 3 locations Oughterard, Ballinasloe and Doughiska as part of a HSE funded national pilot programme
- Organised and presented prizes in the first implementation of the FIT TOWNS initiative throughout 2015.
- Organised and ran Operation Transformation in January 2015.
- Completed our club/school/and sporting organisations databases in 2015.
- Implemented the Community Walking Programme in Clifden in 2015.

Proposals for 2016:

- Launch Galway Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020.
- Establish new website for Galway Sports Partnership.
- Source funding from Sport Ireland (*formerly the Irish Sports Council*) and other funding bodies e.g. HSE, Local Authorities to fund the operations of Galway Sports Partnership for 2016.
- Deliver core programmes of Sport Ireland – Buntús, Child Protection courses, Women in Sport Programme, Be Active ASAP.
- Establish the men on the Move initiative in at least 4 other areas of Galway outside of those already up and running.
- Organise and run Galway Sports Partnership 10K for 2016.
- Organise and run Galway Walking Week 2016.
- In association with Galway City Council and County Council secure funding for Galway Bike Week 2016.

- Continue with the implementation of the Disability Programme in Galway including Disability Awareness Training.
- Organise and run the Fit Towns initiative for 2016.
- Organise and run sport and physical activity opportunities for older adults – including Tai Chi, Qi-Gong and dance.
- Run Sportshall Athletics, Xcessible Sportshall Athletics, Xcessible tag-rugby in schools
- Organise and run events around Operation Transformation in Galway in 2016.
- Implement Bike Tutoring Course for new tutors.
- Implement Bike for Life Training through schools.
- Organise and implement a programme known as ‘midnight soccer’ for disadvantaged youths.
- Continue the implementation of the Community Walking programme in 5 locations in 2016 – Athenry, Loughrea, Portumna, Gort and Tuam.
- Organise and run the Community Coaching Support programme for Jobseekers programme with Galway Community College and Sport Ireland.
- Implement the Level 1 Award in Sport leadership in association with Galway Community College and Sport Ireland.
- Arrange for and facilitate Steering Group and Workgroup meetings of Galway Sports Partnership throughout 2016.

Human Resource Activity

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Thirty three recruitment competitions were held during the year, involving a total of 482 candidates being called for interview for the various posts. 47 appointments were made up to the end of October 2015.
- Galway County Council provided nine month work experience placements for 3 interns through the Job-Bridge National Internship Scheme.
- Twenty Two employees will have retired from the Council in 2015.
- Galway County Council is providing 68 work placements of 22 months duration under the Gateway Scheme.
- In excess of 3% of Galway County Council’s Total Payroll Costs has been spent on Training and Development in 2015. Health & Safety training formed a considerable part of the 2015 Training Plan including courses as follows: Driver Certificate of Professional Competence Training, Signing, Lighting and Guarding Training, Safe Pass and Manual Handling Training.
- Galway County Council has a number of Family Friendly Schemes in place including:
 - *Employee Assistance Programme:* A confidential counselling service, the "Employee Assistance Programme" or EAP is available to all Galway County Council employees. Health Assured Ltd delivers this service on behalf of Galway County Council.

- *Shorter Working Year Scheme*: 33 staff members availed of unpaid leave under the Shorter Working Year Scheme in 2015.
- *Parental Leave Scheme*: 64 staff members availed of parental leave in 2015.
- *Work Sharing Scheme*: 51 staff members availed of work sharing arrangements in 2015.
- *Career Breaks*: 5 staff members availed of career breaks in 2015.
- *Cycle to work scheme*: Under this scheme an employer may provide an employee with a bicycle and/or associated safety equipment up to a maximum value of €1000 without the employee being liable for benefit –in-kind taxation. 33 applications for participation in the Cycle to Work Scheme have been processed to date in 2015 for Council employees.
- *Travel Pass Scheme*: There are currently 12 staff members availing of the TaxSaver Travel Pass Scheme.

