

Kilkenny County Council

Annual Report 2015.

As adopted by Council at its meeting held on Monday 16th May 2016

Mission Statement

**“ Kilkeny County Council aims to work in partnership with the
People of Kilkeny and relevant agencies to deliver quality services
and to promote sustainable economic, social and cultural development
for current and future generations”**

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Statement of An Cathaoirleach.

It is a great privilege to introduce the Annual Report for 2016. This report contains details of the wide variety of services provided by Kilkenny County Council to the people of Kilkenny City & County. In a period of continued economic challenge it is worth noting the very valuable role that the Council plays in providing essential core services such as housing, roads, water, fire and emergency services and in supporting local communities through the arts, heritage, conservation, libraries and community and & enterprise functions. In the light of reductions in available finance and reducing numbers being employed, the Council has continued to modernise its operations and secure improved efficiencies in the way that it does its business.

Kilkenny City and County has a rich cultural and heritage tradition. The Council is intent on maximising Kilkenny's attractiveness as a centre of tourism excellence and is determined to take every and any opportunity to promote Kilkenny and to work to attract investment in our County to enable us to weather the difficult times in which we find ourselves. The County Council has undertaken a number of initiatives to promote Kilkenny as a location for investment including the acquisition of the former Brewery Site and the development of a Masterplan, the development of the Medieval Mile in Kilkenny City and the promotion of local economic activity through the Local Enterprise Office.

Key activities were carried out to build relationships with businesses and stakeholders, embed the County's strengths as a great place to work, ensure a positive and robust environment is in place to support business and communicate with a targeted broad audience of local, regional, national and multinational sectors.

I would like to compliment all Elected Members and those who serve on the various committees and sub committees of the Council who continuously dedicate themselves to the business of the Council and to representing their particular & general interests. The extensive range of business discussed and decided is outlined in the report and is testament to their ongoing dedication and service to the Council.

Finally, I would like to sincerely all the Council's staff for their work for the people of Kilkenny. I commend their commitment and dedication and we look forward to continued progress, working with all of the people of Kilkenny in making Kilkenny a better place to live in, work and visit.

Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh
Cathaoirleach.

Chief Executives Statement

I am pleased to be associated with this Draft Annual Report for 2015 which outlines the extensive range of services provided directly or indirectly by the Council in 2015. I wish to place on record my thanks and admiration for the efforts of elected members, management and staff of the Council in maintaining a high level of service delivery, to the people of the County and City, against a background of reduced resources. Within the main body of this report the various activities and delivery of services and infrastructure projects being progressed by Kilkenny County are outlined

I wish to draw attention to the following highlights:

- the award of a gold medal to Kilkenny City in the National Tidy Towns competition, the award of a silver medal to Inistioge & a bronze medal to Tullaghought
- the continued & ongoing support to the City & Counties festivals & events which are an integral part of the social, cultural & economic life of Kilkenny
- the extensive work undertaken to prepare & adopt the Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2021 & the ongoing work to support & develop the Public Participation Network
- the effective emergency response of the Council to severe flooding events in December
- the continued development of the medieval mile and the Medieval Mile Museum in Kilkenny City
- the planning framework for the Diageo site
- the Capital of Culture bid process

I am satisfied that the Council substantially achieved its objectives as set out at the commencement of 2015 and that it did so within the parameters set out in its 2015 budget.

At this juncture, I wish to pay tribute to the work being done at Municipal District level and at SPC level. These committees are invaluable in assisting the full Council in pursuing its objectives and getting through its business. The Commitment of the councillors and external members is evident from the activities outlined in the report. I express my appreciation for the dedication and hard work of the Elected Members, my colleagues on the management team and the staff of the Council. I am confident that given the abilities and spirit of cooperation that is consistently shown by the elected members and staff we should be in a position to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Finally I would like to particularly thank the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh the Municipal District Cathaoirleach Cllrs Pat Millea, Pat Dunphy and Mayor Joe Malone who have distinguished themselves in their respective roles. I commend this annual report and I am confident that it will give an overview to the people of Kilkenny and beyond, of the broad range of activities undertaken and of the Councils achievements in 2015.

Colette Byrne
Chief Executive

Notable Achievements in 2015

Economic Development and Tourism

- Adoption of Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016- 2021
- Business Incentive Scheme
- Ongoing support to Kilkenny Tourism which implemented a Tourism Mobility Plan
- Festival and Events Presentation nights
- Kilkenny –Winner of National Enterprise Award and Best Young Entrepreneur support by Local Enterprise Office.
- 750 people attended LEO organised Careers and Opportunities Fair.
- LEO grant assists 247 companies which provide 813 full time and 446 part time jobs.
- Launch of South East Action Plan for Jobs

Community Development

- The Preparation, Adoption and launch of The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for County Kilkenny, 2016-2021.
- Ongoing support to the Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Establishment of Kilkenny Public Participation Network.
- €250,000 in Community & Culture Grants
- Recognition of Kilkenny County Councils role in the UNHCR Sudanese Resettlement programme through the invitation to meet UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on his visit to Ireland
- Launch by Ferrybank Steering Committee of the Ferrybank Community Development Strategic Plan 2015-2020.
- REDZ funding for Graiguenanamagh & Castlecomer Discovery Park
- Community & Festivals funding continued
- In a unique regional approach, Counties Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford have joined forces to bid for the European Capital of Culture title in 2020 and the Three Sisters successfully passed Phase 1 of this competition in 2015.

Roads and Transportation

- N.77 Ballinaslee Improvement Scheme
- Ballyragget Village Renewal Scheme
- Mooncoin Pavement Improvement Scheme
- Thomastown Urban Renewal Scheme
- Adoption of Kilkenny Road Safety Plan
- Medieval Mile development works

Fire & Emergency Response

- Flood Emergency Response Plan activated in respect of severe flooding along Rivers Barrow, Nore & Suir catchments

- Funding for a new Fire Station in Graiguenamnanagh
- Attendance of Civil Defence volunteers at 21 Community Events

Parks & Amenity

- Development of 3 Playgrounds at Windgap, Stonyford, and Paulstown by local communities with grant and technical assistance from the County Council and County Kilkenny LEADER Partnership Company.
- 35,000 visitors to Woodstock Gardens
- 100 Groups received Amenity Grants
- Co Hall Commemoration Garden

Planning and Development

- Adoption of Abbey Quarter Master Plan
- Amendment to Callan Local Area Plan
- Conservation works to Tea House at Bateman Quay
- 800 planning applications processed -increased from 639 in 2014.
- Total of € 1.743 m Development Contributions was collected in 2015 compared to € 1.58m in 2014.

Library Services

- 12000 members
- Provision of energy efficient measures in Library buildings
- 27,600 public internet sessions & 1900 website visits
- Online exhibitions-The monks of Graiguenamanagh & The Bridewell Jail in Thomastown
- Innovative & Comprehensive programme of events in all branches throughout the year.

Heritage

- Interpretive Signage at Granny Castle, at Talbots Tower Kilkenny City and at St. Lachtains Graveyard with the local community group.
- Audit of over 300 plaques, memorials and signs from across 61 towns and villages.
- Recording over 1000 fieldnames in 25 town lands in the Kilkenny Fieldnames Project
- Launch of new website dedicated to Kilkenny's heritage www.kilkennyheritage.ie

Arts

- Development of Public Art Policy
- Innovated & comprehensive programme of artistic events
- 13,300 people attended events organised by the Councils Arts Office

Housing

- Housing Strategy 2015-2017 adopted by Council
- Rental Accommodation Scheme increased to 532 properties
- 379 Private rented properties inspected
- 92% of repair requests made in 2015 were dealt with in 2015
- 259 Local Authority Houses were retrofitted and 32 were adapted to meet the needs of disabled tenants
- 209 Grants paid in respect of private housing adaptations for elderly & disabled persons.
- 24 Long term voids were returned to full occupancy
- 11 Voluntary Housing Groups included in the 2015-2017 Housing Strategy which will be providing 78 units of accommodation

Water Services

- Provision of 25 million cubic litres of water daily to 65,000 customers under a service level agreement with Irish Water
- Upgrade of Clonassey Water Treatment Plant & Completion of Freshford Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade
- €876,000 in Grants & Subsidies to the Group Scheme sector

Environment

- Kilkenny City awarded gold medal in National Tidy Towns competition, Inistioge was awarded a silver and Tullahought retaining its bronze medal
- Adoption of Southern Regional Waste Management Plan & Kilkenny County Council Litter Management Plan
- Collection of 1100 tonnes of recycling material at Dunmore Civic Amenity site & 1450 tonnes of glass /cans at 42 bottle banks.
- 120 Community groups involved in National Spring Clean
- Investigation of 950 environmental complaints and almost 1500 routine environmental inspections were undertaken.
- 28 schools awarded a green flag bring County total up to 69
- Kilkenny and Tipperary County Council were appointed as joint Lead Authorities for preparation, consultation and implementation of the River Basin Management Plans 2017 to 2021. A new National Water Framework Directive Office was set up
- 170 First time Farm Inspections were undertaken under the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the protection of Waters) Regulations 2014
- A Consultative Committee on Dog Re-homing and Welfare was set up in 2015 which is multi-disciplinary in makeup including elected representatives, Council officials from Carlow and Kilkenny, the County Veterinary Officer , representatives from Animal Welfare organisations and the IFA.
- 6,200 dog licences issued.
- Ongoing provision of lifeguard service supervising 3,000 swimmers in public bathing areas in the County

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1. Kilkenny County Council

1. 1 Kilkenny County Council Elected Members & Structure

Kilkenny County Council consists of twenty four members, elected for a five year term of office. The current Council was elected in May 2014 and membership at 31 December 2015 is as follows:

Municipal District of Castlecomer

MARY HILDA CAVANAGH (FG) Whiteswall, Crosspatrick, Via Thurles, Co Kilkenny

PATRICK MILLEA (FF) Gaulstown, Tullaroan, Co Kilkenny

MAURICE SHORTALL (LAB) 42 Maryville, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny.

JOHN BRENNAN (FG) Crutt, Clogh, Castlecomer

MICHAEL McCARTHY (FF) Buncrusha Street, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny.

PAT FITZPATRICK (FF) Cloghpook, Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny.

Municipal District of Kilkenny City East

ANDREW McGUINNESS(FF) Constituency Office,O' Loughlin Road, Kilkenny.

PETER CLEERE (FF) Aughiletuan, Skeoughvosteen, Co. Kilkenny.

MICHAEL DOYLE (FG) Ballinbarna, The Rower, Co. Kilkenny.

PATRICK O' NEILL (FG) Ballyredding, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny.

BREDA GARDNER (NON PARTY) Cloghabrody, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny.

DAVID KENNEDY (SINN FEIN) Ballyvool, Inistioge,Co. Kilkenny.

Municipal District of Kilkenny City West.

MATT DORAN (FF) Shrugawadda, Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny.

JOE MALONE (FF) 11 Maiden Hill, Kells Road, Kilkenny.

MALCOLM NOONAN (GREEN PARTY) 35 Fr. Murphy Square, Kilkenny

PATRICK MCKEE (RENUA) 48 St. Fiacre's Place, Kilkenny.

DAVID FITZGERALD (FG) 24 Patrick Street, Kilkenny.

KATHLEEN FUNCHION (SF) Coolrainey, Inistioge Co Kilkenny

Municipal District of Piltown

MELISSA O'NEILL (SF) 40 Abbeylands, Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny.

PAT DUNPHY (FG) Ballygorey, Mooncoin, Co Kilkenny

FIDELIS DOHERTY(FG) Ballyfacey, Glenmore, Co. Kilkenny.

EAMON AYLWARD (FF) Ballynooney, Mullinavat, Co. Kilkenny.

TOMÁS BREATHNACH, (LAB) Forge Road, Narabane, Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny.

GER FRISBY (FF) Treanaree, Slieverue, Co. Kilkenny.

1.2 Management Structure

The Council saw significant changes to its Management Structure in 2015. Its Acting Chief Executive Mr John Mulholland left on promotion to take up a position as Chief Executive Laois County Council, Mr Philip O Neill & Mr John McCormack long serving Directors of Services retired after a total of 65 years public service between them.

The Council welcomed on board a new Chief Executive Ms Colette Byrne who had been Chief Executive with Offaly County Council together with two new Directors of Services Ms Maria Melia & Ms Mary J Mulholland.

	Colette Byrne- Chief Executive			
Martin Prendiville Head of Finance	Maria Melia Director of Services	Mary J Mulholland Director of Services	Simon Walton A/Director of Services	
Finance, Economic Development, Tourism Assets Management	Housing, Planning, Community Development Arts, Tourism, Heritage, Piltown Municipal District Management	Environment , Water & Waste Water , Veterinary , Energy & Castlecomer Municipal District Management	Roads and Transportation Fire & Emergency Services Corporate Services, Human Resources Kilkenny City Municipal District Management	

1.3 Members of Committees and Subsidiary Bodies

There is a legal obligation on Local Authorities to establish certain Committees such as Strategic Policy Committees. Local Authorities have discretionary authority to establish other Committees to assist them in performing their roles as elected members.

Strategic Policy Committees.

Kilkenny County Council has developed a Strategic Policy Committee Scheme to parallel the lifespan of the newly elected Council, 2014 to 2019. The role of the Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's) is to assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. Their composition reflect the major functions of the Council within the broader context, are tailored to the size, membership and administrative resources of the Council and have one third of their membership drawn from sectors relevant to the committees' work. The SPC's bring together both elected members, and people actively working with social, economic, cultural and environmental bodies to develop and review policies related to council services. The SPCs provide elected members with external views as they discharge their strategic role in the development of the local authority, including their policy development and oversight roles within the local authority.

The overall configuration of the Kilkenny Strategic Policy System is as follows:-

<p>SPC 1:</p> <p>Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism</p>	<p>Elected Members :</p> <p>(7)</p> <p>Pat Millea</p> <p>Pat Fitzpatrick</p> <p>Peter Cleere</p> <p>Patrick McKee</p> <p>Patrick O' Neill</p> <p>Michael Doyle</p> <p>Tomas Breathnach</p>	<p>6 Members from External Sectors:-</p> <p>Agriculture/Farming – John Bambrick(IFA)</p> <p>Development/Construction – Mark Kennedy(Chambers Ireland)</p> <p>Environment/Conservation – Charles Wani(Kilkenny Cycling & Walking Campaign)</p> <p>Trade Union- Phil Funchion(ICTU)</p> <p>Social Inclusion – Teresa Delahunty (Immigrant Services)</p>
<p>SPC 2:</p> <p>Infrastructure Policy, Transportation, Fire & Emergency Services</p>	<p>Elected Members:</p> <p>(7)</p> <p>Matt Doran</p> <p>Eamon Aylward</p> <p>Michael McCarthy</p> <p>Fidelis Doherty</p> <p>Michael Doyle</p>	<p>6 Members from External Sectors:- Agriculture/Farming – Michael Rice (IFA)</p> <p>Business/Commercial- Gary Graham (Chambers Ireland)</p> <p>Development/Construction – Barry Lynch (Chambers Ireland)</p> <p>Community & Voluntary – Billy Walsh (Ferrybank Community Development Residents Groups)</p> <p>Social Inclusion – Mairead Phelan (Older Peoples)</p>

	Kathleen Funchion Tomas Breathnach	Forum) Trade Union- Patrick Kavanagh (ICTU)
SPC 3: Planning & Development Policy, Heritage, Community, Arts and Culture	Elected Members: (7) Patrick McKee Pat Fitzpatrick Pat Dunphy David Kennedy Malcolm Noonan John Brennan Andrew McGuinness	6 Members from External Sectors:- Development/Construction- Denis Carroll (Chambers Ireland) Agriculture/Farming – Paul O’ Brien (IFA) Environment/Conservation – Mary Brennan (An Taisce) Community/Voluntary- PPN Business/Commercial- John Hurley(Chambers Ireland) Social Inclusion – Pamela Mansell (SOSKilkenny)
SPC 4: Housing	Elected Members (6) Andrew McGuinness Joe Malone Michael McCarthy Melissa O’ Neill Fidelis Doherty Patrick O’ Neill	5 Members from External Sectors: Environment/Conservation – Declan Murphy (An Taisce) Development/Construction – Brian Dunlop (Chambers Ireland) Trade Union – Yvonne Moriarty (ICTU) Community & Voluntary – PPN Social Inclusion – Margaret Leahy (Older Peoples Forum)
SPC 5: Environmental Protection, Water Services and Energy	Elected Members (6) Ger Frisby Joe Malone Pat Dunphy John Brennan Breda Gardner Maurice Shortall	5 Members from External Sectors Agriculture/Farming – James Murphy (IFA) Business/Commercial- Owen Sweeney (Chambers Ireland) Environment/Conservation – Sadhbh O’ Neill (Kilkenny Local Environment Network) Community & Voluntary (PPN) Development/Construction – Clare Murray (Chambers Ireland)

1.4 Meetings of the Council

The Council holds Ordinary meetings on a monthly basis. It also holds special meetings to consider and adopt its annual budget. The Council may hold as many meetings as it considers necessary to discharge its functions.

No of Plenary Meetings held 15

Main issues discussed/decided

- Election of Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach
- Election of Committees & Sub Committees
- Adoption of Budget
- Annual Financial Statement 2014
- Audit Charter, Annual Audit Committee report
- Local Government Auditor Report 2014
- Annual Report 2014
- Service Delivery Plans
- Vacant Properties Incentive Scheme
- Appointment of Chief Executive Kilkenny County Council
- Chief Executive's Monthly Report
- Update on Waterford Boundary Committee
- Adoption of Local Economic and Community Plan
- Housing Strategic Plan 2015 – 2017
- New Tenant Purchase Scheme
- Housing & other Disposals
- Road Grant Allocations and Road Works Programme
- Speed Limit Review
- An Garda Síochána Safety Camera Project
- Pilot Community Flood Response Project
- Winter Maintenance Plan 2015/2016
- Kilkenny Central Access Scheme Update
- County Kilkenny Road Safety Plan 2015-2020
- Funding Allocation for 30kph Speed Limits in Housing Estates
- Part 8 reports for various projects
- Section 85 Agreements with other Local Authorities
- Local Authority National Water Framework Directive Office – Lead Authority Kilkenny/Tipperary County Council's
- Draft Development Contribution Scheme
- Taking in Charge of housing Estates
- Living Cities Initiative
- 2016 Commemoration
- Abbey Quarter/Linear Park
- Waterford to New Ross Greenway
- Allocation for Arts and Festival Grants ,Amenity Grants, & Cultural Support Grants
- Draft Public Arts Policy
- Draft Memorial Policy
- Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Grant Scheme 2015-2017

- Fire and Emergency Operations Plan 2015-2020
- Southern Region Waste Management Plan
- Adoption of the Litter Management Plan 2015-2017
- Animal Welfare Charter & Control of Horses Bye laws

Presentations were made at the Meetings by the following groups during the year:

- Waterways Ireland
- Lifeline- County Kilkenny Suicide Prevention
- Kilkenny Tourism
- Butler Gallery
- Barrow Blueway
- IDA
- Three Sisters-European Capital of Culture
- Waterford Institute of Technology
- Carlow Institute of Technology
- Minority Sports
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Canoe and Water sports Clubs

1.5 Meetings of Committees, Sub-Committees & Structures

Strategic Policy Committees

SPC1 – Economic Development, Enterprise Supports & Tourism

Number of Meetings held in 2015: 5

(plus a special joint meeting/workshop with the LCDC to discuss the LECP)

Main Policy Issues considered:

- Preparation and adoption of the economic elements of the LECP (as per Sn 44 of the Local Govt Reform Act, 2014)
- Adoption and Monitoring of the delivery of the LEO Local Enterprise Development Plan for 2015, on behalf of the Council (as per SLA with Enterprise Ireland)
- Master plan for the brewery site and Variation to the City Development Plan
- Failte Ireland's National Tourism Policy - PEOPLE, PLACE AND POLICY: GROWING TOURISM TO 2025
- Small Business Rate Incentive Scheme
- Vacant Premises Incentive Scheme
- Fair Employment Principle
- REDZ rural development pilot initiative
- National Broadband Policy

SPC 2 Infrastructure Policy, Transportation, Fire & Emergency Services

No of Meetings Held 4

Main Policy Issues considered:

- Speed Limit Guidelines;
- Traffic Calming for Residential Estates;
- Kilkenny Road Safety Plan 2015-2020;
- Traffic Bye Law Review for Scheduled Towns;
- Waterford to New Ross Greenway;
- Improvement plans for Graiguenamanagh Fire Station;
- Bus Routes /Rural Transport;
- Public Lighting; Rural Broadband,
- Section 26 Plan Fire and Emergency Services;

SPC 3: Planning & Development, Heritage, Community, Arts & Culture.

