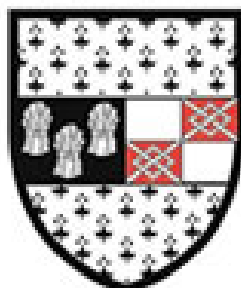


Kilkenny County Council



Housing Report



25th July 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: POLICY	3
SECTION 2: CAPITAL PROGRAMME	6
SECTION 3: HOUSING DEMAND & SUPPLY	11
SECTION 4: PRIVATE HOUSING	16
SECTION 5: TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION & HOMELESS SERVICES	19
SECTION 6: COMMUNITY & ESTATE MANAGEMENT	22
Appendix 1 – Rebuilding Ireland – An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness (2017 – 2021)	24

SECTION 1: POLICY

A. SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2015 - 2018

The Housing Strategy was approved at the Council Meeting in June 2015. This strategy resulted in the approval of €39.8ml for the construction and acquisition of accommodation along with the cost to provide units under the RAS/Leasing/CAS Schemes and Long Term Voids.

The Minister of Environment has now sought the accelerated delivery of housing units and is expected to announce his revised allocations following the publication of the *'Rebuilding Ireland, An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness'*. (See Appendix 1)

B. HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2016

The Statutory three year Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) will be carried out on the 21st September 2016 and must be completed and returned to the Department of Environment on or before the 12th October 2016. A public advertisement was placed in the local newspapers on Wednesday 20th July and on our website to inform the public of the assessment process. Receipt of applications must be returned by 31st August 2016.

This will be the last of the three year statutory housing assessments and will be carried out annually starting from 2017.

C. PROPERTY TAX

The Council is obliged by law to pay Property tax for our rented housing stock. The amount paid in 2015 was €191,340 and the amount calculated on Local Authority houses amounts to €194,040 (2,156 houses) for 2016.

D. HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

Kilkenny commenced the Introduction of the HAP Scheme in mid October 2014.

Where a client is eligible and approved for HAP, the local authority will pay, on behalf of the client, a monthly rent to a landlord. In return the housing client will be required to pay a contribution towards this rent to the local authority. This will be a differential rent based on household weekly income, in a similar way to the differential rents charged for all local authority housing. The Scheme is now rolled out to twenty one (21) Local Authorities.

There are 614 HAP tenancies in Kilkenny at 30/06/2016. These clients are an even mix of transfers of rent supplement clients and new clients approved as having a social housing need.

In some areas, particularly Kilkenny City, market rents exceed the rent limit applicable to tenants. Tenants have the option in order to secure a rental property to pay the difference between their HAP limit (cap) and the market rent to their landlord i.e. a top-up. There are 362 (59%) tenants paying top up payments to Landlords at present.

Minister Coveney notified local authorities of significant amendments to the supports available under the HAP scheme. This is provided for by the Housing Assistance Payment (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2016, which have legal effect from **1 July 2016** as follows:

	FAMILY SIZE						
	Single Shared Accom	Couple Shared Accom	Single	Couple with no children	Couple/Lone Parent with 1 child	Couple/Lone Parent with 2 children	Couple/Lone Parent with three or more children
New Rate	€230	€270	€480	€530	€630	€660	€690
Old Rate	€200	€230	€390	€430	€540	€565	€590

Kilkenny County Council has contacted all our existing tenants paying a top up payment to their landlords. This change should ease the financial burden on tenants. The increased limits should also make it easier and more affordable for new tenants to access properties in the private rented market going forward.

E. NATIONAL DIFFERENTIAL RENTS FRAMEWORK –

While it is the Department's intention to replace the current 70 rent schemes that are in place since 1986 with one national differential rent scheme it is unlikely that it will be implemented in the current year. The Housing Department carried out a full rent review in February 2016 (3,200 accounts) based on tenant's current household income. While the review is complete there are ongoing requests to review and appeal rents. To date, 73 tenants appealed their rent increase (3.5%) with 32 (44%) cases resulting with a reduction in their rent. Seven cases saw no change while fourteen have to provide additional information. There are 20 cases on hand to be processed.

The next general rent review for all tenants will be carried out in 2018 as agreed at previous Council meeting. The Council will need to address some of the anomalies in the current rent scheme and this can only be achieved by having rent harmonization as is the case for all local authorities. This matter will be reviewed in the context of rolling out the National Rent Framework.

F. TENANT (INCREMENTAL) PURCHASE SCHEME 2016

The scheme was introduced with effect from 1st January 2016 but only came into operation on 5th April 2016. Tenants over a year are eligible to apply and also must have reckonable income greater than €15,000. The house must also be deemed eligible for sale. The purchase price is based on a percentage discount of the market value of the property, or, half the estimated replacement cost of the dwelling, whichever is the greater.