Proposals for 2016:

- Recruit and deploy staff in an efficient and professional manner, and in accordance with Government policy.
- Devise and implement tailored training and development programmes which take into account individual and organizational requirements, and implement quality training standards to enable employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall accomplishment of the Council’s goals and objectives. The 2015 Training Plan will continue to focus on the delivery of mandatory Health & Safety Training. Training Programmes that support managers and staff in addressing the challenges of new approaches and greater flexibility in the delivery of work programmes with reduced resources will be prioritised, while having regard to the personal and career development needs expressed by staff members through the PMDS process.
- Develop, implement and communicate appropriate human resources policies in line with existing and new legislation, and in keeping with best practice.
- Support and advise Line Managers on the implementation of workplace policies.
- Promote dignity at work, diversity and equality for all employees of the Council.
- Continue to promote a climate of good industrial relations and strengthen the partnership approach to joint problem-solving in the interest of employee and customer relations.
- Continue to progress actions as set out in County Galway Local Authorities Public Service Agreement Action Plan in conjunction with the various Departments.
- According to service records, a minimum of 17 staff members will retire in 2016.

ENVIRONMENT, WATER, COMMUNITY, ENTERPRISE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Water Services Investment Programme

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- On January 1st 2014 all of the water services responsibilities transferred to Irish Water. The Council continues to operate the Capital programme as an agent of Irish Water. The Water Services Investment Programme as we knew it has been replaced by Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan. There are a number of schemes in County Galway that are on the Plan. In the cases of schemes not on the plan, they will be the subject of a business case review by Irish Water who will make the investment approval decision.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council, in conjunction, with Irish Water, will strive to develop the county in a balanced and prioritised manner and in a way that meets the needs of communities and industries. Priority for the use and assignment of available resources in 2016 will be determined by the need to protect public health and the environment in consultation with Irish Water. Capital and revenue expenditure as agreed with Irish Water will be targeted at achieving further improvements in regulatory compliance in all areas of water and environmental management with particular emphasis on drinking water supplies.

Management and maintenance of Water and Wastewater Schemes

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The responsibility for the management, operation and maintenance of the water and wastewater infrastructure transferred to Irish Water on January 1st 2014. The Council will be working closely with Irish Water to implement Irish Water policies and priorities which are likely to be based around Health and Safety at work, maximising savings through framework procurement and introducing efficiencies in working practices at every opportunity.

- The Drinking Water Remedial Action Programme project is complete and has been very successful in improving the water quality and security of supply in the schemes. The extent of the maintenance implications of the new plant and equipment has resulted in increased costs and has also had an impact on staff resources. This is an issue that will be addressed with Irish Water.
- Regulations introduced in 2007 required that Galway County Council seek licences - or, in the case of plants less than 500 P.E., certification - from the EPA for all wastewater treatment plants and networks. The first licence and certificates issued in 2011 from the EPA. The Council, as agent of Irish Water, is assessing the administrative and financial implications of compliance with the conditions when issued as they may give rise to the need for upgrades at several plants and a scheme similar to the Drinking Water Remedial Action Programme may be needed for these upgrades to occur. The availability of funding for any identified upgrading works are a matter for Irish Water and the Council will work hand in hand with Irish Water and the EPA to advance compliance on all plants.

Water Conservation

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Active leak detection and repair works have continued throughout 2015. Extensive upgrade and maintenance works has been carried out on meters associated with District Metering Areas (DMAs), allowing for complete and accurate data to be gathered on the network. Works are well advanced on the replacement of 11km of mains in the county under Phase 1 of the Rehabilitation Programme. Irish Water has completed the tender process for Phase 2 of the Rehab Programme and the replacement of an additional 18km of mains is scheduled to commence in early 2016.