The SPC Committee report for 2015 is as follows:

Number of Meeting Held 5

Main Policy issues considered:

- Abbey Quarter Master Plan
- Development Contribution Scheme 2015-2017
- Taking in Charge and Unfinished Developments/Site Resolution
- Local Area Plans
- St. Mary's Church Restoration Project
- New Planning & Development Legislation
- Estate Management Strategy 2015-2020
- A Strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017
- Proposed Policy on Civic Memorials
- Public Art Policy Development
- Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2016

SPC 4: Housing

The SPC Committee report for 2015 is as follows:

Number of Meeting Held 5

Main Policy issues considered:

- Social Housing Strategy 2015 – 2020
- Housing Report 2014
- Estate Management Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020
- National Disability Strategy 2011 – 2016

- Urban Regeneration & Housing Act 2015
- Homelessness
- Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) Report
- Housing Service Delivery Plan 2015
- Private Grants Policy
- Retrofit programme
- RAS & Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Update

SPC5 Environmental Protection, Water Services & Energy

Number of Meetings: 5

Main Policy issues considered

- Litter Enforcement Procedures in County Kilkenny
- An Overview of the National Spring Clean & 2015 Initiatives
- Update on the Green Dog Walker Programme & future policy relating to anti-dog fouling initiatives
- Overview of the Draft Litter Management Plan 2015-2017
- National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems; An update regarding County Kilkenny
- River Basin Management Planning: A New Approach
- Update on Water Services Capital Projects
- “Water Services Strategic Plan: A Plan for the future of Water Services” (All elected members were invited to attend this part of the SPC meeting)
- Update on Dog Welfare and Re-homing Consultative Committee
- Energy MAP process for Kilkenny County Council
- Investment Strategy to achieve by 2020 a 33% energy reduction across County Council
- Better Energy Communities
- Covenant of Mayors adopted by Council at April Council meeting
- Data4Action presentation by Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency
- LA National WFD Office – Kilkenny / Tipperary Joint Lead Authorities
- Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) public consultation
- Waste Prevention Measures
- Water Services Update
- Update regarding Clogh-Moneenroe - Water Services
- Update regarding the Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter
- Summary Presentation of AD Facility Visit
- Burial Grounds; Policy on Maintenance & Improvements
- Strategy for Litter Bin Improvements – A Discussion

Municipal District of Castlecomer

No. of meetings held in 2015 12

No. of deputations received in 2015 2

Main issues discussed/decided

- Election of Cathoirleach & Leas Cathoirleach for Castlecomer Municipal District
- General Municipal Allocation and Multi Annual Allocation
- Adoption of General Municipal Allocation
- Adoption of Draft Schedule of Municipal Works including Draft Road Works Scheme
- Budget 2016
- Update provided on taking-in-charge status of housing developments
- Water Services Capital Projects
- Draft Litter Management Plan & Current Anti Litter Initiatives
- Kilkenny County Council's Social Housing Strategy 2015 -2017 and Social Housing Strategy 2020 – Support, Supply and Reform
- Community Development Projects supported by Kilkenny County Council
- Local Economic & Community Plan – approval of draft Social and Economic Statements including draft goals and next phase of consultations
- Tidy Towns awards and achievements
- Second River Basin Management Plan
- Environmental matters including
 - Water Quality
 - Household Food Waste Regulations
 - Waste Enforcement
 - Southern Waste Management Plan 2015 – 2021
 - Dunmore Recycling Centre
 - Kilkenny Tidy Towns Forum
 - Green Schools
 - National Spring Clean
 - WEEE Ireland collections
 - Galmoy / Lundin Mine – Mine closure and transfer of Rural Water Supply Scheme to Irish Water
- Attendance of representatives from EIR at members request to consider the companies investment proposals and proposals to improve fibre speed together with details of National Broadband Plan, implications of non availability of broadband systematic pole testing programme and replacements and the need for contact help lines
- Road works progress report provided bi monthly
- Public Lighting
- Winter Maintenance Programme
- Gateway Scheme
- Flooding
- Community Involvement in Road Works Scheme
- Hedge Cutting
- Various roads site specific issues

Municipal District of Kilkenny City.

No. of meetings held in 2015 15

No. of deputations received in 2015 7

Main issues discussed/decided

- Adoption of Schedule of Municipal Works.
- Progress on Hurling Monument.
- Callan Flood Alleviation Scheme
- Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh Urban Renewal Schemes.
- Streetscape/Shop front Paint Schemes for Callan and Graiguenamanagh.
- 2016 Commemoration Arrangements.
- Adoption of Parking Strategy for Thomastown.
- Adoption of Traffic Management Scheme on Bohernatounish Road Roundabout.
- Leasing of Land at Fairgreen, Callan to Callan United Football Club.
- Adoption of Traffic Management Plan for Convent Lane, Graiguenamanagh.
- Consideration of and Adoption of submission report following the public consultation phase of the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan process.
- Rural Economic Development which was addressed by Deputy Ann Phelan, T.D., Minister of State
- Tourism Structures in Kilkenny.
- Heavy Goods Vehicles Management Plan.
- Land Use Proposal for Fairgreen, Callan.
- Woodstock Gardens.
- Twinning arrangements
- Mayors Civic Events as outlined below

Mayor's Civic Events

The Members of the Municipal District of Kilkenny City, which comprises of the 6 members from the Kilkenny City East Electoral Area & the 6 members from the Kilkenny City West Electoral Areas elect their Mayor each year. Cllr A. McGuinness held the position from July 2014 until June 2015 and he was succeeded by Cllr Joe Malone who will occupy the position until July 2016. During the calendar year 2015 a number of notable Mayor Civic Events were held:

17th March, 2015 Reception for Mr. Kevin Taaffe, Mayor of Kilkenny Minnesota, U.S.A. and sister city to Kilkenny City, hosted by the Mayor of Municipal District of Kilkenny City, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness.



30/3/2015

Launch of the second edition of “Treasures of Kilkenny” Book by author John Bradley by Mayor and Elected Members of Municipal District of Kilkenny City.



10/4/2015

Conferral of Freedom of the City on Mr. Kieran Crotty. The Mayor and Elected Members of the Municipal District of Kilkenny City conferred the Freedom of the City of Kilkenny on Mr. Kieran Crotty at a ceremony held in The Picture Gallery, Kilkenny Castle.



13th May, 2015

The Mayor and Elected Members of the Municipal District of Kilkenny City hosted a civic reception to mark the contribution of Defence Forces Members, based in James Stephens Barracks, Kilkenny, who have represented Ireland on United Nations mandated missions in the cause of world peace.

27th May, 2015

The Austrian Ambassador to Ireland Dr. Thomas NADER and the Austrian Trade Commissioner to Ireland Mr. Wilhelm NEST visited City Hall and met with the Mayor, Elected Members and Executive.

17th June, 2015

The Polish Ambassador, Mr. Ryszard Sarkowicz visited City Hall and met with Mayor, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness.

4th July, 2015

Mayor hosted meeting in Council Chamber, City Hall, with Councillors from many other local authorities who were visiting Kilkenny for a LAMA Conference.

September, 2015

Mayor and Member of the Executive of Kilkenny County Council visited Kilkenny, Minnesota, U.S.A.

7th Dec. 2015

The Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council and Mayor of Municipal District of Kilkenny City hosted a civic reception to confer Civic Recognition on Major General Kieran Brennan, Brigadier General Philip Brennan and Brigadier General Joe Mulligan, to honour their outstanding qualities of leadership, resource and devotion to duty leading to their recent promotions to General Officer rank within the Defence Forces, and to acknowledge their commitment to Kilkenny and its citizens during their terms as Officer Commanding 3rd Infantry Battalion at James Stephens Barracks, Kilkenny.



Municipal District of Piltown

No. of meetings held: 21 including 5 Joint Meetings as follow:

New Ross Municipal District: 1

Waterford Metropolitan District: 3

Carrick-on-Suir Municipal District: 1

Main issues discussed/decided

- Roadwork's Programme, Winter Maintenance & Roads Issues
- Flooding in South Kilkenny
- Housing Developments / Unfinished Estates / Taking in Charge
- Halting Site
- Waterford Boundary Review
- Ferrybank Shopping Centre
- Schedule & Adoption of Municipal District Works
- New Ross ByPass
- Safety at Roundabouts and Junctions
- Pedestrian Facilities at Slieverue Roundabout
- Speed Signage & Signage Audit
- Provision of Public Lighting
- Staffing
- Communications with TII (formally NRA) & CRG
- Renewable Energy
- Pylons & Eirgrid

- Poulanassa Waterfall
- Waterford to New Ross Greenway
- Policing Issues (Gardai in attendance)
- European Capital of Culture 2020
- Provision of Footpaths
- Mooncoin Pavement Improvement & Traffic Calming Works
- Street Cleaning
- Provision of Footpath on Link Road – M9 to Mullinavat
- Local Economic & Community Plan
- Ferrybank Community Development Strategic Plan
- Litter Initiatives & Draft Litter Management Plan
- Recycling Facilities
- Playgrounds
- Dangerous Trees, Hedge Cutting & Grass Cutting
- Community Involvement in Roadwork's Schemes & Local Improvement Schemes
- River Suir Breaches
- Former Council Offices at Newrath
- Traffic Management
- Picnic Area N25
- Glenmore Bus Stop
- Street Parking in Mullinavat
- Dog Shelter

Audit Committee

The Audit committee is a statutory sub-committee of the Council. It produces an annual report for the Council regarding its work and the management controls of the Council. It meets the Chief Executive and Head of Finance at least once every year and meets the Local Government Auditor every year. It considers financial reports at every meeting.

The Audit Committee has a duty to review with management and the internal auditor the charter, activities, staffing and organisational structure of the internal audit function, its compliance with relevant professional standards and bring any recommendations to the attention of the Chief Executive. The Audit Committee must approve the audit plan and monitor its implementation, review audit reports, findings and recommendations and management responses. This oversight by the Audit Committee adds further weight to the Corporate Governance function of Internal Audit.

No of Meetings 4

Main Issues considered

- Risk
- Procurement
- Annual Budget & Annual Financial Statement
- Purchase to Pay cycle
- Challenges in Housing
- Financial Reports
- Role of NOAC

Joint Policing Committee.

No of Meetings held 3

Main Issues considered.

- Sulkies
- Community Alert.
- Review of Tourism Information Signage.
- Suicide Prevention and Domestic Violence.
- Garda Presentation on new Community Policing Strategy for Kilkenny City
- Garda Presentation/Update on Text Alert Schemes.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Issues.
- Presentation on 'Kilkenny Cares' initiative.

2

Services

2.1 Roads, Transportation, Parks, Fire & Emergency Planning, & Corporate Services.

Services provided under this Directorate

Corporate Services including Boundary Commission response, Elected Members support, and administrative support to Meetings of the Council and to its Committees.

Roads & Transportation

Road Safety

Parks & Amenities

Fire Services

Emergency Management

Civil Defence

Human Resources

Health & Safety

Internal Audit

Information Technology

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Department is responsible for the provision and management of a very wide range of services, which include Elected Member support and administration, County Council Meetings, Building & Facilities Management, Register of Electors and Insurances. Included under this heading is a summary of the Councils response to the Waterford Boundary Committee.

Waterford Boundary Committee

In June 2015 the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government established the Waterford Boundary Committee to carry out a review of the boundary between the City and County of Waterford and County Kilkenny, make such recommendations with respect to that boundary, and any consequential recommendations with respect to the area of the Metropolitan District of Waterford, that it considers to be necessary in the interests of effective and convenient local government and prepare and furnish to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, a report in writing of that review and its recommendations.

Following the announcement of the Boundary Review special meetings of the Municipal District of Piltown and Kilkenny County Council were held to brief the Elected Members. It was agreed at the plenary council meeting of Kilkenny County Council to establish a steering group to work on its submission to the Waterford Boundary Review Committee. The Steering Group was chaired by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh and consisted of members of the executive plus all the members of the Municipal District of Piltown, namely Cllrs. Pat Dunphy, Fidelis Doherty, Ger Frisby, Eamon Aylward, Melissa O'Neill and Tomas Breathnach plus the Mayor of the Municipal District of Kilkenny City Cllr Joe Malone and Cllr Michael Doyle.

The Waterford Boundary Committee published a public notice on the 17th November 2015 inviting submissions from the public and a dedicated web site waterfordboundaryreview.ie was developed on which the public could make submissions. Submissions were also invited via post to The Waterford Boundary Committee at both the Waterford City and County Council offices and the offices of Kilkenny County Council in County Hall, Kilkenny. Kilkenny County Council set up a dedicated Secretariat to manage the large number submissions received. Closing date for receipt of submissions from members of the public was set to Friday the 15th January 2016, with Kilkenny County Council given a further week to submit its own submission.

A number of briefing sessions were held with the Steering Group in Early November 2015. On Thursday the 19th November the Waterford Boundary Committee met the Elected Members of the Steering Group in the Ferrybank Area Office where the Elected Members gave a detailed presentation opposing any boundary change. At that meeting the Boundary Committee outlined the details of the process they were involved in and advised the Elected Members that the Boundary Committee would meet with them again once all the public submissions were received.

Following requests from members of the public Kilkenny County Council organised a public information evening in The Rhu Glen Hotel and County Club on the 30th November 2015. The meeting was attended by approximately 300 people and there was unanimous opposition to any boundary change. At that meeting the public were advised that all the TDs and Elected Members for County Kilkenny did not support any proposal to alter the County Boundary between Kilkenny and Waterford.

Kilkenny County Council reassigned their Senior Planner to work full time on preparing its submission. A considerable amount of work was put in throughout the last few months of 2015 by the Senior Management Team, by Elected Members and support staff to prepare a comprehensive submission from Kilkenny County Council which was delivered to the Waterford Boundary Committee in January 2016. Further information was sought by the Committee, meetings were held early in 2016 with the Committee and at the time of this report the Committee deliberations & recommendation is awaited

Register of Electors

The Annual Register is published on 1st February each year and is a list of all persons aged 18 years or over, resident in the State, who are entitled to vote in Elections to the Dail, European Assembly, Presidential, Local Elections and Referenda.

Following the acceptance by the Minister of the recommendations of the Local Authority Boundary Commission Kilkenny Borough Council was abolished in 2014 and the membership of the County Council was reduced from 26 to 24 members which included a reduction in Electoral Areas from 5 to 4 each comprising 6 members as follows: Castlecomer, Kilkenny City East, Kilkenny City West, & Piltown.

The Register of Electors prepared in 2015 was based on the revised Electoral Areas as follows:

Local Electoral Area	Number of Electors
Castlecomer	17,970
Kilkenny City West	17,253
Kilkenny City East	17,950
Piltown	17,920
Total	71,093

The European Constituencies were also revised and Kilkenny is in the (Ireland) South Constituency.

The Register is available in Post Offices, Libraries and Garda Stations which provides people with the opportunity to check if they are on it.

A website is also available for this purpose www.checktheregister.ie.

A person, for whatever reason, who is not included on the published register, or has moved from one address to another, may apply to be included on a supplement to the register.

Referendums and Bye-election

The Referendums on Marriage Equality and the Age of Eligibility for Election to the Office of President were held on Friday 22nd May 2015. In addition to the referendums there was also a bye-election held in the constituency of Carlow – Kilkenny to fill the vacancy left by Phil Hogan. As a result of the bye-election Bobby Aylward was elected to the Dail.

Communications & Social Media

The Council communicates its message through a number of outlets including newspapers, radio and social media. Social Media is playing a growing importance in the Councils communications.

Websites Overview

During 2015 the cumulative number of page views for the Council's websites was **2,276,986**. The Council directly manages 15 websites, in addition to overseeing a number of externally provided sites and services as follows:

Table 1 Website traffic 2015

<u>Top 10 Websites</u>	Page Views 1 st Jan – 31 st December 2015
Kilkennycoco.ie	1,028,303
visitkilkenny.ie	896,315
Kilkenny.ie	128,650
kilkennylibrary.ie	128,224
kilkennycity.ie	52,577
ourplan.kilkenny.ie	15,312
kilkennyheritage.ie	10,166
invest.kilkenny.ie	8,356
rhymerag.net	4,105
kmhp.ie	3,388

Social Media Overview.

- The total number of Face book followers across all of the Council’s Face book accounts is 18,017.
- The total number of Twitter followers across all of the Council’s Twitter accounts is 17,230.
- During 2015 the Council operated 8 Face book pages and 6 Twitter Accounts.
- The highest Social media activity occurred during the flood emergency response between 30th December 2015 & 4th January 2016:

Twitter Statistics – Flood Response

275.7K impressions over this 6 day period as follows:

- December 30th 50 tweets seen 53,414 times
- December 31st 19 tweets seen 15,410 times
- January 1st 41 tweets seen 56,132 times
- January 2nd 79 tweets seen 78,993 times
- January 3rd 48 tweets seen 33 823 times
- January 4th 39 tweets seen 37, 947 times

Face book Statistics -Flood Response

- Reach (total number of times all flood related posts were read) **34,001**
- Number of people who interacted with a post (commented/liked/shared or clicked on a link) **3,941** .Page likes increased by 403 during this period.
- The top post was read 7,700 times, 708 people interacted with it and 122 people commented on it or shared it.

Roads & Transportation

Non- National Road Restoration Improvement and Restoration Maintenance Programme 2015

Under this programme 44km's of non-national road network were reconstructed across the county which included 8km's of Local Tertiary Roads reconstructed under the Community Involvement Scheme.

Similarly under the Non- National Road Maintenance Programme approximately 49km's of non-national road network was surface dressed during 2015. This work is essential in protecting the substantial investment made on the non-national road network down through the years in addition to ensuring adequate skid resistance.

In 2015 approximately 7.5km's of the National Road network has had improvement works carried out by way of road realignment, restoration and reconstruction projects. The main projects included under this heading included the N24 at Mooncoin Village, the N77 at Bullyragged & Ballynaslee, the N78 at Coolbaun & Webbsborough and the N29 Port Road. Various other drainage, road marking and signage delineation projects were also completed across the National Network.

An effective asset management and recording system is central to Kilkenny County Council in undertaking its road maintenance activities in an efficient manner. A recently introduced feature of the roads programme is the requirement to survey and record all road pavement conditions on a central GIS based database. To this end and in order to pursue value for money in road works the Council will continue to develop its pavement and bridge management systems based on the Map Road and GIS suites of software. The adherence to this new data recording system is a requirement to draw down funds from Transport Infrastructure Ireland and Dept. Transport Tourism and Sport.

When the Elected Members adopted the 2015 Roadwork's Scheme for County Kilkenny in March 2015 the total value of Maintenance and Improvement Schemes amounted to €19.853 million. Over and above the amounts approved in the 2015 Roadwork's Scheme, Kilkenny County Council secured an additional €2.7 million for maintenance and improvement works on the National and Non-National Network bringing the total expenditure to €22.553 million in 2015.

Roads Capital Projects and Improvements

The past decade has seen capital expenditure in excess of €1 billion invested in roads and motorway schemes in Co Kilkenny.

The N25 New Ross By Pass Scheme is considered a key piece of infrastructure for Kilkenny and in particular the south of the County. The land acquisition required for scheme was acquired in 2015 and it is anticipated that works will commence in the Spring of 2016.

Under the Transport Infrastructure Ireland Pavement Improvement and Minor Works Programme, Leader Programme and directly financed Schemes, Kilkenny County Council has advanced the following projects:-

N77 Ballynaslee; 2km

This project consisted of the construction and realignment of 2kms of National Secondary road in the north of the County. The project was completed on time and on budget and the new road was officially opened by Mr. Paschal Donohoe T.D., Minister for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, in the presence of Cathaoirleach Mary Hilda Cavanagh on the 22nd of October 2015.



N77 Ballynaslee Before



N77 Ballynaslee After

N76 Callan Road (Tennypark); 3.5km.

The N76 Callan Road Realignment Scheme extends from the N76 Ring Road Callan Road Roundabout to the Brownstown Junction. The Scheme provides for the introduction of on-line footpaths/cycle tracks and public lighting from the Ring Road to Tennypark Cross and an off-line road realignment between Tennypark Cross and Brownstown. In 2014 An Bord Pleanála approved a Compulsory Purchase Order for the Scheme and, following publication of the CPO, Notices to Treat were served in Q1 2015. Negotiations commenced with affected landowners in the summer of 2015 and it is expected the land acquisition will be complete by Qtr 3 2016. Site investigation works and archaeological surveys were substantially completed by the end of 2015 and it is anticipated, subject to the allocation of funding from Transport Infrastructure Ireland, that the main works tender will be advertised in Qtr 2 2016.