25 Applications were received to date. Seventeen (17) Applicants are deemed eligible with 7 not eligible (Part V/Restrictions on the tenancy agreement) and the remaining application is being assessed. Two (2) have progressed to Valuation stage and awaiting report and the remaining 15 require Certificates from Irish Water to confirm payment.

SECTION 2: CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Outlined in the table below is a synopsis of the numerous capital projects being managed by the Housing Section. Further explanatory details for some of the projects are provided in the subsequent paragraphs.

2.1 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015 -2017:

215 Units Budget: €39.8ml Additional Budget: €5ml for Acquisitions

Scheme	Number '15-'17	Amount	Stage/Comments
Construction 2015 – 2017	116	17,050,000	4 of the 5 schemes @ Vicars Street / Brewery Site, Callan, Castlecomer and The Butts at Design Stage
	12	1,247,405	10 units Gaol Road & 2 Rural Cottages Completed and Allocated
	6	1,129,235	(Part V –Rosehill) Under Construction. Date for Completion October 2016
Voids 2015	24	607,862	24 units completed
Voids 2016	10	255,000	Tender stage. Dept allocation 23 rd June
Acquisitions 2015	24	€3,452,060	County Wide – Completed
2016	23	€3,600,000	23 Sales Agreed at 30 th June.
Turnkey 2016	7	1,600,000	Newpark Drive. Under construction Completion date December 2016
CAS 2014	17	1,488,011 982,398	12 units Friary Walk, Callan -Under Construction 5 Units Camphill Thomastown –Tender Stage
CAS 2015	82	9,873,586	11 Projects Various Stages of completion.
CAS 2016			Dept announced Special Call 22 nd July 2016
Total	321	€41.3ml	
Other Social Housing Supports			
HAP	614		2016 target = 8 new tenancies per week
RAS	547		33 units taken on in 2016 with 18 units leaving the scheme i.e. net 15 units ~ target 19 units 2016
Leasing 2015	41		35 - Weir View & 6 - Aylesbury, Ferrybank.
2016	3		3 Aylesbury, Ferrybank
LA Adaptation Scheme	19	261,191	Notified of allocation on 30 th June
Energy Efficiency	200	194,826	Provisional Allocation March 2016 Waiting final allocation
Housing Loans		€5,190,000	Allocation notified of 15 th March 2016
Private Grants		€1,736,266	80% Recouped from Department
Traveller Accommodation	6	€1,328,546	Phase 1 St Catherine's -2 units completed Phase 2 Under Construction (4 units)

It should be noted that any capital expenditure over and above the Department level of funding must be provided from the Council’s contribution as provided in the revenue budget or from internal capital receipts. Internal Capital Receipts arise from the sale of Council units under the Tenant Purchase Scheme.

2.2. ACQUISITIONS

Acquisitions are one of the options to address Housing Need. It should be noted that not every house on the market is suitable to purchase into stock. To accelerate the delivery of housing units in the short term the Council sought and were approved an additional allocation of €5M for the acquisition of 30 units. We are targeting the areas of greatest need i.e. homeless, overcrowding, traveller accommodation and Special Needs.

At 30th June we have ‘Sale Agreed’ on 23 houses (see table) to the value of €3.6ml compared to 24 purchases for the full year in 2015. Regarding activity in this area for the first 6 months of the year – details of approximately 400 houses were looked at - approximately 60 houses were visited – out of those, 23 resulted in ‘sale agreed’.

Area	Number of Properties Sale Agreed
Callan	4
Castlecomer	1
Kilkenny City	12
North Kilkenny	2
South Kilkenny	3
Urlingford	1
Grand Total	23

We are actively pursuing additional acquisitions throughout the city and county. However, acquisitions may not be successful for one the following reasons:

- too expensive
- not required standard
- low priority, low housing need
- house removed from the market
- over concentration of social housing in that area

Currently there are delays with the **conveyance stage** of acquiring these properties that can take up to 3 to 6 months to complete. This is beyond the control of the Council.

The Council is also in discussions with local developers to acquire completed schemes (turnkey developments) to meet housing need along with acquisitions.

2.3. HOUSE ADAPTATIONS - LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSES DISABILITY GRANTS

The Council was notified on 30th June of its allocation of €261,191 for disability/ improvement works (DPG) to 19 Local Authority houses. Works are at various stages of completion.

2.4. RETROFIT PROGRAMME - ENERGY EFFICIENCY WORKS

Kilkenny County Council was notified of its provisional allocation of €194,826 (50% of 2015 allocation) on 8th March towards energy efficient works on occupied houses in 2016. Final Allocation has not been announced by the Department. These works include:

- Roof Insulation
- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Draught Proofing
- BER Certification

A reduced maximum limit of €2,000 can only be recouped from the Department of Environment.