Proposals for 2016:

- A target of 42% Unaccounted For Water (UFW) was set by Irish Water for 2015, the Council had achieved a level of 42.2% by the last quarter of 2015. IW will be setting new targets for 2016 and 2017 under agreed Annual Service Plans.
- Approximately 800 leaks were detected on the water network during 2015. It is anticipated that similar detections will be recorded during 2016. Due to limited resources not all outstanding leaks have been repaired during the course of 2015, IW will look to supplement existing resources in 2016 to allow all leaks to be repaired.
- The Council have been asked to identify all faulty critical network infrastructure for inclusion in a replacement programme in 2016 (Suppressed Capital Maintenance), these works will involve the replacement of faulty valves, hydrants and meters throughout the county. Preparation of this submission has commenced.
- In addition to the 18km of rehabilitation works that are scheduled to commence in 2016, the Council will be submitting proposals to IW for the replacement of sections of

mains within the county with recorded histories of high leakage. Where mains are proving uneconomical to maintain, they will be prioritized for replacement in 2016.

Waste Management Infrastructure

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Galway County Council has been asked by the Department of Environment and working with the EPA to operate the landfill at Kilconnell for the acceptance of waste for a defined period of time in the 2 remaining cells and in parallel, commence the capital works for the permanent capping of the existing cells 1 to 7. Work is ongoing with operations commencing in early 2016.
- The contract for the operation of the Civic Amenity Sites at Ballinasloe, Clifden and Tuam has been renewed for a further six months following a tendering process in 2015. This contract expires in March 2016, with an option in the contract for two possible extensions of the contract for 3 months each.
- Waste collectors were checked to ensure that their vehicles had appropriate pay by weight mechanisms installed.
- Rehab Glasco continue to provide a collection service for glass and beverage cans at the County's 92 bring bank centres, while the Council has a partnership arrangement with Athchursáil Arainn Teo.(now Athchursáil Arainn Cuideachta Gníomhaíochta Ainmnithe) to operate an integrated waste management scheme for the Aran Islands. On Inishboffin a landfill and recycling service is provided for, fully funded by Galway County Council.
- The Local Authority Prevention Network (formerly the Local Authority Prevention Demonstration Programme) continues but with a significant cut in funding. The Network is involved in identifying actions for prevention and capacity building within community, business and public sectors in relation to resource use efficiencies and areas covered include waste prevention, energy conservation, water conservation and capacity building, training and awareness
- Following the implementation of the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009 a comprehensive awareness campaign has been aimed at the commercial sector.

Proposals for 2016:

- The implementation of pay by weight regulations by July 2016.
- Ensure that waste collectors who are providing a residual waste collection service will also provide a food collection service from July 2016
- Monitor the operation of leased recycling facilities countywide.
- Provide mobile hazardous waste & WEEE collections at targeted locations
- Implement waste collection bye-laws in targeted areas.

- Provide an education campaign in support of separate organic waste collection upon implementation of separate collection by private collectors.