N77 Ballyragget Pavement Overlay 1.2km,

The Ballyragget Village Renewal Scheme was advertised under and subject to the Part 8 Planning process and was formally adopted by the Council in September 2013. This Scheme extended for 1.2km through Ballyragget Village along Castle Street to a point 200m north of the River Nore Bridge. This project was funded and constructed by way of two separate funding streams. Phase One the northern side of the Square, was co-funded in partnership between Kilkenny County Council, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership and the Ballyragget Development Committee and works on this

initial phase were completed in 2014. Phase 2 was funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland under the HD28 & Pavement Improvement and Minor Works Programme.

The combined works provided for the environmental upgrading of the existing streetscape using high quality paving materials and street furniture, the reconstruction of the N77 National Secondary road, the undergrounding of existing overhead service cables, the installation of decorative street lighting, traffic management measures and landscaping improvement works to the Square green area. This scheme was officially opened on the 28th May by the then Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council Cllr. Pat Millea.



The Square, Ballyragget – After

N24 Mooncoin Pavement Rehabilitation and Traffic Management Scheme 2km

Following consultation with Transport Infrastructure Ireland a pavement rehabilitation project on the N24 through Mooncoin village, was upgraded to a Minor Works Project enabling road restructuring, footpath reconstruction, enhanced traffic management, parking and public realm provisions to a value of €2.5 million. The works contract for this project was awarded on the 23rd March 2015 and was completed in late October 2015. The traffic calming element of this scheme has proven very effective and made for a safer environment particularly at the schools.



The Scheme was officially opened by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Mrs. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, on the 16th February 2016

Kilkenny Central Access Scheme

The construction of the CAS Bridge, under Phase One of this Project, progressed substantially over the summer of 2015. The in-river works including the removal of the cofferdams on both sides of the river were completed in mid September 2015. The beams across the 5 bridge spans were installed in October and the completion of this element of the works affords a visual representation of the finished structure for the first time. The programme completion date for the bridge is June 2016.

Phase Two of the scheme provides for the construction of the Central Access Scheme from the west side of the Bridge to St. Canice's Place and from the east side of the Bridge to the Castlecomer Road, including the widening of the Castlecomer Road and the reconfiguration of the New Road Roundabout. The Tender for this phase of the project was advertised on the 28th October 2015 and it is expected that works will commence in early 2016 with a completion date of late 2016.

Kilkenny Northern Ring Road Extension 1.5 km

The Environmental Impact Statement, Compulsory Purchase Order for this scheme issued to An Bord Pleanála on 13th December, 2013. An Bord Pleanála approved the EIS and the CPO in the second quarter of 2014. A Judicial Review of that decision has been sought by local landowners and Kilkenny County Council awaits the outcome of that process in advance of being in a position to advise Members as to the next stage for the Scheme

Urban and Village Renewal Schemes

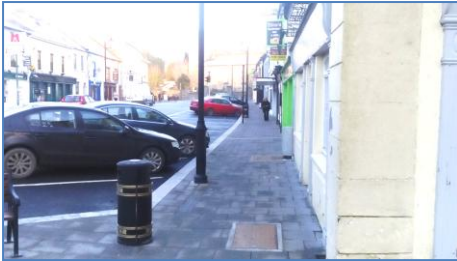
Under Axes 3 and 4 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2012, Kilkenny County Council in partnership with Kilkenny Leader Partnership and the respective Local Community Groups advanced four Urban and Village Renewal Schemes, which included Callan, Graiguenamanagh, Ballyragget and Thomastown. The funding structure within this partnership was broken-down as follows, Kilkenny Leader Partnership (75%), Kilkenny County Council (20%) and the respective Local Community Group (5%). The Callan and Graiguenamanagh schemes were completed in 2014 and the Ballyragget scheme was officially opened in May 2015. The Thomastown renewal scheme which comprised the enhancement of Market Street and Pipe Street was substantially completed in Qtr 2 2015. The project provided for the environmental upgrading of the existing streetscape using high quality paving materials and street furniture along with the undergrounding of existing overhead service cables.



Thomastown-Market Street – Before



Market Street - After



Thomastown Market Street- After



Pipe Street – After

Non- National Low Cost Safety Programme

The Non- National Low Cost Safety Programme is targeted at locations along the non-national road network which have been identified as collision prone zones. In 2015 ten sites were treated and the works carried out included improved junction delineation and visibility splays, installation of a mini-roundabout, traffic calming, enhanced roadside delineation and pedestrian crossing facilities within urban areas.

Public Lighting

Kilkenny County Council maintains approximately 10,000 public lights. A regionally procured maintenance contract was initiated by the Councils in the South East region in 2012 in an effort to procure better value for money. Airtricity were awarded the contract and commenced maintenance on the lighting stock in Kilkenny in April 2012. The contract was for an initial 3 year period with an option to extend for another 2 years. The contract extension option has been exercised; therefore, the current contract will expire in March 2017.

The energy supply for public lighting is supplied by Energia and this supply contract is overseen by the National Procurement Service.

The gross cost of public lighting provision per annum is €1,168,725 million of which maintenance accounts for 29% and energy accounts for 71%. The income from the TII for public lighting in 2015 was €183,232 and the balance of the funds required come directly from the Council's resources.

On average the cost associated with the ongoing maintenance and operation of a public light is €110 per light per annum. There are an estimated further 1100 lights throughout County Kilkenny within housing estates that will, in due course, be taken in charge by Kilkenny County Council. This, in turn, will place additional demands on the funding requirements for the Council.

Strategically, Kilkenny County Council, in meeting its energy efficiency targets to 2020, will be required to undertake a significant retrofitting programme on the public lighting network so as to shift to more energy friendly public lighting systems. The funding of this investment programme will be a key consideration of budgets from 2017 onwards.

Road Safety

Road Safety is an extremely important function of the Council. To this end, the continued budgetary provision towards road safety awareness, the school warden system and the support of community focussed road safety campaigns remains a key consideration for the Council.

Following the ratification of the Kilkenny Road Safety Plan 2015 to 2020 by the Strategic Policy Committee for Infrastructure Policy, Transportation, Fire and Emergency Services, the plan was presented and adopted by the Elected Members in July 2015.

The Kilkenny Road Safety Plan sets out a clear blueprint for progress in the area of road safety up to the end of 2020. This plan is underpinned by a series of defined projects and actions across the core areas of intervention namely, Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Engagement. In all, the plan sets out 39 individual Projects with 50 Actions /Targets running up to 2020.

Kilkenny County Council and An Garda Síochána will continue to cooperate to ensure improvements in road safety in the county.

Following on from the October 2014 Department of Transport Circular relating to the introduction of a Special Speed Limit of 30kph for all Housing Estates, an allocation of €220,350 was allocated to Kilkenny in 2015 which provided for the advancement of Phase One of this initiative. This initial phase provided for the installation of the combined 30km/h Speed Limit and Slow Zone signage in a substantial number of the residential areas across the City and County. Phase One of these works was completed in November 2015.

Energy Efficiency, Energy Conservation and Climate Change

In line with commitments to reduce energy consumption and, in consultation with our Regional Partners, Kilkenny County Council is exploring Energy Performance Contracts (EPC) for the public lighting stock with a view to providing efficiencies in respect of the energy demands and costs associated with this public service. To advise this process Kilkenny County Council is participating in

a European “Streetlight EPC” project with a view to advancing the knowledge base in respect of these types of public service contracts.

Kilkenny County Council established an Energy Office and in consultation with the Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency and Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland. Funding was set aside for the advancement of a variety of energy related contracts some of which have proceeded in 2014 and advanced further in 2015. These include insulation and building fabric upgrades to offices, libraries and fire stations, library lighting upgrades resulting in up to 60% energy savings and having a payback period of 8 to 10 years. The Energy Office has also facilitated various community organisations in accessing energy conservation grants for a variety of projects in Kilkenny. Green design and procurement is also to the fore in Kilkenny County Council.

Medieval Mile

During 2015 further works were completed to the Medieval Mile. This incorporated the section of footpath from the Pedestrian crossing at Lifestyle Sports to Evans lane and also the raised portal on the roadway at the Irishtown Junction. The works included the repaving of footpaths, installation of new street furniture, removal and relocation of Loading Bays and the resurfacing of the road way.



Irishtown Junction Before Works



Irishtown Junction After Works

Bohernatounish Road Works were completed during the summer of 2015 whereby the existing entrance into Loughboy Shopping Centre was closed and a new access was provided by the construction of a roundabout as outlined in the Part 8 proposals. A separate access to St. Fiacre’s church was also provided. The works included the realignment of the footpaths and the provision of cycle-tracks on both sides of the road, the diversion of underground services and the upgrading of the Public Lighting to LED. Enhanced landscaping of the area was undertaken.

Completed works at Bohernatounish Road



Parks & Recreation

The Parks Department was established in 2004 to oversee the development and maintenance of recreational amenities in Kilkenny City and County. Since its establishment the Parks Department has delivered a range of high quality recreational amenities including playgrounds, parks and sports pitches which are available for use to people of all ages. The Parks Department is also responsible for on-going developments, visitor management and maintenance of Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum in Inistioge which has become a major tourist attraction in the south east.

The core services the Parks Department is responsible for are as follows:-

Playground development and maintenance.

There are currently 23 playgrounds around the county with a further two at advanced stages of planning to be completed in 2016. These play facilities were developed in conjunction with local communities and many are also maintained with assistance from local communities and local community employment schemes. Three playgrounds were opened in 2015 in Windgap, Stonyford, and Paulstown. These were developed by community groups with grant and technical assistance from the County Council and County Kilkenny Leader Partnership Company. All playgrounds are inspected each week by our own in-house playground inspector for any potential safety issues and are also cleaned each week, or more often where required, to ensure they continue to be safe and clean to use for children.



A winter's morning in Thomastown Playground

Park development and maintenance.

The River Nore Linear Park along with Newpark Marsh and Garringreen Neighbourhood Park and the recently developed Bishops Demesne are the main city parks. The parks provide a range of amenities both passive and active for people to enjoy. The parks are maintained and cleaned by litter picking crews weekly and grass is cut frequently in the growing season. Facilities with the parks such as playgrounds and exercise equipment are maintained and added to regularly.



View from Ossory Bridge to Lacken Boardwalk

Pitches development and maintenance.

The Council operate a pitch leasing facility on a number of pitches in the city and environs which are leased out to clubs for training and matches. There are a number of very popular all weather mini pitches which are free to use at any time at Newpark, Garringreen and Bishops Demesne. The pitch at Garringreen was recently extensively improved by sanding and re-seeding. Goal mouths are turfed to keep high wear areas in good condition and goal posts are inspected weekly.

Woodstock Gardens Project.

Since the historic Victorian gardens at Woodstock were restored over the past number of years they have become a major tourist destination in the south east and now attract in the region of 35,000 visitors per year. The Council continue to organise events, promote and manage visitors coming to the gardens in addition to carrying out high quality maintenance. The garden staff hosted a very successful Forest School in the gardens in 2015 along with a number of events such as orienteering, foraging walks, Operation Transformation Walks and other family events for Heritage Week. Woodstock is becoming popular for civil ceremonies and in 2015 Woodstock hosted a number of weddings for couples on their big day.



The Turner Conservatory in Woodstock which houses the tea room

Administration of Amenity Grants

The amenity grants scheme is available to voluntary community organisations to enhance or maintain local amenities. Over one hundred groups were in receipt of grant assistance in 2015.

Invasive species control

The Parks Department is concerned with stopping the spread of invasive species on public lands across the county. A programme of Giant Hogweed eradication is continuing in Kilmacow whilst in Kilkenny efforts to eradicate invasive species are continuing along the River Nore, predominantly along the Lacken Walk and Canal Walk in conjunction with Keep Kilkenny Beautiful.



Taking on Giant Hogweed

Sports Capital Projects

The Council was successful in its application for three grants for the provision of outdoor gym equipment at locations across the city. This exercise equipment is proving very popular particularly when sited adjacent to existing facilities. Following public consultation the outdoor gyms will be rolled out in 2016



Outdoor exercise equipment at The River Nore Linear Park

Sustainable planting.

The Councils focus is moving towards sustainable planting to enhance biodiversity in the urban areas in so far as possible. One such project carried out was the large scale planting of perennial flowering plants to attract insects and butterflies on the roundabout serving the motorway link road. The planting scheme provided a colourful spectacle on the approach to Kilkenny city in the summer of 2015 and will continue to flower year after year. The planting theme focused on a black and amber colour scheme towards the end of August so flowers such as Rudbeckia would be in bloom in time for the homecoming

Pollinator Project at Noonan's Folly.

Supporting Pollinating Insects is very much the theme in the Peace Garden Planting carried out in autumn. The planting at this location has been designed to provide pollen and nectar from early spring onwards with a selection of bulbs flowering from February to June, from

then onwards the herbaceous perennials will flower and provide a very concentrated resource for insects.



Setting out the plants for the pollinator project

Tree Giveaway

To coincide with National Tree Week, a Tree Giveaway Day was arranged, providing high quality semi mature trees to community groups, schools and Tidy Towns groups around the county. Over €15,000 worth of trees were allocated for planting and enhancing the towns and villages of the county.

Fire & Rescue Services

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service main functions are engaging with the community to inform and educate citizens in how to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies, influencing and regulating the built environment to protect people, property and the environment, planning & preparing for emergencies that may happen, and making a high quality, effective and resilient response to them and

Incident Response

The following is a summary of the activity in 2015:

<u>Incident</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. of fires attended	219
Road Traffic Accidents	90
Flooding	38
Rescue/Removal of persons from water	8
Other non-fire rescues	2
Hazardous Substances in transit	1

Miscellaneous	191
False alarms, malicious	17
False alarms, good intent	101
Total	667

This is a slight increase from 627 incidents in 2014.

- 65 applications for fire safety certificates were received in 2015. These applications were dealt with in-house by the fire prevention staff. This is a decrease from 2014 when 93 applications were received. However, a lot of these applications were Regularisation Fire safety Certificates that require more time in assessing
- Fire Prevention staff made a considerable number of visits to premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation.
- 3no Fire Safety Notice under the Fire Services Act were served in 2015.
- 2no Closure Notices under the Fire Services Act were served in 2015.
- The programme to focus on fire safety in large retail premises was completed with a number of premises being visited.
- The programme to focus on fire safety in Crèches and similar pre-school services premises commenced in early 2015.

Capital Projects.

- Funding for a new fire station for Graiguenamanagh was approved
- 21dry suits were delivered to Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service
- 2 second hand class B fire engines and a 4wheel drive jeep were purchased.

Community Fire Safety

- The 2015 Primary Schools Programme was provided by Fire Services personnel. The objective of this is to raise awareness of fire safety amongst primary school children and their families. This programme is delivered to children in 3rd class in all the primary schools in County Kilkenny.
- Kilkenny Fire Station and other fire stations continued to facilitate school visits.
- Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service carried out many Fire Safety Talks and training to various organisations

Training

- A comprehensive training programme was provided by Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service in 2015 and included Manual Handling, Peer Supporter (CISM) Training, Pump Operator Course, Chainsaw (Emergency tree-works operations), Fire Service Instructor Course, Dealing with violence and aggression, Emergency Lighting design, Breathing Apparatus Refresher training, Sub Officer Course, Checking PPE training, Abrasive wheels, Road Traffic Collision Course, Tactical Ventilation, Compressed Air Foam course, ESDS workshop, Managing Safely Course, Recruits course, ECDL

course, Hazardous Materials course, Breathing Apparatus wearers course, Emergency First Responder Course, Station Officer course, Working at height course, Working at height instructor course.

Voluntary Fundraising

- Fire-fighters and ambulance personnel partook in the now annual Christmas Charity Collection with the funds going to local charities. The fire-fighters also raised funds at the May Bank Holiday weekend with the Mount Everest Ladder Climb. The Fire Service together with An Garda Síochána and the Ambulance Service held their Annual “Blue Light Ball” and raised funds for local charities.

Major Emergency Management

- The County Council’s Flood Emergency Response Plan was activated by for Storm Frank.
- The External Emergency Plan for Nitrofert was tested under the Seveso Regulations. This exercise was delivered in co-operation with the HSE and An Garda Síochána.
- Briefing on the Severe Weather plan (excluding flooding) was carried out for the various Principal Response Agencies.
- Training was delivered to staff of Kilkenny County Council, the Health Services Executive (HSE) and to members of An Garda Síochána in relation to Major Emergency Management.



Fire Safety Training for Transition Year Students



Fire Safety training for teachers of Presentation Girls Secondary School provided by Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Instructors



Talk on Fire Safety in the Home to Bennettsbridge Community

Kilkenny Civil Defence

Kilkenny Civil Defence is a volunteer based organisation that supports the Principle Response Agencies (County Councils, Gardai and HSE). It also assists our local communities. It has volunteers trained in Casualty, Search & Rescue, Auxiliary Fire Service, and Welfare & Communications

It support the Principle Response Agencies in dealing with severe weather, flooding, major incidents and searching for missing people. Kilkenny Civil Defence supports many community events throughout the year. These include large events such as homecomings, concerts and festivals. We also support smaller local events such as parades and sports events. 2015 was a particular busy year with a large number of calls from the members of the public looking for assistance with community events.

In December the Kilkenny Civil Defence's storage facility was severely damaged by fire and all of the vehicles and equipment were destroyed but thanks to the surrounding Civil Defence Units in our Region and the support of Kilkenny County Council with the Department of Defence, Kilkenny Civil Defence were able to remain available to provide assistance when required. And late December, 3 weeks after the fire, Kilkenny Civil Defence were activated by Kilkenny County Councils Crisis Management Team to respond to the major flooding event. Kilkenny Civil Defence volunteers assisted with filling and deploying sandbags throughout Kilkenny, successfully diverted a burst river in Freshford through a housing estate thus protecting countless homes and the boat crews rescued 15 people for their homes that were flooded by the rising river Nore in Inistiogue.

Search Operations

During 2015 Kilkenny Civil Defence have been requested to assist with searches for missing persons on 15 different occasions. Each time the requests have come through Kilkenny Garda and they have involved searching open country as well as the river areas of Kilkenny.

Community Events

During 2015 Kilkenny Civil Defence provided assistance to 21 community events ranging from Ambulance cover for Gymkhanas to County Finals and Safety Boat cover for River based charitable events.

Vehicles and Equipment

In 2015 Kilkenny Civil Defence received funding for the purchase of a two 5 meter Rigid Inflatable Boats from the Civil Defence Branch of the Dept. of Defence. These boats were required to assist Kilkenny Civil Defence with being able to respond to emergency assistance calls from the Principle Response Agencies and the replace the boats lost in the fire in our storage facility in Purcellsinch. Kilkenny Civil Defence also received a new minibus to also replace the one lost in the fire. Kilkenny Civil Defence also received funding to purchase a CEN compliant ambulance to assist with the community events in Kilkenny.

Training

Kilkenny Civil Defence operates multi-skill training out of its two training centres both located within the city of Kilkenny. The areas of training are broken into the following;

- Casualty/First Aid Service
- Rescue – Open Country Search and River based Search and Recovery
- Auxiliary Fire Service and Flooding
- Welfare Service
- Civil Defence Communications

In 2015, 25 volunteers were presented certificates for courses completed in:

- Radio Operators
- Power Boat Operators at Levels 1,2 and 3
- Cardiac and Emergency First Responders
- Instructional Methods.
- Swift Water/Flood Water First Responder and Water Awareness
- Search Management



Members of Kilkenny Civil Defence rescuing members of the public from their flood homes in Inistiogue

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department deals with the following areas:

Human Resource Strategy
Workforce Planning
Recruitment and Selection
Payroll and Superannuation
Employee Training and Development
Performance Management
Leadership Development
Equality
Diversity Management
Work-Life Balance
Industrial Relations
Employee Health, Safety and Welfare

Staffing Levels

The number of staff employed at 31/12/2015 was 602 (Headcount) or 508 (Whole-Time-Equivalent).

Shared Payroll Service

Kilkenny County Council went live with shared payroll service in March 2015. The service is being delivered by My Pay the Local Government Shared Services Provider from its offices in Portlaoise Co Laoise.