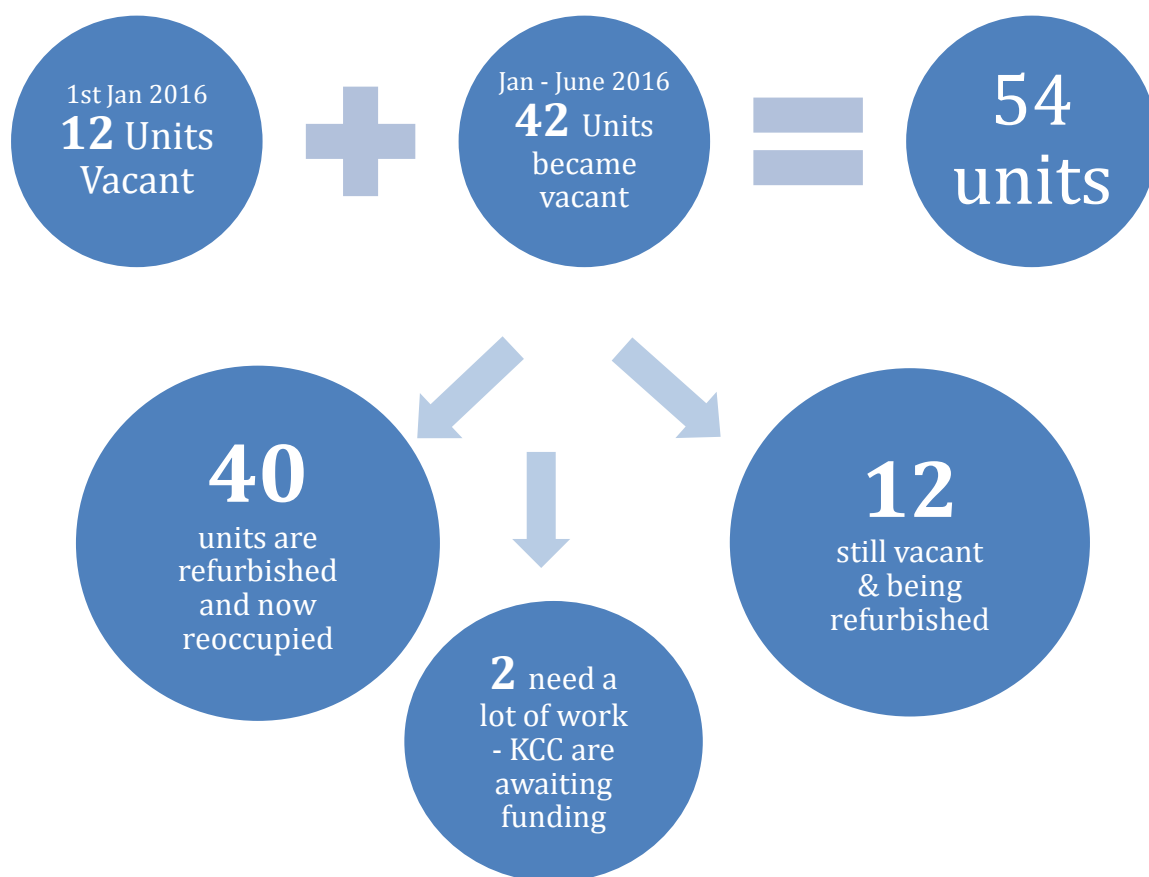
2.5. RETURN VACANT COUNCIL UNITS FOR RENTING –CASUAL VACANCIES & VOIDS

The Department of Environment approved funding for ten (10) long term voids on 23rd June 2016 to be renovated and returned back into productive use at a cost of €255,000. Works are progressing on a number of these units and grant must be drawn down by end of the year.

On average 1.3 houses per week are currently returned to stock and let to applicants on the housing waiting list

Breakdown of current vacant units within each Municipal District:-

DISTRICT	No of Vacancies at 30th June 2016
Municipal District of Kilkenny East	4
Municipal District of Kilkenny West	7
Municipal District of Piltown	1
Municipal District of Castlecomer	2



2.6. RENT REVIEW 2016

The Housing Department carried out a full rent review on 3,200 rent accounts in February 2016 based on tenant's current household income i.e. 2,180 rent accounts, 520 RAS Accounts and 500 HAP Accounts. While the review is complete there are ongoing requests to review and appeal rents.

To date, 73 tenants appealed their rent increase (3.5%) with 32 cases successfully reduced. Seven cases saw no change while fourteen have to provide additional information. There are 20 cases on hand to be processed.