Environmental Monitoring & Enforcement Measures

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Details of enforcement notices, warning letters issued and initiated prosecutions under Environmental legislation in 2015 will be set out in the 2015 RMCEI (minimum inspection criteria for environmental inspection) returns which are due for issue by January 31st 2016.
- The 2015 RMCEI returns detail planned pro-active inspections carried out on regulated facilities and unplanned reactive inspections in relation to complaints received and incidents of environmental pollution. Inspections are carried out in relation to complaints, permitted waste facilities, permitted collectors, quarries, garages, various waste producer categories, discharge licences, sewage sludge facilities, farms, private wastewater treatment systems, air pollution licences, deco paints facilities and solvent registered sites.
- Producer Responsibility Initiative Inspections under Waste Management legislation commenced in 2015 as set out in the RMCEI. Inspections are carried out by Community Wardens using the GeoPal App.
- Contracts were put in place for drinking water, bathing water, river, lake and landfill monitoring in accordance with legislative requirements. Follow-up actions were taken in response to non-compliances.
- Notifications of non-compliance in relation to drinking water were issued to the EPA. Public notices in relation to bathing water quality were issued and investigative monitoring was carried out as required.
- Five Blue Flags and Six Green Coast plaques were awarded to bathing areas in County Galway.
- The Council inspected waste collector permit holders and waste facility permit holders on an ongoing basis.
- The CCTV programme to detect illegal dumping continued to be extended to various locations throughout the County and were successful in a number of prosecutions.
- The Litter Management Plan 2015-2018 was approved by the Council at its November monthly meeting.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will set out all planned pro-active inspections of authorised facilities under various Environmental Legislation in the 2016 RMCEI Plan which is due for issue by January 31st 2016. The scale of Enforcement activity in 2016 will reflect the resources available for inspections and will be on a prioritised basis taking consideration of Departmental guidance.
- The Council will continue to carry out investigations and monitoring under environmental legislation, in accordance with government policy and EPA directions, and take enforcement measures as required for non-compliance with environmental legislation.
- Producer Responsibility Initiative Inspections will continue during 2016 to ensure compliance of businesses with their responsibilities under waste management.
- Use of CCTV cameras will be extended where required to include use of covert cameras at locations where persistent dumping occurs.
- Inspections of waste water treatment systems will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the EPA.

Protection of Natural Waters

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Local authorities and other public authorities are incorporating the programmes of measures set out in the River Basin Management Plans in their business plans and schedules of work. Investigations are prioritised in areas where public health must be protected

Derelict Sites and Dangerous Structures

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Council continued to exercise its powers under the Derelict Sites Act 1990, in order to compel the owners of neglected, ruinous and unsightly buildings and land to take remedial action. While there are currently no sites on the Derelict Sites Register, enforcement action continued to take place where required.

Proposals for 2016:

- Sites in the county will continue to be reviewed in accordance with the Derelict Sites policy and the Dangerous Structures policy.

Burial Grounds

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- There are currently 233 burial grounds listed on The Council's burial ground register. The Council, with the participation of the many local burial ground committees, carries out works of maintenance and improvements as resources permit.
- A burial ground extension programme continued throughout 2015 with priority given to extensions at Annaghdown, Quansboro, Claregalway, Leenane etc. Improvement works were supported at a number of burial grounds resulting in increased plots available.
- An annual grant is provided to committees who maintain the burial grounds in their area. A 3 tier grant was awarded to Committees in 2015 - €600, €450 or €300 with grants made to 163 committees in 2015

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will continue to progress extensions in conjunction with the local communities. Extensions will be advanced in partnership with local communities at Abbey, Abbeyknockmoy, Annaghdown, Ballinafad, Ballygar, Bealadangan, Claregalway, Clarenbridge, Clonfert, Kilkieran, Killursa Kilmeen, Knock, Leenane, Lettermullen and Quansboro as resources permit.

Environmental Awareness & Education

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The awareness officers are involved in promoting environmental awareness through ongoing engagement with the domestic and commercial sectors
- Over 35 community awareness events have taken place focusing on waste management, waste prevention, food waste, home composting, household hazardous waste, energy conservation and water conservation
- Ongoing development and dissemination of information through local media, social media, libraries, schools, voluntary groups etc.
- Ongoing involvement with Tidy Towns groups
- Ongoing involvement in the Green Schools programme with over 90% of county schools involved
- Participating with and funding community based Anti Litter initiatives
- Delivery of WEEE, Mobile Hazardous Waste Collections, National Spring Clean initiatives
- Liaising with Community and Enterprise Unit, Heritage Officer, Biodiversity Officer on various environmental projects
- Participating in SEAI Energy Awareness Programme
- Ongoing implementation of the LAPN / Waste Prevention Programme.

Proposals for 2016:

- The Awareness campaign will continue with particular emphasis on further enhancing partnerships with community and voluntary groups and the continued dissemination of information to all sectors using all suitable methods.
- Ongoing implementation of the Waste Prevention Programme.