Superannuation Project

Following on from going live for Payroll Shared Services, Kilkenny County Council has commenced on a Superannuation project with a cut over date for a Shared Service in 2017.

Performance Management

The Councils Review Performance Management and Development System was identified for Indoor Grades of staff in 2013. The main revisions include performance evaluation & ratings and the linkage of performance to pay. A comprehensive training programme was delivered to Outdoor Staff in 2014 on the revised arrangements and the system will be implemented in full for Outdoor Grades of staff in 2016.

Training & Development

Kilkenny Local Authorities are committed to ensuring the professional and personal development of all staff within Kilkenny Local Authorities. Training, learning and development are aimed at helping employees to become more effective in their jobs and developing their potential. A comprehensive training programme was delivered in 2015.

Attendance Management

The Local Government Sectors Attendance Management Policy was revised in 2013 and revised sick pay schemes were introduced for the Sector. Absenteeism levels remain low at 4.34% which compares favourably with the average for the Sector which is 4.65%.

Gateway Scheme

The Local Government Sector committed to providing 3,000 places on its Social Employment Scheme entitled Gateway. At the end of 2015 Kilkenny County Council were employing 55 people on the Scheme in areas such as Woodland Maintenance, Landscaping, Burial Ground Maintenance, Recycling & Litter Picking, Marketing & Tourism Promotion, general Office and Library duties and Information technology. Participants are engaged under 22 month contracts on the Scheme which provides them with an opportunity to gain or update work experience, learn new skills and to return to the routine of work.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function established by the Chief Executive for the review of the internal control systems as a service to the Council. Internal Audit is responsible for giving assurance to the Chief Executive on the existence, adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control and risk management systems and is an essential element of corporate governance and risk management.

- The Internal Audit unit provides reports and updates to the Chief Executive regarding the operation of controls in the Council.
- Internal Audit reports are presented to the Audit Committee of the County Council.
- In 2015 reports were presented on Housing Loans, Fleet Management, Bank Reconciliation. A Quality Assurance Exercise was undertaken on a sample of projects as part of the Public Spending Code that was presented to the National Oversight and Audit Commission.

2.2 Community, Culture Housing & Planning.

Services provided under this Directorate are:

- Forward Planning & Planning Control
- Conservation
- Derelict Sites
- Community Development & Estate Management
- Arts
- Heritage
- Library Services
- Housing Accommodation & Supports,

Planning and Development

The role and function of Kilkenny County Council's Planning Department is to determine the physical planning policy of the County, to control new development and building and the promotion of industrial, commercial and other appropriate development.

Forward Planning

- Work commenced on the re-visioning of the Abbey Quarter Master Plan in Jan 2015. An extensive public consultation exercise was conducted over January & February.
- Variation to Development Plan adopted and Abbey Quarter Master Plan approved by the Council on the 31st July 2015.
- Work commenced on the preparation of an extension to the Abbey Quarter Master plan to incorporate Vicar Street and New Road.
- Work commenced on the review of the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan. Public Consultation completed in conjunction with Waterford City and County Council community section. Work on the preparation of the draft plan is ongoing with publication in Q1 2016.
- Callan Local Area's Plan amendment published. Plan will be completed Q1 2016.

Conservation

- Kilkenny County Council continues to provide a planning consultancy/advisory system in respect of works to buildings of architectural heritage significance and protected structures within County Kilkenny.
- Emergency works were undertaken to the Tea House at Bateman Quay with the assistance of a grant of €15,000 from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Community.

Development Control

- 833 planning applications were received in 2015 an increase from 639 in 2014.

- € 288,303 was received in planning application fees.
- 218 Commencement Notices under the Building Regulations were received.
- 23 developments were inspected under Building Control Regulations.
- The Planning Clinic system continues to operate successfully in each of the Area Offices.

Development Contributions

- Total of € 1.743 m was collected in 2015 compared to € 1.58m in 2014.

Enforcement

- A total of 101 new complaints were received during 2015
- The Council issued 89 warning letters and served 23 Enforcement Notices during 2015.

Housing Developments

- 10 Housing Estates were taken in charge consisting of 205 houses
- The Bond was called in on 6 residential developments and remedial works were commenced by Kilkenny County Council to bring the developments up to the standard for taking in charge.
- All unfinished housing sites were monitored for safety works and developers were contacted where safety works were required.
- Site resolution works was carried out by Kilkenny County Council on one unfinished housing development with the assistance of a grant from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
- The number of unfinished developments in Kilkenny on the National Survey is 29 down from 34 in 2014.

Unused Lands/Derelict Lands

- Survey commenced on a review of all underutilised sites/buildings in 2015,
- Reviewed derelict sites in urban areas as part of the survey.

Community and Culture

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for County Kilkenny, 2016-2021 was launched in December, 2015. The LECP represents the culmination of over nine months' work involving extensive research, public consultation, analysis, workshops and meetings. The overarching objective of the community dimension of the Plan is to promote local and community development within the county and to ensure the co-ordination of relevant public-funded local and community development actions in a way that reduces duplication, targets available resources where they are most needed and maximises benefits for communities. The plan is overseen by the Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee.

The community elements of the LECP are focussed on identified needs that can be addressed at community level. They involve community engagement and participation when being addressed by the appropriate programmes and /or provision of resources.

Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) – over 2015 the Community & Culture section supported and organised 6 meetings of the committee, including a facilitated workshop in local decision making. The section supported members through the provision of information, presentations and discussion to enable the committee to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programming, with primary responsibility for co-ordinating, planning and overseeing local and community development funding. The key achievements of the LCDC in 2015 were:

- Overseeing the development of the community element of the LECP
- Establishing the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme Monitoring Subgroup and undertaking a review and planning process for the programme over 2015 and 2016
- Adopting the standing orders for the committee
- Overseeing and engaging the local community in the development of a Local Development Strategy for Kilkenny
- Electing the chairperson from the Public Participation Network - Social Inclusion Pillar

Kilkenny Public Participation Network – 2015 was a productive year for the PPN in Kilkenny, as part of the four phased approach to the establishment of the PPN in Kilkenny 2015 involved supporting the PPN to become operational.

After a series of meetings at Pillar and Municipal District meeting level a nine person secretariat was established. The secretariat quickly undertook to develop a process for a democratic election whereby PPN representatives were elected onto decision making bodies and committees within Kilkenny County Council – SPC ‘s and the LCDC, The Local and Regional Drugs Task Force and the Joint Policing Committee.

Six members were elected to the LCDC, and ten members were elected onto the various SPC’s.

The secretariat of the PPN also organised to 2 PPN Plenary meetings over 2015 where decisions were ratified and feedback was given to the wider membership about the work of the SPC’’s and the LCDC. The end of year Plenary in November hosted two keynote speakers – the CEO of Kilkenny County Council – Colette Byrne and Chief Superintendent of An Garda Síochána - Dominic Hayes.

Kilkenny County Council has invested significantly in the PPN as a representative structure for community representation. In 2015 resources were identified for a centrally located independent office and for a full time PPN Development Officer; both to commence in early 2016.

Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 - LEADER: Rural Development Policy has become a significant component of the EU Agricultural Policy (CAP) and is supported by funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) which in turn is delivered through national co-financed Rural Development Programmes (RDP). LEADER is a key funding pillar within national RDPs, which supports the delivery of local development actions in rural communities and has formed part of the EU rural development funding supports since its launch in 1991.

As the 2007-2013 LEADER programme has been wound down, this year saw the introduction to the next LEADER programme as part of the Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 programme. County Kilkenny is one of 28 designated LEADER areas across the country and has been allocated a budget of €7,791,572.91 for the new programme which will run up to 2020. This fund is to be administered locally through a Local Action Group (LAG) and is guided by a Local Development Strategy (LDS).

In Ireland a two stage LDS selection process was introduced to seek to secure a high quality LDS and support the development of a more integrated and effective implementation approach for local and rural development. Stage 1 involved an Expression of Interest Stage with those groups succeeding in this stage following on to Stage 2 which involved the development of the Local Development Strategy. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG), while fully respecting the requirements of the LDS selection process, sought to secure the preferred approach of LCDCs as LAGs (with the LDCs as key implementation partners) at all stages of the selection process.

Kilkenny LCDC was successful in its Expression of Interest submitted in May. In September, Stage 2 - the preparation of the LDS commenced. The LEADER methodology uses a community led local development approach which places rural communities at the centre. Kilkenny LCDC, in preparing the LDS, was committed to participative planning processes and set down an approach which ensured that the LDS was informed by the sectors of society impacted by the plan. To this end, a broad and intensive multi-sectoral consultation process was undertaken in the preparation of this strategy which was inclusive of a diverse number of groups, people and organisations from across the county.

From September to November a detailed consultation process was undertaken which involved:

Three public consultation meetings (one in each municipal district)

- 17 thematic focus group workshops. These workshops were organised around the sub-themes of the LDS and involved participation of organisations, sectoral interests and key people with expertise directly specific to the themes
- Five workshops with Kilkenny Public Participation Network across the three pillars and municipal districts
- Two public submission calls, including via the dedicated consultation website www.consult.kilkenny.ie

- A community questionnaire circulated to 400 groups across the county (including PPN members and groups not registered as members of the PPN)
- A meeting with the elected representatives in each of the three municipal districts of Kilkenny
- Over 30 bi-lateral meetings with stakeholder agencies and organisations
- In excess of 500 people directly engaged in the consultation and focus group workshops. (In addition 17 submissions were received and 48 completed community questionnaires were returned)

Following this consultation process the write up of the strategy commenced which was informed by the findings from the consultation. This work was ongoing at year end and has since been completed.

The Community and Cultural Facilities Capital (CCFC) Grant Scheme 2015-2017

The Community and Cultural Facilities Capital (CCFC) Grant Scheme 2015-2017 was adopted by Kilkenny County Council in March 2015. A total budget of €250,000 was available for grant allocations in 2015.

The following grants were allocated across the county in 2015:

Name of Applicant	Description of Project	Grant Amount
1. Urlingford on the Move Ltd	Development of a Playground	€45,000
2. St. Canice's Community Action Ltd	Development of house to community launderette and information service for older people and unemployed.	€45,000
3. Thomastown United A.F.C. Ltd	Development of a walking track (1km long) around the perimeter of the Thomastown United grounds.	€37,200
4. Black & Whites GAA	Development of a walking track around the perimeter of the GAA grounds	€21,750
5. The Mill Family Resource Centre & Emerald's GAA	Upgrade of handball alley to a fitness and ball games centre	€45,000
6. Conahy Community	Redevelopment of the Community Hall	€23,400
7. Goresbridge Community Park Development Committee Ltd.	Development of a community playground	€32,650

Traveller Supports:

The Council was successful in drawing down funding from the Department of Justice and Equality to support Traveller Education work in partnership with the Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement.

Funding and supporting the Community Participation Programme of the Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement through a Service level Agreement. This programme engages Traveller from across the county insignificant Traveller issues.

There was significant progress made towards the development of the Kilkenny Traveller Horse Project. This is a partnership between Kilkenny County Council, The Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement, the Department of Agriculture, Traveller horse owners and the County Kilkenny LEADER Partnership Company. An innovative consultation approach with LiD Architects was undertaken to commence with the design and layout of the project at the Hebron Rd.

Recognition of Resettlement Programme:

In recognition of Kilkenny County Councils role in the UNHCR Sudanese Resettlement programme in 2009 the section was invited to meet the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon who visited Ireland from the 24-26 May 2015. While in Ireland, the Secretary General requested to meet with resettled refugee communities, members of the Irish-Syrian Community, Department of Justice Officials and local integration groups, to extend his gratitude for the Irish Government refugee resettlement program and to those who have assisted in Refugee resettlement and integration over the years. Kilkenny County Council was one of three Local Authorities to be invited to meet the Secretary General



Kilkenny Age Friendly County

The Council continues its commitment to the Age Friendly County Programme in its support of the Older Peoples Council. In 2015 the Council provided an Age Friendly Co-Ordinator, undertook a significant number of public realm improvements with input from the Older Persons Council, grant aided the Council to undertake its work programme, supported the organisation of the Forum meetings which are large scale events that provide older people in

the county with the opportunity to meet, hear about the achievements of the Age Friendly Programme, as well as to meet, socialize and network with groups across the county.

The Age Friendly Coordinator

- The Council provided a staff member to coordinate the programme and to provide a point of contact for other agencies.
- Age friendly Coordinator attends meetings and supports the older peoples service providers forum
- Age friendly Coordinator attends and prepares an update of all age friendly initiatives and share information of projects being carried, out within the County Council on a quarterly basis
- Attends Regional meetings for age friendly Co coordinators and shares information of new projects and initiatives.
- Allocation of funding supports for OPF meetings and events, provision of mobile phone for the chair person of the OPF for communication, staff allocated to support with meetings of the OPF .

Public realm improvements in the City, with an emphasis on the needs of older people were undertaken as follows

- Provision of seated area at junction of Johnswell Rd/New Orchard Rd
- Amenity area with seating at Leggettsrath, Dublin Rd
- Amenity Area at Canices Steps
- Replacing of footpath at the rear of Maudlin St and provision of steps, handrails to allow persons walk on top of the flood defences in County Hall.
- Reconfiguration of paved area in front of Rothe House including provision of seating.
- Traffic Calming measures at Bateman Quay
- Footpath improvements and removal of trip hazards at Fr Walsh Close and Deans Court .
- Footpath widening and measures to prevent inconsiderate parking at Friary Street
- Footpath improvements at Market Yard adjacent to the rear entrance to the Courthouse
- Removal of timber poles, completion of footpath surfacing and provision of new lighting at Kells Rd.

Improvements undertaken in the County were as follows:

- Completion of Glenmore Bus Stop
- Continuation of Improvement Works to Granny Amenity Area
- Provision of new footpath in Kilmacow from Upper Street to Dangan
- Provision of infill footpath at top of Rockshire Road
- Completion/provision of new public lighting provision at;
Tullagher Church Car Park
Mill Road, Mullinavat
Piltown, School to Kildalton
Kilmacow opposite Sports Complex

Milepost infill lighting

Urban renewal scheme completed in Thomastown

The enhancement of the urban realm in Market Street and Pipe Street, Thomastown, included a new Age Friendly Seat located adjacent to Bus Stop as part of consultation with the Older peoples forum for the Thomastown Urban Renewal Scheme.

Social Inclusion

The Councils Library Services ran a number of courses in 2015 for Older People as follows:

- Castlecomer Library held an 8 week course called “Taking Stock” Aimed at over 55’s and supported by Age and Opportunity.
- The Nattering Knitters Group also meets weekly in Castlecomer Library and most members are retired.
- Castlecomer Library supports the newly formed Castlecomer Men’s Shed offering exhibition space (show case products for the community to see) send up books of relevance e.g. carpentry books etc.. design posters for them etc.
- Ferrybank Library supports a number of Age friendly events including Patchwork Quilting, Creative Writing, Arts Classes & Knitters Group all of which meet weekly.-

Bus Shelters.

Following on from Consultation with the older Peoples forum a review of existing Bus Shelters has been carried out. The Design of the existing Bus Shelters located in the City was viewed as not Age Friendly (Open on one side and slanted seat which is difficult to sit on). A meeting was held with Director of Services (Roads) and Members of the Older person’s forum. A commitment has been made to ensuring all new Bus Shelters will be designed to ensure that they are Age Friendly in the future. One of the existing Bus Shelters on Ormond Road has been retrofitted with a third panel and an age friendly seat installed.

Bus Routes/Rural Transport.

An audit of the existing bus services and frequency of services in the city and county including Ring A Link bus services were carried out and the results were shown on a map and schedule prepared. This information was presented to the Age friendly alliance and a copy given to the Older Persons forum.

Pedestrian Crossings

A review of the pedestrian crossing timings at a sample selection of traffic signals within the City were examined at the following locations

- The Parade,
- Market Yard/Parliament St,
- Irishtown and
- McDonagh Junction.

The times were compared to the TILDA Amber Cross Code 2015. (The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing) Initial results found that the amber time for all road crossing will cater for a slower walking speed.

Fire Services

The Acting Chief Fire Officer gave a fire safety talk to the Older Peoples Forum in Ormonde Hotel in November and it is proposed to organise further talks in 2016.



Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg:

Key activities for the Comhairle in 2015 were:

- The hosting of a ‘Let’s Go Mental’ Day took place on Saturday 27th of June 2015, at the Parade Square, Kilkenny. This was one of a series of 31 regional events for teenagers to promote positive mental health through music, sport, the arts and other fun activities. It was a great success with a good turnout by young people from across the county.
- The Comhairle na nÓg engaged with Kilkenny Planning Department who hosted a special youth consultation session on the ‘Brewery Site Visioning’ in February. This proved a very successful event with positive input by all young people in attendance. A number of the young people engaged in a further consultation on the Brewery Site in May.
- In the run up to the Comhairle AGM held in October four electoral area consultation workshops were held for young people with a view to engaging with a wider group of young people from across the county. The consultation workshops concentrated on a series of themes informed by the Local Economic and Community Plan high level goals. Over 120 young people attended the sessions. The findings from the workshops were used to inform the Local Economic and Community Action Plan and the Kilkenny Local Development Strategy as prepared by Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee. The findings also formed the basis of discussion at the Comhairle na nÓg AGM where young people agreed the priorities for their 2016 Action Plan.

Ferrybank Community Development:



In April 2015, Kilkenny Ferrybank Steering Committee launched the Ferrybank Community Development Strategic Plan 2015-2020. This plan was compiled after extensive consultation, the completion of a review of the previous strategy and updating the demographic profile and needs analysis of the greater Ferrybank area. The priority actions in the strategy are based on local needs as identified by the residents of Ferrybank and the service providers and community groups working in the area. Kilkenny County Council working in partnership with Waterford City & County Council jointly funded the development of this plan. The Steering Committee is now working on the implementation of this strategy.

Social Inclusion Supports:

This year the section was in a position to provide supports through the allocation of funding supports of €6,300 to specific programmes that were identified in the service delivery plan; this is small funding that makes a huge impact for groups and communities.

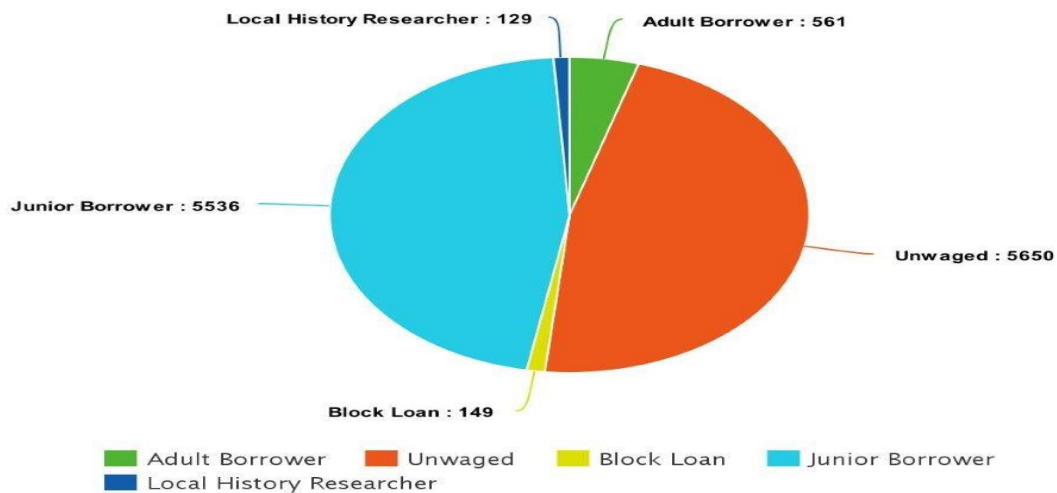
Project	Funding
Kilkenny Gay Pride Festival and Education Programme	€1,100
Association for the Kilkenny Empowerment Initiative for African Women (KEIFAW) – traditional crafts programme	€1,000
Citizens Information Service production of Kilkenny Life and Kilkenny Kids 2015	€2,000
Ballyfoyle Community Centre	€500

Open Circle Women’s Arts Collective – attendance at National Women’s Council event for project participants	€200
International Women’s Day Committee Programme and printing costs	€500
Young Social Innovators	€1,000

Library Services.

Kilkenny Library Service aims to provide a quality, accessible service, which enhances the lives of communities of County Kilkenny. It provides for the information, cultural, education, recreational and learning needs of people throughout the network of library branches in Callan, Castlecomer, Urlingford, Kilkenny City, Graiguenamanagh, Loughboy, Ferrybank and Thomastown. It is supported in this by the administrative functions of library headquarters which also provides a Local Studies, a school’s library service and a mobile library service.