It is important to note also that there are almost 200 rents to be re-calculated since the Rent Review was carried out in the first quarter of the year. These tenants have a change in their income into the household and require their rent to be recalculated. There are 84 of these re-calculations yet to be processed and they will be backdated to the date of change in circumstances once proper evidence of same is provided.

RENT HARMONISATION

There are anomalies in the current rent scheme as there are currently two Differential Rent Schemes in operation i.e. one for the old Borough area and one for the County. These anomalies will be reviewed in the context of rolling out the National Rent Framework.

2.7 INCOME COLLECTION - SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR HOUSING COLLECTIONS

A summary of the collection performances showing the 31 December 2015 arrears position in respect of the main income categories with the comparative figures for the previous year are as follows:

	2014	2014	2015	2015
	Arrears	%	Arrears	%
Housing Rents	630,000	92%	590,000	92%
Housing Loans	710,000	77%	570,000	82%

There was further improvements recorded in respect of the 2015 collection levels in both Housing Loans and Rent Collection and Kilkenny County Council was ranked as one of the better performing Local Authorities in the country.

The Local Government Auditor has also reported '*the dedicated arrears collection unit, located within the central finance directorate continues to make a good contribution to this increase in collection levels across all of the main income categories*'.

SECTION 3: HOUSING DEMAND & SUPPLY

3.1 HOUSING LIST

The current Housing list [end of June 2016] is 2,794 and a comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

Year	Number on Housing List
June 2016	2,794
December 2015	2,744
December 2014	2,456
December 2013	2,144 (Last Statutory Assessment)
December 2012	3,688
December 2011	3,118
December 2010	2,876

Then housing demand broken down by bedroom size is as follows:

	One Bed	Two Bed	Three Bed	Four Bed
	1,258	880	550	86
	45%	32%	20%	3%

Breakdown by area of preference is on the next page

Housing List at 30th June 2016

Area	No of Approved Applicants	Percentage of Total
Ballyragget	56	2.0%
Ballyhale	20	0.7%
Bennettsbridge	37	1.3%
Callan	118	4.2%
Castlecomer	76	2.7%
Clara	2	0.1%
Clogh	12	0.4%
Coon	4	0.1%
Ferrybank	78	2.8%
Freshford	40	1.4%
Glenmore	11	0.4%
Goresbridge	18	0.6%
Gowran	41	1.5%
Graiguenamanagh	48	1.7%
Hugginstown	4	0.1%
Inistioge	27	1.0%
Johnstown	31	1.1%
Kells	11	0.4%
Kilkenny City & Environs	1,740	62.3%
Kilmacow	45	1.6%
Kilmanagh	7	0.3%
Kilmoganny	10	0.4%
Knocktopher	9	0.3%
Moneenroe	16	0.6%
Mooncoin	38	1.4%
Mullinavat	9	0.3%
New Ross Environs	13	0.5%
Paulstown	19	0.7%
Piltown	45	1.6%
Fiddown	19	0.7%
Skeoghvosteen	1	0.0%
Slieverue	14	0.5%
Stoneyford	13	0.5%
The Rower	1	0.0%
Thomastown	107	3.8%
Tullaroan	1	0.0%
Urlingford	51	1.8%
Windgap	3	0.1%
	2795	

3.2 HOUSING SUPPLY

The Council has 2,157 units of accommodation to meet its housing need along with 547 RAS units and 113 leased units secured with private landlords and voluntary housing Associations. These units do not include units provided by the Voluntary Housing Associations who have provided in excess of 840 Units, of which, 251 units of these are for the Elderly and 397 units for Special Needs.

A total of 49 offers of accommodation were made in the period January to June 2016 with only a 4% refusal rate.

Analysis of Offers of Accommodation made Jan- Jun 2016 – old Electoral Areas

Electoral Area	New Lettings	Casual Vacancies	Refusals
Ballyragget	3	6	1
Callan	1	2	0
Kilkenny City and Environs	5	18	1
Piltown	4	3	0
Thomastown	2	5	0
Total	15	34	2

Analysis of Offers made Jan- June 2016 – New Municipal Districts

Electoral Area	New Lettings	Casual Vacancies	Refusals
Castlecomer	3	6	1
Piltown	4	3	0
Kilkenny City East & West	8	25	1
Total	15	34	2

- 17 offers of transfers were made up to 30th June 2016.
- 9 offers of accommodation were made to applicants who were homeless/potentially homeless.
- There are 2,794 approved applicants on the Social Housing Support waiting list at the end June 2016

3.3 RAS –RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME

This scheme continues to be a defined social housing option with 547 units available to the local Authority. The Department of Environment set a national target of 1,000 new units nationally to be provided in 2016 with a target of 19 set for Kilkenny for 2016. In 2016, 33 units were taken on with 18 units leaving the scheme i.e. net 15 units.