Energy Efficiency

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Energy efficiency upgrades were completed in 300 local authority houses. The Council also installed energy efficient windows and doors in 23 houses
- PV array generating electricity was installed on the roof of Arus an Chontae (additional to last year). The internal corridor lighting was upgraded to LED lighting.
- Energy efficiency information was supplied to all Chambers of Commerce in the County.
- Energy efficiency information provided at Meet West, Local Enterprise days and environmental sessions with local communities

Proposals for 2016:

- Continue upgrading Council owned buildings with improved insulation and lighting. Install further PV arrays.
- Complete all preparatory work for participation in national programme for energy efficient street lighting.
- Continue the energy efficiency fabric upgrade and deeper retrofit programme for local authority housing.
- Continue with provision of information at local community and business events and explore further opportunities.

Animal Control & Welfare

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- Animal welfare cases involving dogs, cattle, sheep and horses were investigated where appropriate in conjunction with Gardai, Dept of Agriculture and welfare groups.
- The Council continued to be active in providing pound facilities for impounding of horses, sheep, cattle and goats. Structural improvements were made to Ballinasloe Pound. The Council veterinary service liaises with Housing in the implementation of the Control of Horses Act including the tendering processes.
- The Council continued to implement the Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010 which requires the registration, and compliance with standards, of all premises coming under the definition of a 'dog breeding establishment'.

- Under the Control of Dogs Act, increased compliance with dog licensing was achieved by targeting resources.
- New legislation was introduced with regard to the compulsory micro-chipping of all Dogs

Proposals for 2016:

- The Council will continue to provide pound services and are carrying out further improvement works to Ballinasloe Pound.
- Ongoing improvements to the efficiency of the Dog Control service will be implemented during the year to include continuing targeting of resources with a view to increased compliance with dog licensing.
- The Council will continue to investigate cases of animal welfare breaches in conjunction with Dept of Agriculture, Gardai and welfare groups.
- The Council will implement and enforce the new micro-chipping law.

Food Safety

Indicative Activities in 2015:

- The Council provided a Veterinary Public Health Inspection Service for both City and Galway County Councils under the terms of its 5 year service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- There are 11 local abattoirs in the county which are approved by the Council under Irish and EC legislation. These premises slaughter cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and now poultry under Council supervision.
- 3 new abattoirs commenced business in the county following approval by the Council veterinary service to process poultry, cattle, sheep and goats.
- The Council also supervises 10 approved or registered meat processing premises in both the city and county.
- Specific EC required welfare training at time of slaughter, was organised for staff of Galway abattoirs. Training in labelling//Hygiene and HACCP was provided to Council supervised food businesses.

Proposals for 2016:

- Resources for this service have been included in the budget for 2016
- Developments in the area of national shared veterinary services will be responded to.
- It is proposed to organise further training for Food Business Operators and veterinary inspectors in 2016.
- Continued operation of Food Safety compliance activities to standardised procedures.

REPORT ON THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME

2016 – 2018

ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

The completion of the following projects is subject to the appropriate departmental sanctions, the availability of the necessary funding and compliance with all appropriate legislative and regulatory provisions.

In addition to works on Major Inter Urban routes, a full programme of Pavement and Minor Improvements Works, Safety Measures and Bridge Improvement Works shall continue to be undertaken on the National Primary & National Secondary Road Network. This Programme is dependent on annual allocations from the National Roads Authority and as such the programme of works shall be presented to the Council on an annual basis in the context of the Annual Roads Programme.