Over 12,000 members use the service :



meta-chart.com

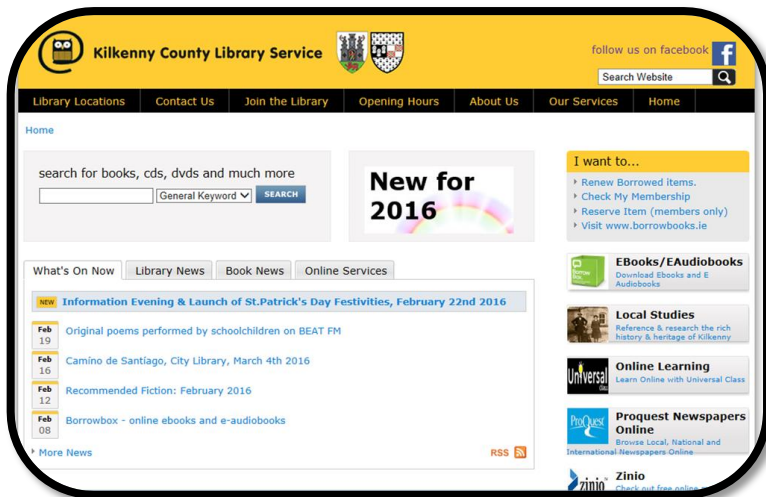


Carnegie Library



Infrastructure

Our public libraries are places of civic participation to this end we constantly strive to redesign our spaces to reflect community need. A range of energy efficient systems were introduced across the network and include lighting systems at Urlingford and Loughboy and insulation works at Urlingford library. These improvements were carried out as part of the



Better Energy Community Grants Scheme. A range of positive measures have been developed across the branch network to ensure compliance with the Disability Act 2005.

Information Communication

Technologies As technology becomes more integrated into the daily life, customer's expectations

from their public library have also risen. Technology and development are an integral part of library services. There were 27,628 public internet sessions in 2015.

Kilkenny Library Service considers www.kilkennylibrary.ie as another service point which provides access to a myriad of services and information, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Website Visits – 1,900 per month. Country of origin – Ireland, United Kingdom, USA, Australia. Age profile of main users – 25-34 years. E – Services Usage-Britannica- 426 sessions, Naxos Music – 209 sessions, Language Learning- 398 sessions E Magazines – 1,228 downloads audio – 1,375 downloads. We now have access to WIFI in 4 of our service points and usage already indicates (2,726 sessions in 2015) that this is a popular and much requested service.

Social Media also played a positive role in the promotion and access to library services and events throughout the year as well as providing a platform for instant and current interaction with the public both at home and abroad

Events and Programs 2015

Throughout the year the library continued to offer a wide range of innovative and diverse programming. These included:-

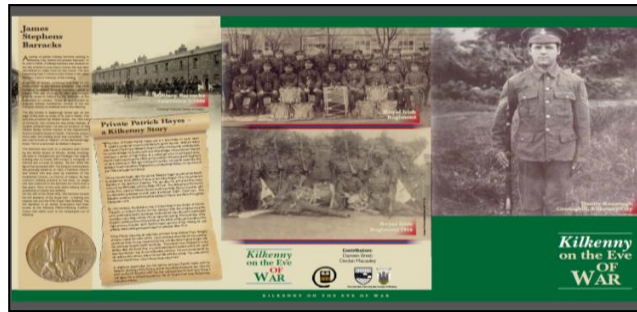
- Culture Night
- National Science Week
- Computer Classes
- Reading Groups
- Writing Groups
- National Heritage Week
- National Children's Book Festival
- LEO Business Advisory Clinics
- Christmas Events
- French & Irish Language Circles
- Exhibitions & Author Visits
- Primary and Secondary Savour Kilkenny
- Local History Societies, Creative Writing & Drama workshops

Kilkenny Library Service provides virtually unlimited access to a diverse selection of materials in a variety of genres and formats. Currently the collection contains 240,728 items and the amount of items issued in 2015 was 303,440 items. **Partnerships and Collaboration** Kilkenny County Library Service has worked collaboratively with a range of local and national organizations which allows the library to promote itself as a valuable community space actively engaging with the community. We will continue this collaborative approach to service delivery to ensure the library is viewed as a social and versatile space for everyone.



Local Studies and Archives

The role of the Local Studies Department is to provide free access to sources relevant history, culture and genealogy. Guidance and advice as regards sources and research methodologies is also provided around genealogy with 80% of queries in this area. With 127 registered members, 1,631 items were issued in 2015.



The Irish Newspaper Archive facility is now available across the network and forms an important source of information for students, researchers and local historians.

Outreach activities included visits from students and tutors from the Military Museum in James' Stephens's Barracks, and from a range of primary and secondary schools. We also continued class visits both at Primary and Secondary levels with an emphasis on 1916 sources.

2 online exhibitions as part of Heritage Week

- The Monks of Gariguenamamagh – in co-operation with Graiguenamanagh Library and the Local Community
- The Bridewell Jail in Thomastown in co-operation with Housing Department.

The Department has ongoing co-operation with the Heritage Section as well as providing sources and historical input for the 1916 Commemoration Committee.

There are also 20,612 items in the store collection which consists of a range of material including Irish interest as well as non-fiction and fiction, official publications, Board of Guardians' records and Grand Jury Presentments.

It is important to emphasise the importance of this collection and service as a valuable and vital part of the overall library service. It is a highly significant record of the county's heritage and collective memory.

Children, Literacy, and the Summer Reading Challenge: - At a minimum 645 children read 6450 books over July and August across Kilkenny Library Service as part of the Summer Reading Buzz.

This culminated in a celebratory evening in the Watergate theatre for all the children and their parents. It was a simple and cost effective means of encouraging reading skills and improving literacy skills among children. For many children it was often the first introduction they have to one of the best free resources available on their doorsteps- their local library.

<p style="text-align: center;">KILKENNY CITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French Conversation group . • Edible book Competition for secondary schools as part of Savour Kilkenny Food Festival • Class visits programme completed with 200 students from St. John’s Junior school • Culture night -performance of Congolese music organised in partnership with Alliance Francaise • Creative Writing series with writer Ken Bourke and 4th class from St. John’s Senior School as part of their One Book One Community initiative 	<p style="text-align: center;">LOUGHBOY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the first edition of “Writing News” by the Loughboy Library Writers Group. • Introduction of “technology tips for the elderly” in conjunction with Presentation Secondary School, Loughboy. • Summer Reading Challenge-our most successful year to date. 190 children reading a total of 1900 books. • Foras na Gaeilge Funding invested in “club leabhair” and visits from Irish speaking authors. • Culture Night Event with dance, music and song from the members of Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann. 	<p style="text-align: center;">FERRYBANK LIBRARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fáilte Isteach – English Conversation classes in partnership with KLP • Homework Help for Parents – tutor lead, in partnership with Kilkenny Carlow ETB • Transition Year Programme with students of Abbey Community College, Ferrybank • Age Action computer classes for the over 55s • 246 class visits, 149 workshops and talks, 47 computer class sessions
<p style="text-align: center;">URLINGFORD LIBRARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Classes • Cartoon Saloon short film and drawing classes • Mindfulness class • Author visit • Adult and Children’s crafts for Halloween and Christmas. 	<p style="text-align: center;">CALLAN LIBRARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness Talk. • Summer Reading Challenge for children. • Dog’s Trust visit • Children’s colouring competition and library Christmas decorating competition. 	<p style="text-align: center;">GRAIGUENAMANAGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Christmas Stories with Jim Maher • Cartoon Saloon Animation Workshop • Local Enterprise Business Advisory Clinic • “From bugle call to tolling bell: Graiguenamanagh’s Great War” Speaker is Captain Larry Scannal from James Stephens for Graiguenamanagh Historical Society • Crafty Crew group meetings
<p style="text-align: center;">CASTLECOMER LIBRARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bealtaine Event: The life and times of Percy French by The Castlecomer Minstrels • Shapeshifters Animation Workshops by Cartoon Saloon - • Science Week: Motorized Lego workshops – • Six Book Challenge – Deenview Centre (SOS) 8 participated over a number of months. • Age Action “Taking Stock” a course for over 55’s. 	<p style="text-align: center;">THOMASTOWN LIBRARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry Classes with Rita Kelly • Cartoon Saloon Workshop – Shape shifters character design workshops • Talk on The Bridewell, Thomastown for National Heritage Week • Mindfulness talk with Mary Kavanagh • Spooky magic with Ann Moylan 	

Heritage.

Kilkenny County Councils Heritage Office provides a professional heritage service throughout the city and county. This includes providing advice and information on heritage issues; developing policies and priorities for the identification, protection, conservation and enhancement of Kilkenny's heritage; collecting and collating heritage data and promoting heritage awareness & education throughout the county. A key objective is to work with the Kilkenny Heritage Forum in the preparation and implementation of the County Heritage Plan and the County Biodiversity Plan.

Kilkenny County Heritage Plan

The Councils Heritage Office was awarded €27,000 from the Heritage Council for implementation of Kilkenny Heritage Plan projects, under the County Heritage Plan Grants Programme.

Launched new Kilkenny heritage website

A new website dedicated to Kilkenny's heritage www.kilkennyheritage.ie was launched at Kilkenny County Council meeting of 20th April 2015. The site is maintained by the Heritage Office and there are plans to introduce links to social media in 2016.



Talbot's Tower: Irish Walled Towns Network

The Council made a successful grant application to the Irish Walled Towns Network and was awarded €4,500 towards interpretive signage. This involved construction of 7 interpretive panels at Talbot's Tower, telling the story of the 13th century Tower and the circuit of medieval walls around Kilkenny City. The panels will be erected on site in early 2016.

Heritage Council Grants Programme in Kilkenny

The Heritage Council awarded €15,500 in heritage grants to seven heritage initiatives in County Kilkenny in 2015. Funding was awarded to Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Kilkenny Archives Ltd, Kells Union of Parishes, Graiguenamanagh Historical Society, Freshford Old Graveyard Group, Coilin O'Drisceoil and Tullahought Community Development Ltd.

Audit of Civic Memorials, Plaques and Signs

An audit of plaques, memorials and significant signs was commissioned in County Kilkenny to identify and record this often overlooked part of our cultural heritage. Over 300 plaques, memorials and signs from across 61 towns and villages were recorded and mapped, and will be upload onto the County Council's GIS. The main types of plaques and memorials recorded were dedication plaques; historic events; significant street plaques; personal memorials; special or scared places; OS bench marks.

Given the public interest in the project it was decided to follow up the survey with by producing and distributed 3000 copies of "*Kilkenny Signs and Stories*" calendar, using data collected in the audit. The project was co-funded by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Programme.

Kilkenny Fieldnames Recording Project

Alan Counihan was commissioned to co-ordinate the Kilkenny Fieldnames Project. This comprised the following: recording over 1000 fieldnames in 25 townlands; providing training & support to volunteers in Castlecomer, Conahy, Freshford, Inistioge, Lisdowney and Goresbridge; also to teachers of transition year students Colaiste Mhuire Johnstown; organising exhibitions about the project for Heritage Week, in Castlecomer Library; Ionad Dara Centre Goresbridge; Abhainn Ri Community Centre Inistioge; analysis of all 6000 fieldnames collected to date and translation of Irish fieldnames.

The project was co-funded by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Programme.

Castle Field,
Sandfordscourt

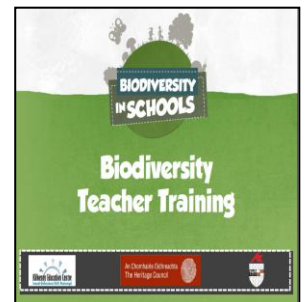


Heritage Education

The Heritage Office undertook a number of heritage education projects in partnership with the Kilkenny Education Centre and the Kilkenny County Childcare Committee. These include:

Biodiversity in Your Schoolyard Commissioned “Biodiversity in Schools” to provide biodiversity training & Biodiversity Action Plans for teachers in 7 primary schools between September and December. The aim of the project was to give teachers the confidence and skills to use the biodiversity resources in their schoolyard or adjacent land as a classroom to teach students about biodiversity and natural heritage. Across the seven schools, approximately 316 students, in addition to the teachers, were directly involved in the training days. The schools were; Urlingford N.S; Lisdowney N.S; St. Lachtain’s Freshford; St. Senan’s N.S Kilmacow; Ringville N.S; School of the Holy Spirit; St. Aidan’s N.S Kilmanagh.

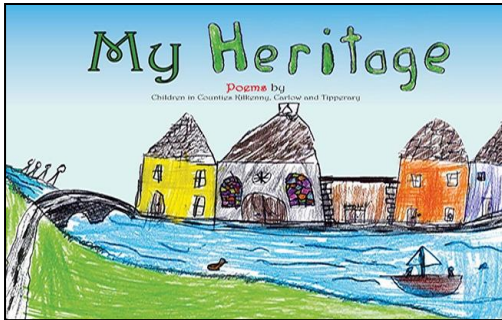
Biodiversity Teacher Training In partnership with the Kilkenny Education Centre, commissioned “Biodiversity in Schools” to undertake a biodiversity training course to a group of primary school teachers, childcare practitioners and tutors from the Heritage in Schools Scheme on 28th April in Kilkenny Education Centre. The session was part-two of a programme designed to help participants undertake actions to teach biodiversity for each season of the year



Forest School Training In partnership with the County Childcare Committee a Pilot Forest School Training session for Early Years Practitioners at Oasis Childcare Centre Freshford was held on 9th May. The training took place in Browns Wood and linked to Aistear, the national curriculum framework for pre-school.



"My Heritage" poems recorded for radio Recorded 28 primary school children reading their "My Heritage" poems, in partnership with Kilkenny Education Centre and BEAT FM. This is the 2nd phase of a project undertaken in 2014. The poems will be aired on BEAT FM in early 2016.



Eimear Davis, St. Lachtain's National School, with her poem "Wonderful Water"



Tidy Towns Support

Commissioned three ecologists to provide biodiversity training and Biodiversity Action Plans for three Tidy Towns committees (Inistioge, Thomastown, Stoneyford) in partnership with Environmental Awareness Officer. The aim is to support the Tidy Towns committees in addressing the "Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities" element of the national Tidy Towns competition.

Kilkenny Free Day



The Council sponsored a medieval themed day, including medieval re-enactments and guided tours, at Rothe House, for Kilkenny Free Day October 10th. On Kilkenny Free Day, which coincides with the Feast Day of St. Canice, Kilkenny's patron Saint, buildings and attractions throughout the City and County open their doors and offer free guided tours and activities throughout the day.

Granny Castle Interpretive Signage

Produced 3 heritage interpretive signs for Granny Castle amenity area, telling the story of the settlement of the area and life in the medieval castle on the banks of the River Suir. The signs will be erected in 2016.



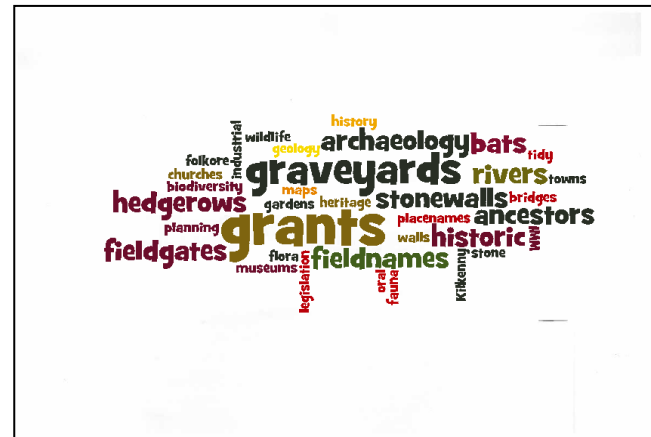
Heritage Policy Co-ordinated a submission, on behalf of the Council, to *Culture 2025* (a discussion document produced by the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht to inform a proposed new *National Cultural Strategy*).



Prepared a submission for Kilkenny County Council on the heritage aspects of the proposed county boundary change with Waterford – in particular the contribution that heritage makes to the identity and social cohesion of the county.

Providing heritage advice, support and news

Throughout the year the Council's Heritage Officer provided advice to and answered hundreds of queries from the public, local authority colleagues, community groups and Elected Representatives on a diverse range of heritage topics including graveyards, hedgerows, archaeology, grants, signage, geology, historic gardens, wildlife, museums, bridges, oral history, fieldnames, folklore, etc.



In addition, the Heritage Office sent regular “Kilkenny Heritage News” emails to the heritage office database of heritage groups, Tidy Towns groups, local authority staff and elected reps.

European Capital of Culture “Three Sisters 2020” bid

Provided heritage advice to and attended meetings of the joint Kilkenny, Waterford & Wexford European Capital of Culture “Three Sisters 2020” bid and provided facilitation services at public meeting in March in Kilkenny City.

Valuing Heritage

In partnership with the Heritage Officers in Meath, Kildare and Cork City Council's, the Heritage Office commissioned Fitzpatrick's & Associates and Ecory's to undertake a Scoping Report to identify evidence-based data on the value of heritage. Heritage makes a significant contribution to the economy, social values, the environment and well being. However, this is not widely accepted or understood. This project aimed to address this by examining the value of heritage under these headings, at a local level, in 4 counties.

The project was co-funded by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Programme.

Kilkenny Military Heritage Project

On-going updates to Kilkenny Military Heritage Project website www.KMHP.ie

The Council funded a talk by military expert Gordon Power entitled ‘**Military History – Researching your World War 1 Ancestors**’ in Ferrybank Library, with particular emphasis on local and South Kilkenny participants in the war

Kilkenny Heritage Forum

Co-ordinated Kilkenny Heritage Forum meetings and had on-going liaison with Heritage Forum.



Civic Memorials Policy

The Council adopted a new policy on Civic Memorials for Kilkenny County Council, following consideration at Strategic Policy Committee 3 (Planning & Development, Heritage, Community, Arts & Culture on 24.03.15 and 27.05.15.

National Heritage Week in County Kilkenny

National Heritage Week took place from 22nd – 30th August. 90 events were organised in the county, an increase of 29% on 2014, including family open days, guided walks, heritage site visits, fieldtrips, exhibitions, children’s workshops, and demonstrations. The Heritage Office organised a programme of events and coordinated local press coverage, co-funded by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan Programme, including **Radio coverage** on KCLR, was co-ordinated and funded by the Council and ran for the duration of Heritage Week, including adverts, pre-recorded packages, live studio interviews and an outside broadcast.



In partnership with the NRA, the Heritage Office organised and co-funded a **Roman Re-enactment** family day delivered by the Roman Military Society of Ireland at Lyrath Hotel. This included personnel in Roman clothes and displays of roman tools, weapons & food. Talks were given on the theme of the Romans in Ireland and Kilkenny by Dr Jacqueline Cahill Wilson and C  il  n    Drisceoil.



The Council funded a Children’s archaeology workshop **“Weapons of Medieval Destruction”**, run by ‘Dig it kids’ at Rothe House. There were 4 workshop sessions throughout the day, aimed at 6-12 year olds. The theme was “Exploring the medieval history of Kilkenny through the weaponry of the time”.



The Council co-funded 2 **interpretive signs** at St. Lachtains Graveyard Group, which were launched during Heritage Week. The signs comprised a lectern style interpretation panel with map of graveyard and a round cast iron plaque on outside wall of St. Lachtains graveyard with graveyard name and date.

Arts

Kilkenny City and County has an extensive, illustrious and spirited tradition within the arts, we have a rich and varied cultural and craft heritage combined with an abundance of festivals. And are an integral part of the cultural, tourism and economic development of the city and county.

The Councils Arts Office programme reflects this in its support for the arts across all disciplines and for all aspects of the community both practitioners and audiences, also in its provision of professional development services for practitioners.

Arts Office Overview

The Council's Arts Office works to develop, co-ordinate, motivate, inspire and strengthen artistic activity throughout the city and county. We promote the arts as a worthwhile activity for all, providing advice and support for groups and for individuals. We work to further strengthen Kilkenny's position as a centre of excellence for the arts and ensure a successful and prosperous arts environment within the region.



Community and Education

Siamsa is a fun child centred programme for 5 to 12 year olds supporting children in developing a variety of creative skills, through workshops using materials such as origami, clay modelling, and Lego art as well as textile work. In 2015 the children were also introduced to new authors and illustrators, discussing geography and travel as they created new stories, characters and books.