3.4 LEASING

To date the Leasing model (113 units) has not been as successful as the RAS Scheme in delivering units as part of the Social Housing Strategy. This was mainly due to the level of finance needed from the voluntary bodies own resources and the level of rents in rural local authorities to support the repayment of their capital loans.

There are currently 14 to 16 leasing proposals under negotiations with approved Housing Associations/Housing Agency for the provision of **362** units of accommodation in the city and county i.e. Kilkenny City & Environs, Callan, Thomastown, Castlecomer, Ferrybank, Mooncoin, Urlingford and Goresbridge.

There are a number of other sites that are very suitable to meet our housing supply needs but are complicated by the input from third parties such as the Banks, Liquidators, Receivers and NAMA. Also the majority of these sites are the subject of planning compliance.

3.5 CAPITAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME ‘CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2015 - 2016’

The ‘Special Call’ in 2015 under the CAS Scheme resulted in the nine projects approved. The six (6) successful Voluntary Housing Bodies secured funding of €7ml in principle from the Dept of Environment to meet a special category of housing need;

CAS Projects 2015 -	Allocation	Units	Comment
SOS Housing Association Ltd	500,000	6	Homeless/Special Needs
Good Shepherd Centre	€440,000	4	Homeless –Acquisitions
	€1,200,000	12	Renovations
	€666,000	6	Construction
Focus Irl	€682,792	6	Homeless- Acquisitions
Camphill, Callan	€2,200,000	16	Special Needs
Ballytobin	€514,361	4	Special Needs
Cluid Housing Association	€606,000	4	Homeless –Acquisition
Brothers of Charity, Belmont	€300,000	4	Special Needs
Total	€7,109,153	62	

In March 2016, the Council was notified of two additional allocations as follows;

Camphill, Thomastown	€334,955	5	Special Needs
Respond –Golf Links Rd, Kilkenny	€2,419,478	15	Elderly
Overall Total	€9,873,586	82	

Calls for Proposals 2016

LA’s were informed by Circular dated 22nd June 2016 (Housing 29/2016) that the CAS Scheme is now open to Approved Housing Bodies to submit proposals for the construction and acquisition of houses/apartments to meet the needs of homeless persons, elderly, people with a disability with a particular emphasis on moving people from a congregated setting into community based living.

Construction Projects - Closing date for submissions is 1st November 2016.

Purchase of Units – All acquisitions must be completed and claimed from the Department by 26th November.

Work is ongoing with three Approved Housing Bodies to provide the community accommodation to address the de-congregation of St Patrick’s, Kells Road, Kilkenny.

SECTION 4: PRIVATE HOUSING

4.1 PRIVATE HOUSING GRANTS:

The Council provides Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability to enable them to remain living independently in their own homes for longer and also to facilitate early return from hospital stays. The Mobility Aid (MAG) and Housing Adaptation (HGD) grant schemes are medically assessed and requires certification from a qualified medical practitioner and report from the Council’s approved Occupational Therapist. The OT carries out an assessment and assigns one of four categories based on priority to each application i.e. Emergency, Priority 1, P2 and P3. The Housing Aid for Older Persons (HOP) is a grant to assist older people living in poor housing conditions mainly covering rewiring and re-roofing and is assessed in-house by technical staff.

2016 Allocation from the Department	€1,736,266
Kilkenny County Council Contribution - 20%	€347,253
No Applications approved in 2016	252 i.e. 44 HGD €478,856 23 MAG €107,832 185 HOP €931,529
Amount Approved Amount Claimed from Department	1,518,217 (87%) 508,615 (37%)
Balance Remaining to be Allocated	€218,049
No on hand (Estimated) at 30th June 2016 Amount	70 applications €608,616

*HOP = Housing Aid for Older Persons Scheme MAG = Mobility Aid Grant Scheme HGD = Housing Grant for People with a Disability Scheme

Grant	On hand	Approx. amt
HGD	39	€ 424,437
HOP	12	€ 96,000
MAG	19	€ 88,179
	70	€ 608,616

The decision to re-open the HOP Scheme will be reviewed in late 2016.

4.2. INSPECTIONS OF PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

The 2009 Act amends the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 under which each housing authority has a responsibility for the standards of private rented accommodation within its jurisdiction. In 2015, 53% of the target inspections were completed.

Private Rented Inspections	2015	2014	2013
RAS	115	116	233
HAP	211	0	0
Private	11	228	2
Voluntary	35	37	0
Total	372	381	235

The challenge for 2016 is to meet the backlog of inspections carried forward from 2015 along with achieving the target of 1,092 for 2016. 24 % of target to 30/06/2016.