NATIONAL ROADS (including Major Inter Urbans):

Project:	Status:
N6 Galway City Outer By-Pass	The ECJ ruled that the approval given for the GCOB scheme was not in compliance with the Habitats Directive EO 92/43. Funding has been provided for the development of a new planning application and the procurement process for the lead consultant for the scheme has been completed with Arup Consulting Engineers. A section 85 Agreement has been agreed between Galway City and County Councils and the County Council will act as the lead organization in the development of the scheme. ARUP Consultants have been appointed for the Galway City Transport Project and are based in the Project Office in Ballybrit. Necessary documentation for publication of the scheme will be available mid 2016.
N18/ N17 Gort to North of Tuam	Contracts have been signed. The contract is between the NRA and Direct Route. Major works have commenced on the project since Qtr 1 2015 expected completion date is Feb 2018
N59 Maigh Cuilinn Online	Works are ongoing in Moycullen Online and are due to complete Qtr 1 2016
N59 Clifden to Oughterard	Maam Cross to Oughterard has been granted Planning Approval. Advance works are to commence by Q2 2016. Clifden to Maam Cross has been published and the Oral Hearing took place in mid-November 2015.
N17 Carrownurlaur to Ballindine	Contract for works was signed in November 2015 and the works will continue into 2016. Expected completion Qtr 4 2016.
N84 Luimnagh	Works are ongoing with expected completion Qtr 4 2016

	and Land Acquisition is now in progress.
N63 Annagh Hill to Abbeyknockmoy	Part VIII Planning has been approved in October 2015. Approval to proceed to CPO has been sought.
N67 Kinvara to Ballinderreen	A CPO for the Section of road approaching Kinvara from Galway was published in 2015 and the Oral Hearing took place in November 2015.
N83 Forty Acres	Fencing works have taken place. The remainder of the scheme will be completed by end of 2016.

The advancement of the above projects is dependent on the availability of funding and where required the availability of the necessary internal resources to advance the projects.

PLANT ACQUISITION / RENEWAL & WINTER MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES:

Project:	Status:
Purchase of replacement items of plant to facilitate the continued operation of the Machinery Yard and to meet essential operational requirements.	It is intended to proceed with the Plant Acquisition Programme within the limits of available funding with a particular emphasis on the renewal of essential plant and equipment. The cost of replacing essential plant will be met by means of charge-out, in accordance with Machinery Expense Account procedures. The Council will be seeking much needed funding for plant replacement to satisfy OHSAS and Health & Safety requirements.
The replacement and acquisition of necessary equipment and the development of salt barns to facilitate the delivery of the winter service plan.	It is intended to replace existing and acquire additional winter maintenance equipment and construct additional salt barns (<i>Sandy Road & Conamara</i>) subject to the availability of the necessary funding from the National Roads Authority.

FLOOD RELIEF/MITIGATION SCHEMES:

Project:	Status:
To directly advance and assist in the advancement, as appropriate, of Flood Relief/Mitigation Schemes including the Dunkellin River Flood Relief Scheme, Clare River Flood Relief Scheme and South Galway.	The Council will continue to work with the Office of Public Works through the Joint Working Group and Steering Group and other stakeholders to advance appropriate flood relief/mitigation schemes in compliance with all appropriate legislative and regulatory provisions and within the limits of available resources.

Dunkellin/Aggard Flood Relief Scheme	This scheme has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála and an Oral Hearing took place in November 2015.
Clare River Flood Relief Scheme	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has approved this scheme for development in 2016.
Ballinderreen/Kinvara	The Office of Public Works and Transport Infrastructure Ireland agreed funding for the development of this scheme. Galway County Council will progress the planning and development of the scheme during 2016.

STRATEGIC PIERS & HARBOURS PROGRAMME:

Project:	Status:
Inis Oírr Pier Improvements	The proposed development at Inis Oírr comprises the following main elements: the construction of an attached breakwater to the seaward side of the pier, the construction of a pier extension including additional berthage and limited dredging works to provide a safe approach channel. Funding of €8million for the pier development on Inis Oírr was specified in the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Programme 2016 -2021. However, to date, no correspondence has been received notifying Galway County Council of the availability of such funding. This project will be considered when funding is made available.
Caladh Mór Harbour Phase III	It is proposed to submit a Planning application to An Bord Pleanála under the Strategic Development Act 2007 in the future. This project is linked to the Inis Oírr Harbour development where rock from Caladh Mór will be recycled for constructing Inis Oírr Harbour.