Literature



Kilkenny County Councils Arts Office has a strong commitment to providing literary developments. In 2015 the Arts Office supported the continuing professional development of writers in Kilkenny by providing low cost or free workshops for adults and teenagers, awarding Bursary Schemes and by giving writers a platform to showcase their work

(Broadsheet 15 & Rhymereg.net). We also provided Writers in Residence in local schools and the youth sector; all with positive and powerful results.

Broadsheet 15

We were once again delighted to produce the fifteenth issue of the very popular Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet, which gives local writers a platform for their work. Seventy-eight poems were submitted with thirteen poems by nine poets selected by Editor Tony Curtis. The Broadsheet was illustrated by visual artist Alé Mercado. Copies of the Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet Issue 15 are available for free from the Arts Office and libraries around the county. This year we carried out an evaluation of the Broadsheet with the Kilkenny writing community and are examining the feedback to plan the next steps for Broadsheet 16.

Rhyme Rag

The Rhyme Rag is an online teen poetry journal borne out of a poetry publication project initiated in 2005. The project is produced and managed by Kilkenny County Council's Arts office and is going from strength to strength. Young people who submit their writing receive personal feedback on their poem from a professional editor regardless of whether their poem is published or not.

Two poems are chosen each month to be published online and they are professionally illustrated by local artist, Alé Mercado. This year we welcomed our new editor Kathy D'Arcy on board.

ÆVERSE

Rhyme Rag is complemented by school and library poetry workshops and residencies which go under the title of **ÆVERSE**. The Kilkenny County Council Arts Office and Library developed **ÆVERSE** to become a key project to feed into the re-launch of Rhyme Rag. It enables the Arts Office to offer immediate outlet and support to young people interested in writing poetry. The response from young people over the last ten years shows that we've been addressing a clear need in which they can write and publish their work.

Open Circle Community Arts Collective

Open Circle community arts collective is in its third year of operation. Objectives for Open Circle continue to be: to diversify and maximize the use of the project's community space, to increase participation, independence and sustainability and to develop new groups and activities.

In 2015 Open Circle developed partnerships with Blackstack Print studios and the National Craft Gallery of Ireland. ETB funding enabled Open Circle to build project capacity by funding the development of new skills for members, opening up opportunities to access professional arts resources already in the community. Open Circle marked Culture Night with an event that saw members facilitate the public in a drop-in print workshop. Self-sustainability was successfully explored when members, old and new, made and sold art work and crafts during the Kilkenny Arts Festival.

Artlinks



This is a partnership program between Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford and Waterford County Council's. And once again offered a quality and accessible Arts Professional Development programme for practitioners across all disciplines. Through the Artlinks Mentoring Programme seven Kilkenny individuals received a mentoring opportunity with a professional artist in their respective areas. A further nine Kilkenny based artists were awarded bursaries to aid their artistic practise in the areas of music, visual arts, theatre, dance and community arts and awarded six Mentoring Awards in literature, visual arts and theatre.

This year an ArtLinks Cafe was held at VISUAL Carlow in partnership with VAI. It involved a series of short presentations by 8 selected artists, 2 from each of the counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford who received funding in 2015 as part of the ArtLinks bursary scheme for specific projects.

Public Art

Kilkenny County Council had its first Public Art Policy adopted in 2015. The policy is in line with the National Guidelines on Public Art and it sets out the principals and structures under which public art will be commissioned and managed. The policy will set out the recommended processes for the commissioning of new public art projects including best practice principles in the areas of planning commissions, selection of projects, artists contracts, budgeting etc.

Grants, Awards & Bursaries

Various groups and projects secured funding through the Council. These include the Arts Act Grants, which aim to provide financial assistance to Kilkenny based groups and individuals for the purposes of stimulating public interest in the arts, promoting the knowledge, appreciation and practices of the arts or improving standards in the arts; the Tyrone Guthrie bursary, which aims to assist and encourage both established and emerging practitioners, in giving them an opportunity to work intensively on a 'project' alongside others in a very unique environment; the Story House bursary which aims to support the professional development of writers based in the Kilkenny. The Arts Office once again supported Barnstorm Theatre Company, the Butler Gallery, Blackstack Studio, the Watergate Theatre and funded the Brewery Project and the Still We Work exhibition.

European Capital of Culture - Three Sisters 2020 Bid

In 2020 Ireland is hosting the European Capital of Culture (ECoC). This is one of the most important cultural events in Europe and helps cities and regions to become visible on the European map.

In a unique regional approach, Counties Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford have joined forces as the 'Three Sisters' to bid for the ECoC title in 2020. In November 2015, the Three Sisters successfully passed Phase 1 of this competition at Dublin Castle. We are now in Phase 2 which involves the preparation of a Bid Book which includes a Regional Cultural Strategy and a Cultural Programme. Phase 2 will culminate with a visit from the European jury in July this year. The winner of the bidding process will be announced on the 15th of July 2016.

The ECoC designation is for a period of one year during which the region will organise a series of cultural events with a strong European dimension. The Three Sisters team, which comprises of the three local authorities, is working with local communities and groups, artists, performers and venues

to put together a winning Bid, showing the best of what our three counties have to offer to visitors and locals alike.

Hosting the ECoC in our region would be an amazing opportunity for the people living here to tell the rest of Europe about our culture and lifestyle; including music, sport, arts, heritage and all of the things we are proud of; and at the same time learn more about the culture of our neighbouring countries. The aim of ECoC is to highlight the richness and diversity as well as common cultural aspects in Europe with a view to contributing to bring the people of Europe closer together and improve mutual understanding. Winning the ECoC would automatically make this region “the place to visit” in Europe. The number of visitors will increase significantly, but more importantly we would be able to create a more sustainable future for our artists and creative people. There will also be improvements in investment opportunities, enterprise creation, a greater appreciation for the value which creativity can bring and foster a strong sense of pride in our region.

HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation. This is achieved by offering a variety of social housing supports by the Housing Authorities, Voluntary and private sector.

Housing Capital Programme 2015-2017

Kilkenny County Council secured **€39.8 million** for the 3 year Housing Capital Programme 2015-2017. This allocation includes the construction and acquisition of accommodation units provided by the Local Authority and Voluntary Housing Bodies (CAS Scheme) to provide 215 units during the course of the programme. Also included is the return of Voids properties back into productive use.

Social Housing Investment Programme [SHIP] 2015:

- Housing Strategy 2015-2017 was approved at Council meeting in June 2015.
- Kilkenny County Council purchased 24 units on the open market in 2015.
- Two (2) rural cottages and two (2) apartments in Gowran were completed in 2015.
- Ten (10) units at Gaol Road, Kilkenny were under construction in 2015 and will be completed in Q1/2016.
- Twelve (12) houses commenced construction in Friary Walk, Callan by Cluid AHB and a further ten houses were acquired by a number of other Housing Bodies.
- The Construction of six (6) units at Rosehill, Kells Road, Kilkenny commenced in late 2015 and will be completed in 2016.
- Tenders for design teams for construction projects for approx. 100 units at Bolton, Callan, The Butts, Kilkenny, Vicar Street, Kilkenny and Donaguile, Castlecomer were advertised in Q4/2015 and will be appointed early 2016.
- Works to 24 Long Term Voids were completed returning units to full occupancy.

Rental Accommodation Scheme [RAS], Leasing & Housing Assistance Payment [HAP]:

- Expenditure for RAS in 2015 was €4.7 million.
- 75 applicants accommodated under RAS in 2015
- A total of 532 RAS Properties are now forming part of social housing options.
- 36 properties left the RAS Scheme in 2015
- A total of 41 units were secured under Leasing in Kilkenny during 2015.
- The Housing Assistance Payment was introduced in Mid October, 2014. 498 live tenancies are established up to 31/12/2015.

Homeless Referral to KLA Homeless Services 2015

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|------------|
| • Referrals | - | 240 |
| • Potentially homeless Referrals | | 154 |
| • Other | | 5 |
| • Total | - | 399 |

Private Rented Accommodation

- The Council carried out 379 inspections on private rented accommodation during 2015

Voluntary Housing Programme:

These CAS units form part of the 2015-17 Housing Capital Programme.

The Department invited applications under a 'Special Call' during 2014 and 2015 and the following applicants were approved and are at various stages of completion:

No. of Units	Approved Housing Body & location of units	Status	Budget
12	Cluid VHA – Friary Walk, Callan	Under construction 2015	1,488,011
5	Camphill Thomastown – Brooke House, Thomastown	Tendered 2015 - On site Feb. 2016	1,043,805
6	SOS. H.A. Ltd – Cashel Downs, Kilkenny	In progress	500,000
4	Good Shepherd Centre – Purchases	2 completed/2 in progress	440,000
5	Focus Ireland – purchases	5 completed 2015	692,792

12	Good Shepherd Centre – Church lane, Kilkenny	Design stage	1,200,000
16	Camphill, Callan – Prologue, Westcourt & Moate Lane	Design stage	2,200,000
4	Belmont Park HA Ltd -	Preliminary stage	300,000
6	Good Shepherd Centre – construction project	Preliminary stage	666,000
4	Cluid HA – Turnkey Development	Preliminary stage	606,000
4	Camphill, Ballytobin – construction	Design stage	514,361
		TOTAL	9,650,969

Traveller Accommodation Programme:

- Review of Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 on going- to be completed in 2016.
- The Traveller Accommodation Programme annual target of 13 units of accommodation was exceeded. In that 20 units of accommodation offered to Traveler families in 2015 of which 19 were accepted and 1 refused.
- The 19 allocations can be broken down as follows: 11 Standard Housing; 1 Group Housing Scheme; 1 Halting Site Bay; 1 Rural Cottage; 1 Voluntary Housing, 1 RAS & 3 Transfers.
- The total number of Traveller families in the local authority area on the date of the national count was 157 in 2015, a decrease of 13 on the previous year. This decrease can be accounted for by tenant deaths and move out of County by a number of families
- Construction of 2 group houses at St. Catherine’s Halting Site (Phase 1) completed in Q4 2015. Houses to be allocated Q1 2016.
- Preparatory works on Phase 2 of redevelopment of St. Catherine’s are underway with the construction of 4 houses to commence Q1 2016.

Assessment of Needs:

- The 3 year statutory Assessment of Needs will be carried out in May 2016.
- 2,744 applicants on Social Housing Support waiting list at 31st December 2015.
- 572 Social Housing Assessment interviews were carried out during 2015.
- 62% of applicants want to live in Kilkenny City & Environs
- 572 Housing Need Assessment appointments were held in 2015
- There were 75 new lettings under the RAS Scheme, 36 units left the scheme in 2015.
- 122 offers of accommodation were made during 2015, 85 casual vacancies and 37 new purchases.

- 28 Offers of accommodation were made to applicants who were homeless/potentially homeless
- 29 Offers of transfer of accommodation were made during 2015.

Maintaining Housing Stock:

- Maintenance Budget €1.6ml expended in full on combined housing stock of 2,157
- 4,233 requests for repairs received in 2015 and 3,025 (92%) were completed at year end.
- 92 Units were vacant during 2015 with 80 made ready for re-letting
- 259 units were Retrofitted in 2015
- 32 Local Authority house adaption's in 2015 to meet the needs of the disabled.
- 15 houses were vacant at end of the year i.e. less than 1%
- 17 Long Term Voids were returned to use in 2015 with a further 7 to be completed in early 2016. Cost €607,862.

Housing Loans:

- 71 applications for loans made in 2015 compared to 72 in 2014
- 65% of loan applications received approval.
- 38 Annuity Loans approved totaling €4,019,748 in 2015 compared to 41 in 2014
- 6 Reconstruction Loan Applications received, 5 approved at a cost of €53,700
- No Tenant Purchase Loans in 2015
- 3 Caravan Loans approved totaling €18,570
- All loans vetted by the Housing & Sustainable Communities Agency and in house team.
- Local Property Tax due and paid on Local Authority houses amounted to €194,040 for 2016.

Housing Private Grants:

- An allocation of €1,523,562 was expended in 2015.
- 209 applications covering the three schemes were paid out in 2015.
- Housing Adaptations Grant - €826,976 paid out to 72 applicants averaging €11,485 each
- Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant - €514,950 paid out to 100 applicants averaging €5,149 each.
- Mobility Aid Grant - €181,635 paid out to 37 applicants averaging €4,909 each
- HOP grants accounts for 34% of applications paid in 2015
- Advertised the opening of HOP applications in November 2015 with 216 applications received.
- 229 applications on hands at 31/12/2015 estimated at €1,829,112.

Community & Estate Management Services:

- Council adopted the Estate Enhancement Plan 2015-2020.
- €6,000 support for LA Tidy Estates Competition.

- Winners of the 2014 scheme included;
- **Small Estates;**
 - 1st. St. Patrick's Close, Mullinavat
 - 2nd Fr Raftice Place, Moneenroe
 - 3rd. Brandon Crescent, Graiguenamanagh,
- **Medium Estates,**
 - 1st . Assumption Place, Urlingford.
 - 2nd. Friars Hill, Graiguenamanagh
 - 3rd. St. Mary's Avenue, Urlingford
- **Large Estates**
 - 1st . Woodview, Freshford
 - 2nd. Ashfield & Ashfield East, Kilkenny
 - 3rd Chapelfield, Urlingford
- Estate Management Grants total spend €76,000.
- 44 active Residents Associations in the City and County were supported in 2015.
- 156 complaints were dealt with by the Anti Social Behavior Officer
- Five larger scale estate/community enhancement projects were identified for development and completed in 2015as follows:.
 - Tober Bride, Graiguenamangh,
 - Church Avenue Castlecomer,
 - Halting Site, Hebron Road,
 - Hebron Park, Kilkenny
 - Seville Grove, Margaretsfield

2.3 Finance & Economic Development

Finance

The Finance department is responsible for the overall control and management of the Council's finances. The main services being provided under this directorate are Financial Planning & Control, Income Collection, Treasury Management, Procurement, Economic Development and Motor Taxation.

Income & Expenditure Account Statement.

The Income & Expenditure Account summarises the expenditure on the day to day services provided by the council and provides details of how this expenditure is funded. A deficit of €68,000 was brought forward on the Income & Expenditure Account to 2015. This deficit was reduced by €50,000 during 2015 as strict budgetary controls were maintained by the Council on a total expenditure budget of €73 million.

Capital Project Funding Arrangements

The Capital Account summarises expenditure by the Council on capital projects and how those projects are funded. The Council requires an identified funding source before it can initiate capital projects. The total expenditure on the Capital Account in 2015 was €38.2 million. Projects are funded through a variety of sources and the Council's ability to progress capital projects across all its service areas is very dependent on sufficient funds being available to commit to the projects in question. A new Capital Budget will be prepared in the second quarter of 2016 for the period 2016 to 2018.

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2015

The Council has maintained a strong balance sheet at the end of 2015. The Council is devoting considerable time and effort to debt collection, and the Council's performance in this area compares very well against other Local Authorities. This is reflected in the improved collection levels and decreasing arrears in the major income streams.

The total bank loans (excluding housing related loans) outstanding as at December 2015 was €1.2 million.

Economic Development

The role of the Economic Development Unit is to promote Kilkenny as a location in which to invest and to conduct business.

Economic Development is a combination of the business environment and the social setting as a place to live, work and play. This is the key of the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2016- 2021 Vision Statement “*Kilkenny is a great place to live, work and play; offering its citizens dignity, security and the capacity to participate to their maximum potential.*”

The LECP is the strategic plan for aligning all Economic development activity and community development over the coming five years. The LECP was adopted in December 2015 by the Council.

The plan outlines 9 strategic goals for Economic Development between 2016 and 2021:

- **Goal 1:** Support the Enterprise Economy - strengthen the local enterprise base, and thereby encourage job creation and multi-sectoral employment potential.
- **Goal 2:** Facilitate Innovation and Entrepreneurship - provide an integrated support structure for enhanced levels of enterprise start-up and growth.
- **Goal 3:** Enhance Visitor Experiences - support, co-ordinate and optimise the visitor experience potential across the county.
- **Goal 4:** Provide for enhanced levels of Educational Attainment and Skills Development - encourage and support up-skilling, job mobility and enterprise creation in key economic growth sectors.
- **Goal 5:** Develop the Rural Economy - increase the levels of rural economic activity and build sustainability into the rural economy.
- **Goal 6:** Improve Access and Communications Infrastructures - encourage integrated transport systems through the use of existing and new infrastructure innovations, and increase the use of communications technologies through enhanced infrastructure and skilled communities.
- **Goal 7:** Foster Leadership and Increase Local Capacity - develop leadership capacity in promoting economic and integrated development.
- **Goal 8:** Protect and Utilise the Natural, Cultural and Built Environment - and support biodiversity and the protection and enhancement of local heritage and culture, support energy efficiency and maximise the circular economy potential.
- **Goal 9:** Contribute to Regional Growth and International Potential - contribute to the growth of the region and expand the international reach of the local economy.

Promoting Kilkenny

- The economic development unit continued to promote Kilkenny in 2015, both on-line and off-line:
- Print media – Advertorials and articles in trade and industry publications. Lightbox posters in Waterford Regional Airport.
- Outdoor & Radio – Combined media campaign in the UK with Wexford & Waterford Councils, Waterford Regional Airport and VLM Airlines.

- Online – www.InvestKilkenny.ie updates and maintenance throughout the year, continually promoting Kilkenny with news and events stories.
- Social media channels of Invest Kilkenny – daily promotion of Kilkenny, audience engagement and increasing followership.

The Economic Development unit works closely with the IDA, promoting suitable property solution within the county to potential IDA clients. This is an intensive aspect of the workload for the unit and is critical in attracting new enterprises into the County. Kilkenny City and Belview Port area are the IDA backed priority sites within the County.

Local Business

The Councils economic unit works closely with local businesses to assist in networking, making contacts and introductions, sharing information and supporting access to state supports and public procurement. This activity continued throughout 2015.

Local businesses were also the focus for the development of the newly adopted “*Business Incentive Scheme*”. The scheme adopted in December 2015, provides for a grant award for new businesses and expanding businesses over their first three years of operation in a new location that has been vacant for over 6 months.

Research

The Economic Development unit carried out extensive research in the preparation of the economic elements of the LECP. This valuable research will be made available over 2016 to businesses to help identify opportunities for growth and job creation. The research is also a key factor in attracting new businesses to Kilkenny.

Action Plan for Jobs South East

The action plan for Jobs for the South East has a series of actions, which Kilkenny County Council are signed up to. The unit has taken these on in 2015 and will work closely with the implementation committee in 2016.

Abbey Creative Quarter

The former brewery site will be the largest commercial asset that Kilkenny County Council has at its disposal to support the development of the economy locally. The unit has been actively engaged in 2015 in promoting the development of the site to potential investors and tenants.

Local Enterprise Office

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) was established within Kilkenny County Council in 2014, and replaces the former County Enterprise Board (CEB). All of the support services provided by the CEB are now available from the LEO. The Council used to be the place where business people only went to seek advice on rates, planning permissions, roads, waste permits and so on. However, through the LEO, the County Council now takes a much more proactive role in helping small businesses to start, to develop and to grow. The LEO provides a ‘first stop shop’ business support service to anyone in business or thinking of setting up a business.



The Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh; Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council, Colette Byrne; Head of Finance, Martin Prendiville; and Head of Enterprise, Sean McKeown with winning entrepreneurs who participated in the IBYE Awards in 2015.

The LEO operates under the terms of a service level agreement between the Council and Enterprise Ireland. The LEO is required to develop and implement an annual action plan setting out the key services, actions, projects, programmes and targets it intends to deliver each year.

The annual action plan is submitted to the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism, and the SPC provides oversight of the implementation of the action plan on behalf of Kilkenny County Council, and LEO staff provides progress reports on the implementation of the Development Plan to the SPC at their quarterly meetings. The LEO also submits an annual metrics return to EI. The LEO has the services of a specialist Approvals & Evaluation Committee to assess applications for financial support.

The LEO delivers a wide range of supports and services to start-up and established business owners, while nurturing the development of a supportive environment for enterprise in the County. The supports provided by the LEO are divided into 2 main Measures, namely Measure 1 (financial supports) and Measure 2 (soft supports). The following is a review of activity and outputs in both Measures in 2015.

Review of Activity in 2015

Measure 1

The LEO received a total of 25 project applications for Measure 1 financial assistance in 2015. 23 (or 92%) of these applications were approved a cumulative total of almost €430,000 (see Table 1). The 23 projects supported have the potential to create 43 new full-time jobs when fully implemented. This represents a cost per job of just under €10,000.