Private Rented Inspections	Jan to June 30 th
RAS	37
HAP	99
Private	2
Follow Up	118
Total	256

4.3 HOUSING LOANS

There is a marked increase in housing loan applications being received by the Council. The following is an analysis of this area to date

4.3.1 ANNUITY LOAN

The maximum loan amount that the Council can advance is €220,000 or 97% of the value of the house. The loan can be used to purchase a new or second hand or a new build.

The applicant must be a first time buyer with exceptions for divorced or separated couples. There are income limits of under €50,000 for a single person and under €75,000 for a couple. Interest rates

are now 2.30% variable rate and 3.25% fixed for five years only. Repayment periods of 15, 20, 25 and 30 years are available.

Since January 2016, there were 47 loan applications received with 20 Annuity Loans approved totaling €2,656,405 in 2016. All loans are vetted by the Housing Agency and by an in-house team.

4.3.2 RECONSTRUCTION LOAN

Loans of up to €38,000 may be considered for repair/refurbishment or extension to main residence. The interest rate is the same as that applicable to the normal housing loans, currently 2.30%. Loans in excess of €15,000 must be secured against the property as a charge on the folio. A total of 5 reconstruction loans were received and 1 approved to date at a value of €6,000.

Three (3) Caravan Loans were approved totalling €19,710.

4.3.3 MORTGAGE ARREARS RESOLUTION PROCESS -MARP

629 Loan Accounts with a market value of €31.9ml. 142 Loan Accounts in arrears amounting to €570,400 i.e. 22%. 80 accounts are in MARPS. Between Jan and June 11 left MARP as following resolutions reached;

Mortgage to Rent	1
Capitalise Arrears	2
Extend repayment term	1
Capitalise arrears and extend term	1
Payment Plans	6

There are currently 69 loan accounts in MARP with an arrears value of €492,600 i.e. 86% of the arrears

SECTION 5: TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION & HOMELESS SERVICES

5.1: KILKENNY TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME (TAP) 2014-2018

This was adopted by The Council in March 2014.

The assessment of need/projected need indicated that a total of 65 families will require accommodation during the lifetime of the programme.

- Current Need: 50 families
- Projected Need: 15 families

The annual target is the provision of 13 units of accommodation each year for the duration of the programme.

In 2014, 9 offers of accommodation were made as follows:

- Standard Housing: 7 Offers made: 5 Allocations; 2 Refused.
- Halting Site Bays: 1 Allocation
- Voluntary Housing: 1 Allocation

In 2015, 20 offers of accommodation, including 3 transfers, were made as follows:

- Standard Housing: 15 Offers made- 14 Allocations; 1 Refused
- Halting Site Bays: 1 Allocation
- Group Housing Scheme: 1 Allocation
- Voluntary Housing: 1 Allocation
- Rural Cottage: 1 House Constructed
- RAS: 1 Allocation

In 2016, 5 offers of accommodation have been made to date, as follows:

- Standard Housing: 5 Allocations
- Group Housing: 2 Allocations
- Halting Site Bays: 1 Allocation

A review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme (Section 17 (1)(a) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, will be completed by December 31st 2016.

The key issues to be addressed in this review are:

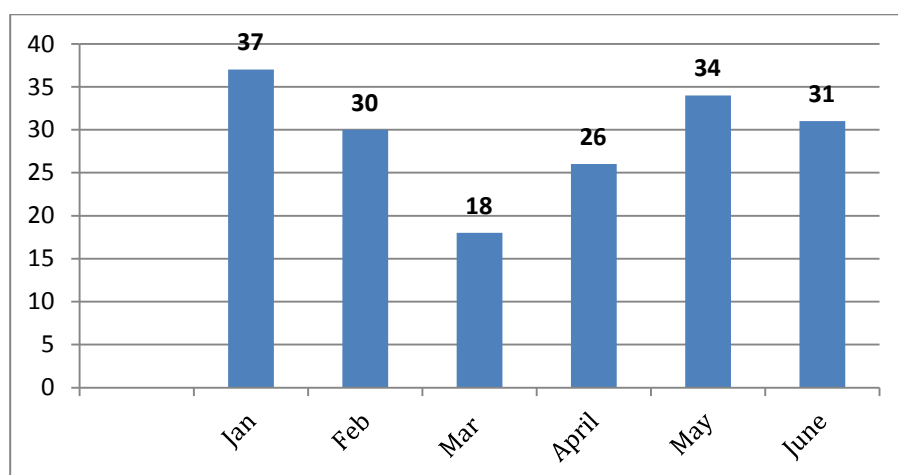
- Identification of a suitable site in Kilkenny Environs for construction of Transitional Halting Site/Group Housing Scheme to meet the particular needs of young Traveller families who need tenancy sustainment and household management supports.
- Acquisition and allocation of units of accommodation in Ferrybank
- Acquisition and allocation of units of accommodation in Rosbercon

5.2. ST.CATHERINE’S PROPOSED GROUP HOUSING SCHEME, WETLANDS, KILKENNY:

The Council is advancing the provision of a Group Housing Scheme at Wetlands. Phase 1 of the redevelopment is now complete with the construction of two houses. Phase 2 (4 Houses) has commenced, with 2 additional houses planned in Phase 3.