GALWAY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (G.F.R.S)

G.F.R.S is the Principal emergency service (P.E.S.) for Galway City And County Councils respectively The followings sets out the indicative Capital programme for G.F.R.S. for 2015-2017.

Please note all projects are subject to Department Of Environment Community & Local Government (DECLG) Funding and specific approval by project.

Fire Appliances

- A request for capital funding for two pre-owned Class B appliances has recently been approved by DECLG and a recoument claim will be submitted to DECLG before end of 2015
- DECLG have approved the procurement of a new Class B appliance for Galway County Council Fire Authority, as part of Regional Tender for the West & North West Regions for 5 number Class B appliances in 2015. This Project is been led by Roscommon County Council, who issued tender documentation in the summer of 2015. Expected delivery of new Class B appliance is late 2016/early 2017.

Fire Stations

An Cheathra Rua

- Subject to DECLG funding as outlined above, Galway County Council intend to:
 - Progress Galway City Project - new HQ station i.e. site selection and progress planning - following outcome of the review of the Fire Services and external consultants report
 - Progress new Fire station Project in Tuam, Co. Galway approved in 2008, design consultants appointed in 2009, planning permission granted in 2010, full working drawings were submitted to Declg in Dec. 2010. Engineering Consultants have been instructed to revisit 2010 cost plan/working drawings in summer 2015. Galway county Council will request approval from DECLG to proceed to tender stage, when revised figures are available.
 - Make a case to DECLG to procure & appoint Design consultants for a new fire station in Athenry. Site has been identified in Council ownership, and approval in principle was given by the Declg in 2008.
 - Make a case to DECLG for approval in principle for a new Fire station in Loughrea. A potential site in Council ownership has been identified in Loughrea
 - Ballinasloe Fire Station Extension Project –application lodged with DECLG in 2008. We will continue to make a case to DECLG for an interim project for Ballinasloe Fire Station, in existing location
 - Mountbellew Fire Station Project – continue to make case to the Department to advance the project. An application was lodged with DECLG in 2009.

HOUSING

House Construction:

- Under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 the Council has been provided with funding to construct 54 units, subject to planning. The Council has been provided with an allocation of €8.7m of Capital funding to carry out the work and the Council has engaged Architects to prepare drawings for the construction of these units. It is envisaged that the units will be complete by the end of 2017. Further sites may come under consideration during this time and the members will be keep informed of these changes.
- Nationally provision has been made for works under the regeneration, remedial and energy efficiency programmes. The housing unit will prepare schemes in anticipation of funding opportunities for construction on its own land bank and also regeneration type projects.
- The Council currently has a number of applications under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF). The Department have granted approval for 13 units at Letterfrack, Connemara. These units are now substantially underway and due for completion in Early 2016. Approval was given for 12 units at Dunloe Hill, Ballinsloe and it is anticipated that construction will commence in early 2016 and the project is currently in the early procurement phase.

House Purchase Loans:

- Loans up to the approved limit of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will be issued to eligible purchasers under the various loan schemes operated by the Council. Funding is sourced by way of borrowing, the debt servicing of which is met by repayments from loanees.

Aquisitions:

- We continue to acquire properties on the open market to meet our housing requirements.

Social Housing Investment programme Estimated Capital Funding 2016 to 2018

Description	2016	2017	2018
Main Construct/Acquisition Programme	€8,500,000.00	€9,200,000.00	€77000,000.00
Capital Assistance Scheme	€1,500,000.00	€3,800,000.00	€1,000,000.00
Traveller Accommodation	€ 500,000.00	€600,000.00	€650,000.00
Remedial works	€ 250,000.00	€500,000.00	€200,000.00
Energy Efficiency/Voids Retrofitting	€1, 550,00.00	€1,000,000.00	€1,000,000.00

Please note all projects are subject to Department Of Environment Heritage & Local Government Funding and specific approval by project

CORPORATE SERVICES

Capital investments over the next three years will focus on completion of projects which have been given previous commitments under the Recreation and Amenity Framework and Playground Policy and support for continual improvements at Rinvilla Park. External funding will be sought to advance proposals for the re-generation of Loughrea Town Hall and other priority projects identified as part of the Historic Assets Strategy. Implementation of the Strategy relies on external sources of Co-funding and working with community groups to lead on re-generation of buildings in Corporate ownership.