Table 1: Summary of Measure 1 Activity 2015

Measure 1 Financial Assistance	2015 Output
Number of Grant Applications Received	25
Number of Feasibility Study Grant Applications Approved	5
Number of Priming Grant Applications Approved	10
Number of Business Expansion Grant Applications Approved	8
Number of Grant Applications Refused	1
Number of Grant Applications Withdrawn	1
Total Amount Approved	€428,530
Number of New Jobs Associated with Projects Approved	43
Average Cost per Job	€9,966

LEO Kilkenny client Linda Nolan of MyBio Ltd won the overall title at the National Enterprise Awards held in June, 2015. The National Enterprise Awards celebrate the achievements of the 24,000 micro-enterprises from all over the country that have been supported by the LEOs over the past 20 years. The company is based in the Kilkenny Research and Innovation Centre in St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny and is now one of the country's most proactive suppliers of research products. The company currently employs 4 people. LEO Kilkenny provided financial support and mentoring assistance to Linda to establish and expand her company.



L-R: Sean McKeown, Head of Enterprise, LEO Kilkenny; Linda Nolan, MyBio Ltd; Richard Bruton, TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment.

LEO Kilkenny also had a national winner in Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) Competition held in December, 2015. 24-year-old Blaine Doyle of GlowDx won the ‘Best Business Idea’ Award for his business idea to develop a tool-kit to diagnose Neglected Tropical Diseases. The IBYE Competition is organised by the national network of LEOs, and aims to find the country’s best entrepreneur under the age of 30. A total of 1,400 entrepreneurs nationwide entered the competition in 2015.



L-R: Ann Phelan, TD, Minister for Rural Affairs; Blaine Doyle, GlowDx Richard Bruton, TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment; Sean McKeown, Head of Enterprise, LEO Kilkenny.

Measure 2

632 entrepreneurs participated in the 64 core enterprise training and management development programmes organised and delivered by The LEO in 2015 (see Table 2). 81 people completed a Start Your Own Business (SYOB) Programme run by the LEO in 2015. The SYOB Programme gives participants an introduction to all of the main issues encountered when starting and running a business, from researching and planning their idea through to developing a sales strategy and preparing financial projections.

Table 3: Summary of Measure 2 Activity 2015

Measure 2 Supports	2015 Output
Number of Entrepreneurs availing of Business Advisory Session	422
Number of Start Your Own Business (SYOB) Programmes Run	4
Number of Participants on SYOB Programmes	81
Number of Entrepreneurs availing of Mentoring Support	288
Number of Schools participating in Student Enterprise Awards	13
Number of students participating in Student Enterprise Awards	574
Number of core Enterprise Training Programmes Run	64
Number of Participants on core Programmes	632

Number of Specialist Support Grants Approved	42
Number of Entrepreneurs assisted to apply to MFI	13
Number of Entrepreneurs assisted to apply to Smart Option	17
Number of Trading On-Line Vouchers (TOV) Approved	42
Number of Businesses supported under InterTradeIreland Going North Initiative	9
Number Attending Careers & Opportunities Fair	750

288 entrepreneurs availed of mentoring support from the LEO in 2015. The LEO maintains a panel of specialist mentors and their role is to share their experience and learning to help clients develop the capability to solve their own problems. The mentor helps clients explore their goals and ideas for the future and helps them to realistically appraise their current situation.

574 students from 13 second level schools in the county participated in the Student Enterprise Awards (SEA) Competition in the 2014/2015 academic year. The SEA is the primary vehicle for exposing young people to enterprise and giving them a better understanding and appreciation of what is involved in running a business.

The LEO helped 11 businesses to make application for loan finance to Micro-Finance Ireland (MFI). The LEO continued the partnership (begun in 2009) with St. Canice's Kilkenny Credit Union and assisted a further 17 businesses to make application for a small business loan. The loan scheme was rebranded in 2015 as the 'Smart Option' Business Loan. This new loan product provides a flexible and convenient source of credit for those looking to set-up or expand their business. Since the loan scheme was launched in July 2009, almost 90 businesses have been approved loan finance of almost €2 million. Many of these businesses were unable to access credit from the mainstream banks.

The LEO approved a further 42 Trading On-Line Vouchers (TOVs) to local businesses in 2015. While there is currently an increasing trend in online spending, it is estimated that only 23% of small businesses in Ireland have an eCommerce capability. Furthermore, it is estimated that of all online purchases made in Ireland 70% are done in overseas markets. The Government introduced the TOV Scheme operated through the LEO network to address this situation and to support more small businesses to develop their ecommerce presence. An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny presented the 1,000th TOV to John Lawton from JL Intelligent Cooling Systems, Kells, Co. Kilkenny in July 2015.



L-R: Sean McKeown, Head of Enterprise, LEO Kilkenny; Taoiseach Enda Kenny, TD; Alex White, TD, Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources; and John Lawton, JL Intelligent Cooling Systems Ltd.

The LEO organised a Careers & Opportunities Fair in June, 2015. Almost 120 job vacancies were on offer from local employers, including LEO clients, and over 750 people visited the Fair on the day. The LEO also linked up with Kilkenny County Council Library Services to run regular Business Advisory Clinics through the County Library Network for the first time in 2015. The initiative is aimed at improving access to the wide range of support services available from the LEO, in particular business information and advice to entrepreneurs in rural towns.

LEO Kilkenny organised the first Food Academy Start Programme for food and drink producers based in the county in 2015. The Food Academy is a new training programme aimed at supporting and nurturing start-up food businesses. Bord Bia, SuperValu and the LEO network have joined forces on this initiative to provide a consistent level of food marketing knowledge to new and early-stage food businesses. The programme is designed to guide companies from start-up to their first retail listing. The participants who successfully completed the programme in Kilkenny last year decided to establish #tastekilkenny to exhibit in the Local Enterprise Village at the National Ploughing Championships held in Ratheniska, Co. Laois. Following on from the success of the Ploughing, the group also exhibited at Savour Kilkenny and BITE 2015. #tastekilkenny includes some well-established artisan food and drink producers, namely Goatsbridge Trout Farm, The Little Mill Company and Highbank Orchard, along with relatively newcomers: Mooncoin Home Preserves, Bernie's Farmhouse Desserts, Made in Heaven, Inistioge Food Company and Costello's Brewing Company.



Members of the #tastekilkenny food network exhibiting at the National Ploughing Championships

The LEO supported 9 local businesses to participate in Inter Trade Ireland’s “Going North” Initiative, which is aimed at helping businesses to explore and target new business opportunities in Northern Ireland. The LEO were also involved in a range of initiatives aimed at promoting County Kilkenny as a good location for inward investment. In particular, the LEO played a proactive role in helping to land 2 FDI projects to Kilkenny in 2015, namely Trade Mark Now and CipherTech EU. These companies had a combined employment of almost 50 at the end of 2015. The LEO will continue this role in conjunction with the Economic Development Unit of Kilkenny County Council.

Annual Employment and Development Survey

The LEO Annual Employment and Development Survey (AE&DS), 2015 showed that there were 247 companies on the LEO portfolio of grant-assisted companies. These companies accounted for a total of 813 full-time and 446 part-time jobs (i.e. total of 1,036 full-time job equivalents). This represented an increase of 75 full-time job equivalents compared to the AE&DS for 2014 (Table 3).

Table 3: Comparative Summary of the Annual Employment and Development Survey (AE&DS)

Annual Employment & Development Survey	2014	2015	Change
Total Number of Companies on Portfolio	240	247	+7
Total Number of Full-Time Jobs Associated with Companies on Portfolio	768	813	+45
Total Number of Part-Time Jobs Associated with Companies on Portfolio	386	446	+60
Total Full-Time Job Equivalents Associated with Companies on Portfolio^[1]	961	1,036	+75

^[1] Note: The Full-Time Job Equivalents are based on 2 Part-Time Jobs equating to 1 Full-Time Job Equivalent

South East Action Plan for Jobs

The South East Action Plan for Jobs 2015-17 (SEAPJ) was launched in September, 2015 and covers Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. The overall aim of the SEAPJ is to create an additional 25,000 jobs in the region by the end of 2017. There are 194 actions in the Plan to help achieve this ambitious target and the key sectors identified for further growth include agri-food, tourism, life sciences, manufacturing, retail and financial services/business services. Most of these sectors are strongly represented in County Kilkenny. Kilkenny County Council are represented on the Implementation Committee for the SEAPJ by the Chief Executive and the Head of Enterprise.

The LEOs in the south east are to stimulate a 30% increase in the number of new business start-ups in the region as part of the SEAPJ. The Heads of Enterprise of the 5 LEOs in the south east have met to discuss the 48 actions listed in the SEAPJ with which LEOs have been assigned either a lead or support role, and have decided on the best way to initiate/ progress each of these actions. The LEO, where appropriate, will integrate the actions in the Local Enterprise Development Plan for 2016, and the LEO will provide regular reports on progress to the Implementation Committee. Actions identified in the SEAPJ have also been incorporated in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 for County Kilkenny.

Local Economic and Community Plan-Economic Actions

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for County Kilkenny, 2016-2021 was launched in December, 2015. The LECP represents the culmination of over nine months' work involving extensive research, public consultation, analysis, workshops and meetings. The overarching objective of the economic dimension of the Plan is to create conditions to support business and job creation. Strong economies are essential to the development of sustainable communities.

The Council's SPC for Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism will now work to provide the supports necessary for the implementation of the 63 economic actions contained in the plan over the next 6 years. The delivery of the economic actions will be critical to the overall success of the LECP. One of the actions the SPC have already brought forward is the development of an incentive scheme for the occupation of vacant commercial units to support start-ups, and the regeneration of streetscapes in the towns and villages throughout the county. Another action in the plan that is already being progressed is the development of the former brewery site in Kilkenny City, to provide in particular office space for inward investment and indigenous enterprise, and to expand our third level education and research capability.

The successful implementation of the LECP will be dependent upon the support of local businesses, communities, organisations and statutory agencies working collectively to deliver on the actions. The LEO has been assigned lead responsibility for many of the economic and enterprise actions contained in the LECP.



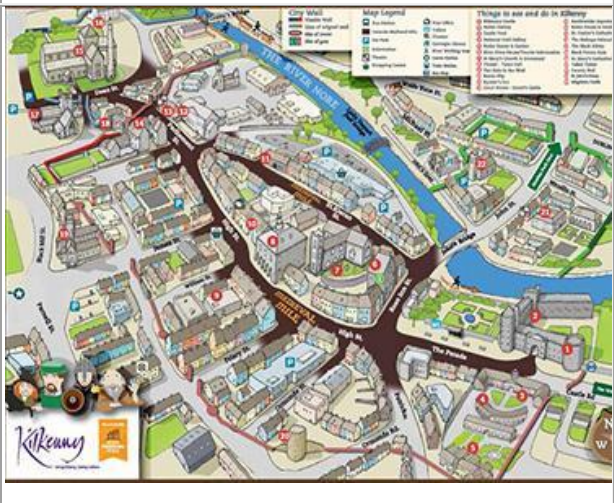
TOURISM

Kilkenny County Council supports Kilkenny Tourism with dedicated administrative & financial expertise and direct financial support. In addition the Council provides a funding scheme for Festivals.

The Council plays a pivotal role in the delivery and co-ordination of tourism products in Kilkenny. The Council provides the mechanism and administrative support to drive the Tourism agenda – from promotional campaigns to marketing initiatives to festival promotion and contributing funding to same.

- Improved tourism infrastructure regarding streetscaping, visually enhancing our towns and villages for example improvements to Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh, and working to develop the Visitor experience
- Worked with Failte Ireland on signage and product development for Ireland's Ancient East initiative, promoting the Medieval Mile as a hero site
- Engaged with the Bid Team in promoting Kilkenny as a key partner for the Capital of Culture /three sisters 2020 Bid
- Supported rural development initiatives such as the Castlecomer Discovery Park Zip wire project
- Provided administrative support to the Kilkenny Tourism Board and co-ordinated procurement of communications and PR Tenders
- Provided website support and content management support to cross promoting PR/Communication campaigns through the Kilkenny.ie/KilkennyCounty Council/InvestKilkenny websites and social media networks
- Supported regional PR campaigns eg Waterford Airport Lightbox visual campaign
- Co-funded and marketed regional communications initiatives with neighbouring counties at Birmingham
- Managed and administered the IPB/Failte Ireland/Kilkenny CoCo Diaspora Community Tourism Grant Scheme
- Developed a promotional video and booklet with Connect Ireland to promote Kilkenny as a tourism and business investment location
- Met with a number of delegations from neighbouring counties to showcase the Kilkenny Tourism story, in addition to meeting bloggers and journalists to maintain Kilkenny's high media profile
- Entered and participated in national and international competitions to promote Kilkenny

Kilkenny Tourism Activity 2015

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Plan 2015 	<p>Four themed campaigns were rolled out during 2015, each driven by separate communications campaigns. Special e-supplements were produced to promote activities during these campaigns.</p> <p>The 4 Themes were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Romantic Medieval Adventurous Artisan Food & Craft 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Festivals & Events 	<p>Medieval Week and Kilkenny Free Day proved very popular again in 2015. Both new events were managed by Kilkenny Tourism members and promoted via radio interviews, the Tourism website and associated online marketing, newspaper advertising and flyer circulation. Kilkenny Free Day was oversubscribed and Medieval week received extensive domestic coverage</p> <p>Kilkenny Tourism works closely with all festival & event committees to promote Kilkenny's unique festivals throughout the year.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Guide & Maps 	<p>A revised brochure was produced in 2015. 50,000 copies were printed, of which 45,000 have been distributed.</p> <p>100,000 City maps printed, 80,000 were distributed to members, businesses and venues in city & county as well as via a number of tour operators/coach trips visiting the city.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade Shows & Promotions 	<p>To kick start the year, Kilkenny Tourism attended the Holiday World Show at the RDS in January. Other shows attended during the year were the Over 50's, BITE food event and National Craft & Design Fair. Special promotional material was produced for distribution at these shows</p> <p>Kilkenny Tourism were privileged to secure a stand at the World Travel Market in London under the Tourism Ireland showcase. Participation at national and international trade events led to positive engagement with media, international buyers and domestic visitors.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitions and achievements 	<p>Kilkenny Tourism entered The Tourism Town and Foodie Town competitions again in 2015. While not winning the overall awards Kilkenny was shortlisted in the top 10 in both competitions. This was Kilkenny's fourth consecutive success in the Tourism Towns competition, winning the National award in 2013 and highly commended in 2014 and 2015.</p>	

Festivals & Events in Kilkenny in 2015.

Kilkenny County Council allocated funding to provide Festival and Event Grants together with Community and Cultural Grants to groups and organisations engaged in the development and promotion of events and the provision of community and cultural developments at local level.

These grant schemes aim to promote and support local festivals and Community groups and to support and assist those events that have a tourism, cultural/artistic or community perspective, the objective being to provide funding for a diverse range of projects to ensure that the financial resources available are used to the maximum benefit of the community.

To publicly acknowledge the dedication and hard work across the County of Kilkenny, Kilkenny County Council hosted a Grants Presentation Event in the Rivercourt Hotel, John Street, Kilkenny. At this event, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Pat Millea

and other Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council, presented Grant Award Certificates to all groups and organisations that were allocated funding under these Schemes.



Recipients of Community and Cultural Grants with Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Pat Millea. The Grant Recipients were as follows:

Kilkenny Arts Festival, Kilkenny Tourism, Rothe House and Garden, Watergate Theatre, Drum Youth Centre, Castlecomer Discovery Park, Kilkenny Archives, Castlecomer Enterprise Centre, Rural Transport Programme, Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement, Garda Youth Diversion Project, Ossory Youth and Drugs Outreach Programme



Recipients of Festival and Events Assistance Grants with Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr. Pat Millea. The Grant Recipients were as follows:

Kilkenny Roots Festival, Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann, Thomastown Community River Trust, Cartoon Saloon/Butler Gallery, SUBTITLE European Film Festival, Kilkenomics, The Sky Cat Laughs Comedy Festival, Kilkenny City St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, Savour Kilkenny Food Festival 2015, Abhainn Rí Festival.



Recipients of Festival and Events Assistance Grants with Cathaoirleach of Municipal District of Piltown, Cllr. Eamon Aylward. The Grant Recipients were as follows:

Eigse Sliabh Rua Committee, Mullinavat Community Group Ltd., Kilmacow Community Sports Complex Ltd., Windgap Community Development Ltd., Iverk Show



Recipients of Festival and Events Assistance Grants with Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick and Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr Pat Millea. The Grant Recipients were as follows:

Urlingford St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, Mill Family Resource Centre, Castlecomer Wellie Race, Irish National Sheepdog Trial 2015 and Clogh National School Project.



Recipients of Festival and Events Assistance Grants with Deputy Mayor of Municipal District of Kilkenny City and Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr Pat Millea. The Grant Recipients were as follows:

Kilkenny Rugby Club, Inistioge Tidy Towns, Inistioge Summer Festival, Goresbridge St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, Enable Ireland/Rockfall Festival, Kilkenny Music Festival, Bennettsbridge O'Gorman Loop Walking Festival, Graiguenamanagh 10K and Fun Run, Kilkenny Gospel Choir Festival, Kilkenny Fringe Festival, Discovering Kilkenny, Military Heritage & History, Graiguenamanagh Town of Books Festival, Kilkenny Tradfest 2015 and House of Treasure Concepts/AfroCultural Extravaganza

2.4 Water Services & Environment.

The services provided under this Directorate include

Operation & maintenance of public drinking water supplies

Operation & maintenance of waste water facilities

Provision of new or improved water & waste water infrastructure

Support to Group Water Schemes

Waste Management Services

Community Involvement & Tidy Towns Support

Water Safety

Veninary Services

Animal Welfare & Pound facilities

Burial Grounds

Sustainable Energy Programmes



Castlecomer Wastewater Treatment Plant - Works in Progress

Water Services

Since 2014, Irish Water has been the Water Services Authority for all public water and waste water schemes. Kilkenny County Council continues to be the Water Services Authority for the Rural/Group Water Sector.

Under the twelve year Service Level Agreement between Irish Water and Kilkenny County Council, the Council undertakes the day to day delivery of the public water and waste water services on behalf of Irish Water. Irish Water funds and macro manages the service delivery, while the Council provides the staff and micro manages the service delivery.

The Service Level Agreement covers;

- public water and waste water treatment,
- public water and waste water networks,
- project management of water and waste water capital projects.

The Council retained responsibility, on a transitional agency basis, for non domestic water billing and revenue collection in 2015. Irish Water expects to take full responsibility for this function, in 2016. Council staff involved in the delivery of water services continue to be direct employees of the Council. Irish Water has assumed direct responsibility for communications, public relations, reporting to the EPA, procurement and payments of suppliers, as well as overall funding of the sector.

Operations & Maintenance:

Kilkenny County Council manages 23 public drinking water supplies and 35 public waste water treatment schemes on behalf of Irish Water. In 2015, 9.2 billion litres of water (25 million litres/day) was supplied through Kilkenny's public water supply network to approximately 65,000 customers.

All water and waste water operations and maintenance works are now financed by Irish Water and undertaken on their behalf by Kilkenny County Council.

2014 is latest year for which the EPA has published its Drinking Water Quality Report. The 2015 report will be published later in 2016.

For the fourth year in a row, Kilkenny's Public Water Schemes achieved 100% microbiological compliance in 2014 (National average 99.9%). 99.3 % compliance was achieved for chemical parameters (National Average 99.4%). There were no water restrictions, or boil water notices on Kilkenny's public supplies in 2014. Nationally there were 199 boil water notices and 15 water restriction notices affecting 205,516 people in 2014.

Two Kilkenny public drinking water supplies, Inistioge and Radestown, remain on the EPA's Remedial Action List (RAL). Both are included because of elevated levels Trihalomethanes (THM), a by-product of the chlorination process. Both RAL schemes are on Irish Water's capital scheme priority list.

In line with recent years, the level of environmental compliance achieved at Kilkenny's waste water treatment plants has continued to improve. This overall trend is illustrated by the improvement in results recorded in the EPA's Annual Urban Waste Water Reports.

Water Conservation:

Kilkenny's Water Conservation team continued to make steady progress during 2015 in reducing the volume of unaccounted for water (UFW) on the public water supply schemes throughout the County. UFW includes water lost as a result of leakage from mains and fittings, unauthorised connections and excessive consumption by the domestic and non domestic customers.

When the water conservation programme commenced in 2009, the volume of water produced and supplied across the public water networks was 31,800m³/day. The average volume of water produced and supplied during Q4 of 2015 was 24,336m³/day, representing an overall reduction in production requirements since 2009 of 7,464m³ (enough water to supply 16,000 homes).