5.3. HOMELESS SERVICES

176 Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations to 30/06/2016. Of the 176, 10 were couples/families and are counted as individual presentations.



- **Comparative figures for the same time in 2015 stood at 242 people.**

Breakdown as follows:

Female	68
Male	106
Children	95

• **Emergency Accommodation@ 30/06/2016: - 52 people**

- 24 Adults in Good Shepherd Centre.
- Apartments at Brother Thomas Place full (6 adults)
- 2 Adults & 4 Children in the Lodge
- 11 Adults & 2 Children in Hotel/B&B accommodation
- 2 Adults & 1 Child in homeless beds in Amber

At local level homeless services continue to be co-ordinated and delivered by Kilkenny Homeless Action Team (KHAT) while oversight of service provision, strategic development and funding is coordinated by Waterford County Council, the designated lead authority for The SE Regional Homeless Services.

Two exciting new developments at regional level are:

- (i) the appointment of Mr. Frank Murtagh to carry out a Study on Homeless Services in the South East Region to meet the specific needs of Women, Parents & Children and Vulnerable Adults with Complex Needs, and
- (ii) the release of initial funding for the establishment of **Housing First** Projects in each LA Area.

Housing First is a model for tackling homelessness which focuses on the immediate provision of long term/permanent accommodation for the homeless with supports and services subsequently built around the needs of each individual. Housing First/Led works from the ethos of moving the homeless individual or household immediately from the streets or emergency accommodation into their own accommodation.

The Homeless individual or household is provided with a high level of support until they are linked in with mainstream support services and this is to ensure they can sustain their tenancy. The approach is an alternative to the system of emergency shelter and transitional housing progressions that currently exists in Kilkenny.

SECTION 6: COMMUNITY & ESTATE MANAGEMENT

ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

Estate Management Grants Scheme

- The number of County Council estates being funded by Kilkenny County Council has increased by 30% over the last three years.
- In order to facilitate the increase of groups participating and the implementation of the Estate Management Strategic Plan 2015-2010 the Estate Management Grant was increased from €70,000 to €100,000 in 2016.
- In 2016 a total of 44 Groups were funded under the estate enhancement grant scheme for Kilkenny County Council Estates.
- As part of the Kilkenny County Council Estate Management Strategic Plan 2015-2020 a newly introduced larger estate enhancement grant has been advertised with a closing date of 13th July 2016. It is proposed to fund four projects per annum (€5,000 per project) over the next four years.
- Kilkenny County Council Tidy Estate Competition was advertised in July 2016. The aim of this competition is to encourage residents to take an active role in improving the physical appearance of their estate.

Community Information

Kilkenny County Council has developed an interactive e magazine that focuses on work carried out by communities and resident associations in Kilkenny City and County. This quarterly E newsletter can be viewed on your phone, ipad, android or computer and incorporates links and video to relevant community information e.g. grants, activities, advice, community structure/plans, good news stories etc.



Pride of Place

Kilkenny County Council is working with a number of community groups in preparation for entering the 2016 National Pride of Place competition. Pride of Place is an All Ireland competition that acknowledges the work that communities are doing across the Island of Ireland. The competition is about people coming together to shape, change and improve daily lives in their communities.

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Three projects were submitted for the National Competition with judging to take place in August.

The three projects are:

Theme:	
Community Enterprise Initiative	Piltown Creamery Project
300 – 1,000 Population	Stoneyford
Communities Reaching Out	Castlecomer Discovery Park



APPENDIX 1 – REBUILDING IRELAND – AN ACTION PLAN FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS (2017 – 2021)

The Minister for Environment has announced new housing targets in the ‘**Rebuilding Ireland –An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness**’. An Investment of €5.5billion in social housing (€5.35bn) and infrastructure (€200ml) is planned along with reform measures for the sector. A housing programme of 47,000 units will be delivered. The Minister is setting up a Special Delivery Office to oversee the implementation of the Plan.