Progress on all projects is however, subject to continued availability of internal and external funding together with necessary statutory and legislative approval as appropriate on a project by project basis.

Project	Budget	Sources of Funding
Playground Projects (Limited to existing commitments)	€90,000	Development Contribution Scheme, limited to existing commitments under the Playground Policy
Walking Routes and Passive Recreation & Amenity Development	€67,000	Limited to meeting existing commitment under the Recreation and Amenity Framework
Clarinbridge Cowpark Amenity Development	€95,000	Development Contribution Scheme - Recreation and Amenity
Loughrea Town Hall Regeneration	€650,000	External Grant Aid and Galway County Council

APPENDIX A

Increase in Annual Rate on Valuation 1977 to 2015

	COUNTY COUNCILS*	€ RATE IN 2015	€ RATE IN 1977	% increase 1977 to 2015
1	MEATH	69.63	8.32	837%
2	KILDARE	68.95	9.02	764%
3	CARLOW	69.56	10.67	652%
4	OFFALY	66.00	10.18	648%
5	LOUTH	60.00	9.35	642%
6	CLARE	72.99	11.43	639%
7	WEXFORD	71.52	11.34	631%
8	SLIGO	66.95	10.65	629%
9	LAOIS	64.63	10.54	613%
10	WESTMEATH	54.54	9.02	605%
11	WICKLOW	72.04	12.02	599%
12	MONAGHAN	59.61	10.03	594%
13	CORK	74.75	12.61	593%
14	KILKENNY	54.90	9.62	571%
15	ROSCOMMON	71.44	12.58	568%
16	KERRY	79.25	14.28	555%
17	LONGFORD	65.35	12.02	544%
18	GALWAY	66.59	12.48	534%
19	LEITRIM	62.15	12.49	498%
20	TIPPERARY	56.77	11.52	493%
21	CAVAN	56.85	11.68	487%
22	DONEGAL	68.39	15.54	440%
23	MAYO	68.76	16.51	416%

ABOVE TABLE EXCLUDES SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL, FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL, DUNLAOIRE COUNTY COUNCIL,
WATERFORD CITY*/COUNTY COUNCIL & LIMERICK CITY* / COUNTY COUNCIL AS THEY HAVE MOVED TO A REDEFINED
VALUATION BASIS & ARE NOT DIRECTLY COMPARABLE

APPENDIX B

Annual Rate on Valuation 2015

	COUNTY COUNCILS	€ RATE IN 2015
1	KERRY	79.25
2	CORK	74.75
3	CLARE	72.99
4	WICKLOW	72.04
5	WEXFORD	71.52
6	ROSCOMMON	71.44
7	MEATH	69.63
8	CARLOW	69.56
9	KILDARE	68.95
10	MAYO	68.76
11	DONEGAL	68.39
12	SLIGO	66.95
13	GALWAY	66.59
14	OFFALY	66.00
15	LONGFORD	65.35
16	LAOIS	64.63
17	LEITRIM	62.15
18	LOUTH	60.00
19	MONAGHAN	59.61
20	CAVAN	56.85
21	TIPPERARY	56.77
22	KILKENNY	54.90
23	WESTMEATH	54.54

ABOVE TABLE EXCLUDES SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL, FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL, DUNLAOIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, WATERFORD CITY*/COUNTY COUNCIL & LIMERICK CITY* / COUNTY COUNCIL AS THEY HAVE MOVED TO A REDEFINED VALUATION BASIS & ARE NOT DIRECTLY COMPARABLE