The overarching objective of the Plan is to accelerate delivery in the private, social and rental sectors. The Plan comprises of 5 key Pillars of Actions to address these challenges, namely:

PILLAR 1: ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Provide early interventions to address the unacceptable levels of families in emergency accommodation. Need to deliver inter-agency supports for homeless people and reduce the incidence of rough sleeping and enhance supports to keep people in their own homes. The key targets are:

- By mid 2017, emergency hotels and B&B type accommodation for families will only be used in limited circumstances by meeting their housing needs through the HAP and general housing allocations. New supply will be delivered by expanding the Rapid Build Housing Programme (1,500 units) and the Housing Agency Initiative to acquire 1,600 vacant properties.
- Increased Rent Supplement and HAP limits
- Roll out of Housing First Initiatives –housing led approach
- Additional Supports to tackle complex needs (including mental health and addiction issues) of homeless people
- Earlier Intervention Measures for Young People Leaving State Care and Prison Service.
- Extend Tenancy Sustainment measures
- Facilitate more households with Mortgage to Rent
- Support mortgagees in arrears with access to independent expert financial and legal advice

PILLAR 2: ACCELERATE SOCIAL HOUSING

Increase the level and speed of social housing and other State sponsored housing

- Deliver 47,000 social housing units by 2021 with funding of €5.35bn
 - LA Direct Provision -25,000 units by 2020.
 - Private Sector (PART V and Acquisitions)
 - AHB (Leasing and Acquisitions) –Increased Role
- Accelerated HAP delivery
- NTMA/Private sector Housing Fund to deliver increased housing supply

- The Housing Agency will acquire up to 1,600 vacant houses from Banks and other financial Institutions, to add to the stock of social housing.
- Vacant Housing Repair and Leasing Initiative
- State Lands Management Group - The Department will work with LA's to identify and release lands in the ownership of public Bodies to make them available for Housing development
- Establish Housing Delivery Office and Procurement Unit to support AHB's & LA's
- Streamlining approval processes
 - Department Approvals and PART 8 Procedures
 - Large Planning Applications (over 100 units) apply directly to An Bord Pleanala
- Housing for Specific Groups e.g. People with Disabilities - €10ml fund in place under the Capital Assistance Scheme (Special Call for Proposals 2016) to help the transitioning of people from congregated settings to community based living.

PILLAR 3: BUILD MORE HOMES

Double the output to deliver 25,000 units per year over the period of the Plan (2017 – 2021) by;

- Open up land supply and low cost State lands
- Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) of €200ml earmarked for inactive zoned housing sites with planning permission starting from 2017
- In Addition, NTMA funding to invest in the provision of new large infrastructure
- Provision of third level student accommodation to alleviate pressures on the rental market
- **Starter Homes** –
 - LA's will review Housing Strategies as part of the Development Plan to plan for and identify the provision of starter homes on private lands
 - NAMA developing a Programme of 20,000 starter homes over the next 3 to 5 years
- Planning Reforms e.g. ePlanning and large planning applications to go directly to ABP
- National Planning Framework (20 Year)
- Vacant Site Levy
- Tackling Construction Costs -Efficient design and delivery methods to lower the cost to deliver housing

PILLAR 4: IMPROVE THE RENTAL SECTOR

Address the obstacles to greater private rented sector delivery, to improve the supply of units at affordable rents by

- Develop a Strategy for a Sustainable Rental Sector Q3 2016
- Target the delivery of 2,000 rental properties by 2018
- Introduction of an Affordable Rental Scheme – to be finalised Q3 2016
- Encourage '**Build to Rent**'
- Review the standards of Private Rented accommodation
- Provision of third level student accommodation
- Enhanced Role for Residential Tenancy Board

- Strengthen the legislation surrounding tenancy terminations

Rental Sector is a key building block for a modern economy. 20% now live in the Rental Sector i.e. a doubling of units in the last two decades.

PILLAR 5: UTILISE EXISTING HOUSING

Ensure that existing housing Stock is used to the maximum degree possible –focusing on measures to use vacant stock to renew urban and rural areas

- Better management of Voids and introduction of Choice Based Letting Model
- Review Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme & Differential Rent Schemes
- The Housing Agency will acquire up to 1,600 vacant houses from Banks
- Village and Rural Renewal Schemes– €30ml for Town and Village Renewal initiatives to support LA's in bringing people back into town and village centres.
- Urban Regeneration including Living City Initiative
- Vacant Site Levy
- Repair and Leasing Initiative (RLI) – vacant properties in city and town centres that require an element of renovations will be eligible for funding from Local Authorities provided the place the units in a Long Term Leasing Scheme
- Continue programme of works to resolve unfinished estates

The Next stage will be the notification of specific allocations by the Department to each Housing Authority under the various Pillars.