In 2015, a 1.5% reduction in production requirements was achieved and the UFW, expressed as a percentage of total water produced was just under 38%. This represents the lowest annual figure ever achieved in the county and trend continues downwards for 2016.

In 2015, approximately 700 leaks were identified and repaired during the year, 85% of these leaks were on public mains, with the remainder on the customer side.

These figures are testament to the excellent work carried out by the Water Conservation Team, the Water Services Supervisors and Caretakers who are constantly striving to improve the network and eliminate areas of potential wastage

Capital Programme 2015:

As the Water Services Authority, Irish Water now has responsibility for the Water Services Capital Programme. Kilkenny County Council staff act as project managers for the various projects approved by Irish Water.

Under the Irish Water/Kilkenny County Council Service Level Agreement:

Irish Water have responsibility for:

- Setting targets, investment plans and objectives and formulating strategy for the overall delivery of the Major and Minor Capital Programmes.
- Overall funding and delivery of the Capital Programmes.
- Procurement, budget management and change approval.
- Project Communications.

Kilkenny County Council have responsibility for:

- Provision of project management services for Major & Minor Capital Projects approved by Irish Water.
- Making available all known information regarding past performance and current status of assets which may be under consideration for capital expenditure.
- Where requested, undertake procurement activities on behalf of Irish Water.
- Reporting on project progress as required.

Water Capital Projects

- Inistioge Water Supply Scheme: This project involves taking a water supply from a new groundwater source in Thomastown, which would augment the existing supply to Thomastown and supply Inistioge. Planning permission for this scheme was granted by Kilkenny County Council, conditions were appealed to ABP. Detailed design was completed and land / wayleave negotiations were well advanced in 2015.
- Outrath Reservoir Upgrade and Associated watermains: Tender documents for this project were finalised in 2015. It is expected that before the end of Q1 2016, IW will advertise a tender for the construction of a new reservoir at Outrath, a booster station at Springhill and network improvements in the general area.
- Kilkenny City Water Supply Scheme: This scope of this project is currently under review. The revised capital project is likely to involve the construction of a new intake on the Nore at Troyswood, the upgrading of the water treatment plant at Troyswood to treat all the water supplied in Kilkenny City area and a new treated water rising main between Troyswood and the existing reservoirs at Radestown.
- Substantial upgrade works took place in Clonassy WTP (serving the Mooncoin RWSS) in 2015.
- A new high-efficiency high lift pump was successfully installed at Troyswood WTP
- A programme of improvement of disinfection facilities across the water treatment plants in County Kilkenny was tendered in 2015 and works are due to commence early in 2016.

Waste Water:

Freshford, Johnstown, Goresbridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrades:

Construction works on these three plants commenced in 2014. To date, Civil, Mechanical and Electrical works are substantially completed on all three schemes. The Freshford plant was officially opened by the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, Cllr Pat Millea in May, 2015. Sewerage is expected to be connected to the new plants in both Johnstown and Goresbridge in early 2016. All three plants are expected to be completed in Q2, 2016



Freshford Waste Water Treatment Plant

Castlecomer Stoneyford, Urlingford Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrades: Works commenced on the upgrade of these three plants in 2015 and are expected to be completed by the middle of 2016.

Kilkenny City (Purcellsinch) Waste Water Treatment Plant: Contracts intended to save energy and which involve the installation of a Medium Voltage Transformer and of a fine bubble diffused air system are expected to commence on site in Q2, 2016.

Upgrade works at **Mooncoin WWTP** to include installation of fine bubble diffused aerators are due to commence on site in February 2016.

A consultant was appointed to design upgrades to **Inistioge and Mullinavat** waste water treatment plants.

Rural Water Programme:

While the EPA is the Supervising Authority for public water supplies, Kilkenny County Council is the Supervising authority for those private water supplies in County Kilkenny, which fall under the drinking water regulations

In 2015, Kilkenny County Council was the Supervising Authority for the following:

- 195 Group Water Schemes, 125 of which are served from their own sources and 70 which are served from public mains.
- 134 Small Private Supplies (SPS), which typically include schools, food premises and rural housing estates.

The Council also manages and allocates Government grants approved under the Rural Water programme for group water and waste water schemes, as well as grants for private wells.

In 2015 approx €876,000 was paid by the Department of the Environment to Kilkenny County Council for works undertaken as part of the rural water programme as follows:

- € 118,000 for Group Water Scheme Conservation/Network Upgrades
- € 224,500 for Group Water Scheme Treatment Upgrades
- € 81,000 for Group Water Scheme Takeovers
- € 60,100 for Group Sewerage Schemes
- €15,300 for Source Protection Works
- Subsidies towards the operational running costs of Group Water Schemes totalling €262,000 were administered and paid to 55 Group Schemes.
- Approvals were issued for grant applications for the provision of wells to private houses and the sum of €114,000 was paid out in 70 well grants
- Staff costs totalling €90,250 were recouped from the Department to cover the supervision and administration of the rural water programme.

Environmental Services

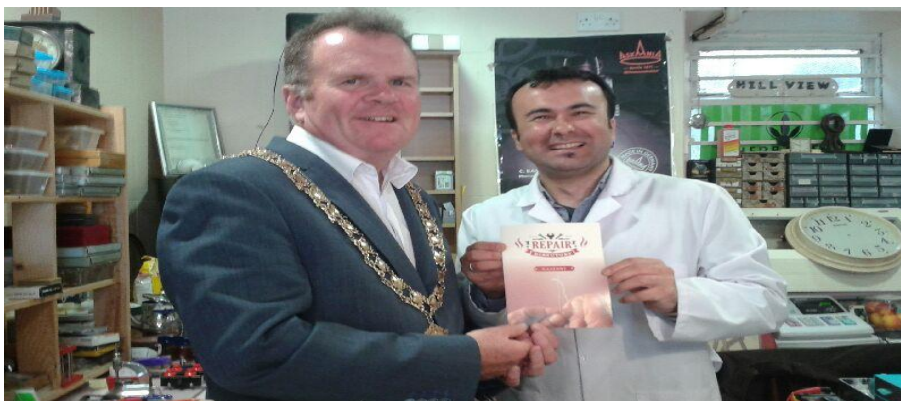
The key aims of the Councils Environment Department are:

- To promote sustainable development, to provide an efficient and environmentally sound waste management infrastructure and implement the Joint South East Waste Management Plan & to maintain proper regulatory and monitoring systems for environmental protection and control of pollution
- The Council has responsibility for over 500 statutory environmental functions, which are contained within over 100 pieces of legislation. The key areas dealt with include:
 - Waste Management
 - Waste Management Planning
 - Dunmore Recycling & Waste Disposal Centre
 - Recycling
 - Enforcement
 - Litter Management
 - Education and Awareness
 - Water Quality & Pollution Control
 - Water Framework Directive
 - Pollution Control and Enforcement
 - Coastal Pollution Planning
 - Water Safety
 - Veterinary Services
 - Burial Grounds
 - Energy

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Southern Waste Management Plan

The Southern Waste Management Plan was adopted in May 2015 and a number of waste prevention campaigns were run to achieve targets and objectives set in the Plan.



- The Kilkenny Repair Directory was launched listing local repair services

- The “Say No to Junk Mail Campaign” encouraged householders to reduce their recycling volumes by refusing unsolicited postal mail
- A pre-Christmas Campaign advised householders on how to prevent food waste during the festive period



- Kilkenny County Council in association with the local charity shops and the Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce ran a secondary school Christmas competition to encourage teenagers to up-cycle second hand clothes to create Christmas jumpers
- Kilkenny Council participated in social media regional campaigns, including one focusing on bread waste, the other on how to recycle better in the home

Dunmore Recycling & Waste Disposal Centre 2015

- Clean EPA environmental audit, complete compliance with waste licence resulting in no complaints from the local community and no adverse effects on the surrounding environment.
- 1114 tonnes of recyclable material was collected in 2015 which is up from 1070 in 2014
- Tonnages of Cardboard, Paper, Plastic and Metal all increased by 6 tonne, 17 tonne, 5 tonne and 40 tonne respectively.
- Waste quantities received at the site were up from 2578 tonnes in 2014 to 2676 tonnes in 2015. While the aim is to reduce the amounts of MSW waste, this increase was due to the growth in customers using the site. As is seen above the recycling quantities increased in a similar fashion.
- Leachate disposal to waste water treatment was at an all time low in 2015 with approximately 1800 tonnes of Leachate sent for disposal.
- The use of social media to advertise the site was adopted in 2015 and currently has attracted 147 followers to the sites Facebook page.
- 825 people were reached through social media across 10 posts relating to the site. This is a figure which will grow in the future as social media is more widely used by the site.



New GAA Training pitches on former landfill lands at Dunmore.

Council Recycling Services

- Dunmore Recycling Centre continued to serve the community providing a cost effective waste management service.
- Newrath Saturday Recycling Service was suspended for a short period during 2015 and it was relocated to the Piltown Community Centre in November. It continues to operate each Saturday between 10am-3pm accepting paper, cardboard and plastics
- A network of 42 Bottle Banks operate throughout the county and are serviced by a cleaning contractor to ensure they do not negatively impact their local environment. Just over 1,374 tonnes of glass and 81 tonnes of cans were collected from these sites in 2015. The regional tender for servicing of the recycling facilities continued in 2015.
- WEEE Ireland in partnership with Kilkenny County Council complete a number of mobile collections throughout the county to assist the public to recycle their electrical appliances. In 2015 ten collections were completed yielding a weight of 75 tonnes.

Litter Management Plan

The Kilkenny County Council Litter Plan was adopted in June 2015 and a number of anti-litter campaigns were run to achieve targets and objectives set in the Plan.

- Kilkenny participated in the national Gum Litter Taskforce Campaign, it was launched locally in August 2015 with the assistance of Mayor Cllr Joe Malone.
- The Green Dog Walker Campaign continued throughout the county encouraging dog owners to pick up after their dog. By December 2015 over 500 people have pledged to clean up after their dog.
- The “Talking Lamp Post” initiative encouraged walkers to bin litter and clean up after their dog in 8 locations throughout 2015 including Urlingford, Ferrybank, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Kilkenny City.
- The National Spring Clean was launched by Chairman Cllr Pat Millea in April with the assistance of Model, Sarah McGovern. Over 120 groups participated throughout the county.
- The Litter Waste Land BEAT FM radio campaign run the previous year was shortlisted for the Chambers Ireland Local Government Awards 2015 under the category “Joint Local Authority Initiative”

Enforcement

- 980 Environment Complaints were received, all were inspected and appropriate action was taken to resolve each issue
- Covert cameras were deployed 159 times in a variety of litter black spots including bring banks
- The Enforcement Officers issued some 41 fixed penalty notices for litter offences
- Payment of fixed Penalty Notices yielded €1,555 in 2015
- Payment from court cases yielded €3932.89 in 2015
- 1481 inspections of a variety of facilities were completed under the RMCEI plan.
- 96 enforcement procedures were taken as a result

2015 Awards and Achievements

IBAL

Kilkenny was assessed as cleaner than European norms and came third in the Irish Business against Litter League table.

Tidy Towns & Community Awards



- 2015 saw the establishment of the Kilkenny Tidy Towns Forum; a forum to provide support to active tidy town groups across the county. 4 forum meetings were held, each providing an expert speaker and discussion time for groups to discuss topics of interest and relevant to their volunteer efforts.
- The national tidy towns results for groups across the county saw an encouraging increase of scores. Kilkenny City retained its gold medal, Tullahought retained its bronze medal and Inisitoge was awarded a prestigious silver medal for the first time in the competition.
- Kilkenny City represented Ireland in the International Competition, Communities in Bloom; a panel of adjudicators visited the city and gave a special commendation to Dunmore Recycling Centre.

Education Awareness

- 28 schools in Kilkenny renewed their green flag in 2015 and 69 schools now fly a green flag in County Kilkenny
- The Spring Educational Campaign is a mechanism to provide additional environmental education support through the provision of specialists to conduct environmental primary school workshops. 28 workshops were organised by Kilkenny County Council in 2015 and covered themes such as biodiversity, litter and waste management.
- SEAI completed 5 days of Energy Workshops for primary schools on request of Kilkenny County Council and focused on energy conservation and climate change. 10 schools were distributed Energy Educational Packs to assist teachers to explore the topic of energy and climate change in the class room.

WATER QUALITY & POLLUTION CONTROL

Water Framework Directive & River Basin Management



- Kilkenny and Tipperary County Council were appointed as joint Lead Authority for preparation, consultation and implementation of the River Basin Management Plans 2017 to 2021. A new National Water Framework Directive Office was set up and recruitment commenced.
- Kilkenny County Council along with the other local authorities agreed to undertake surveillance and operational monitoring as part of Water Framework Directive (WFD) requirements. This work had previously been undertaken by the EPA. Planning and provision for this work was undertaken in 2015 with the monitoring to commence in 2016.
- The Implementation Plan for County Kilkenny which sets out the specific measures which must be undertaken in County Kilkenny to ensure compliance with WFD,

continued to form the framework for inspection planning in 2015. Septic tank inspections were planned to comply with the EPA's National Inspection Plan 2015 to 2017 and WFD.

- 22 premises which hold a Section 4 Discharge Licence were inspected in 2015.
- 170 First time Farm Inspections were undertaken by Kilkenny County Council under the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the protection of Waters) Regulations 2014. Approximately 18% were found to be non-compliant with the regulations. 44 follow up inspections were also undertaken.
- A further 70 Farm Inspections were undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine on behalf of Kilkenny County Council in 2015.



- 32 septic tank inspections were undertaken.
- 15 Nutrient Management Plans were received, assessed and approved with conditions in relation to the use of sewage sludge in agriculture.
- 440 written recommendations – primarily providing for the protection of, or improvement to water quality – were issued to the Planning Department in 2015. 30 site inspections were undertaken as part of this work.
- Extensive Surface and Ground Water Monitoring Programme was continued.

Water Safety

A total number of eighteen lifeguards worked on a rota basis for the months of June, July and August 2015 at the following locations:-

- The Meadows, Kilkenny City
- The Weir, Bleach Road, Kilkenny City
- Graiguenamanagh
- Inistioge
- Thomastown

Statistics 2015	
No of swimmers	3013
Accidents Prevented	600
Rescued people	9
Rescued craft	1
First Aid Procedures	620

VETERINARY SERVICES

The Veterinary Service fulfils the food safety service contract between the FSAI and Kilkenny County Council which includes responsibility for the Food Safety Section of the LA Veterinary Service in the Carlow area. The Veterinary Public Health and animal welfare functions include providing official controls/ regulation in small to medium throughput slaughterhouses and small meat processing plants, and the regulation of small poultry slaughtering plants (including on farm slaughter of poultry i.e. seasonal slaughter etc.).

All animals slaughtered for human consumption, in premises approved under food legislation must undergo an Ante Mortem and Post Mortem. All premises supervised under food legislation must have a Food Safety Management System i.e. generally based on HACCP principles. Inspections and audits are carried out on supervised premises to verify compliance with legislation. Samples are taken as part of National Control plans and sometimes as part of investigations. The County Veterinary Officer is involved in interagency planning at regional and national level.

- In 2015, approved slaughterhouses under the Service's supervision slaughtered
- 4,878 cattle, 18,161 sheep and 89,911 poultry.
- 21 food businesses were under the supervision of the Service in 2015
- 29 residue samples were taken as part of the National Residue Control Plan.
- 57 meat, swabs and water samples were taken as official controls.
- 224 hygiene inspections (other than AM/PM Inspections) were done in food premises under the Service's supervision.

Control of Dogs

The Carlow – Kilkenny Dog Shelter is a modern facility which is a joint venture between Carlow County Council and Kilkenny County Council, from which the Carlow – Kilkenny Dog Warden Service operates. It is situated just off the N10 at Garryduff, Paulstown, Co Kilkenny. The Carlow – Kilkenny Dog Warden Service is run by the ISPCA for both Local Authorities which fund it. It fulfils both Local Authorities statutory obligations under the Control of Dogs Act 1986.

A Consultative Committee on Dog Re-homing and Welfare was set up in 2015 which is multi-disciplinary in makeup including elected representatives, Council officials from Carlow

and Kilkenny, the County Veterinary Officer , representatives from Animal Welfare organisations and the IFA. Its focus is to maximise dog re-homing and to assist in maintaining dog welfare standards at the Dog Shelter.

- In 2015, the licences were issued in respect of 6,188 individual dogs, 4 general dog licences and 9 lifetime dog licences.
- There were 16 premises on the Dog Breeding Establishments Register on the 31st December 2015.

Control of Horses

The Kilkenny County Council Control of Horse Bye Laws were reviewed in 2015 and are to come into force in 2016.

- The Control of Horses enforcement team impounded 75 horses and licensed 2 horses in 2015.

Burial Grounds

- Kilkenny County Council has 14 open burial grounds across the County with each having a caretaker in place to manage the record keeping.
- Updated burial ground maps continue to be developed and are distributed to the caretakers on completion.
- It was agreed late in 2016 to undertake a survey of all burial grounds so as to identify the requirement for works of a capital nature

3. 1 Appendix 1 - Schedule of Members Conferences & Training Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>2015 Conference Details & Cllr. Attendance</u>	<u>Location</u>
6-8 Feb 2015	Governments Construction 2020 Strategy Melissa O'Neill, Joe Malone	Wexford
10 Feb 2015	Engaging with the Oireachtas Fidelis Doherty	Dublin
17 Feb 2015	AILG Training Module 1 - Governance of Local Authorities Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Pat Fitzpatrick, Pat Millea, Michael McCarthy, John Brennan, Peter Cleere, David Kennedy, Ger Frisby, Eamon Aylward	Killarney, Co. Kerry
21 Feb 2015	AILG Training Module 1 - Governance of Local Authorities Breda Gardner, Joe Malone, Matt Doran	Arklow, Co. Wicklow
12-13 March 2015	AILG 2nd Annual Conference 2015 Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Pat Dunphy, Michael Doyle, David Kennedy, Breda Gardner, Matt Doran, Joe Malone, Peter Cleere, Michael McCarthy, GerFrisby, Pat Fitzpatrick, Eamon Aylward	Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
20-22 March 2015	Domestic Water Charges Michael Doyle	Carlingford, Co. Louth
10-11 Apr 2015	LAMA Spring Seminar Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Ger Frisby, Peter Cleere, Maurice Shortall, John Brennan, Pat Fitzpatrick, David Kennedy, Kathleen Funchion, Matt Doran, Joe Malone, Michael McCarthy	Tuam, Co. Galway
14 Apr 2015	AILG Training Module 2 Local Economic Development & The Role of the Local Authority Michael McCarthy	Celebridge, Co. Kildare
18 Apr 2015	AILG Training Module 2 - Local Economic Development & The Role of the Local Authority Mary Hilda Cavanagh, John Brennan, David Kennedy, Ger Frisby, Peter Cleere, Kathleen Funchion, Matt Doran, Pat Millea	Limerick
7 May 2015	AILG Training Module 3 - Local Community Development & LCDC's - A New Role for Local Authorities Maurice Shortall, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Pat Fitzpatrick, Breda Gardner, Fidelis Doherty, Ger Frisby, Eamon Aylward	Kilkenny
8-9 May 2015	Crime Prevention & Community Safety Joe Malone, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Peter Cleere	Galway
16 May 2015	AILG Training Module 3 - Local Community Development & LCDC's - A New Role for Local Authorities Peter Cleere, Michael McCarthy, Matt Doran, David Kennedy, Joe Malone	Sligo
5-7 June 2015	EU Support Programmes for Irish Regions Ger Frisby, Michael McCarthy, Breda Gardner, Eamon Aylward	Cllonakilty,

9 June 2015	AILG Training Module 4 - Local Authority Finance & Housing Pat Millea, Michael McCarthy, Michael Doyle, Fidelis Doherty, Eamon Aylward	Dungarvan, Waterford
13 June 2015	AILG Training Module 4 - Local Authority Finance & Housing Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Joe Malone, Peter Cleere, Ger Frisby, John Brennan, Maurice Shortall	Longford
31 July-1 Aug 2015	Changes to Community Development Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Pat Millea	Galway
16 Sept 2015	Environment Ireland Conference Malcolm Noonan	Croke Park, Dublin
25-27 Sept 2015	Mobile Marketing Tourist Destinations Maurice Shortall, John Brennan, David Kennedy, Pat Fitzpatrick	Clonakilty, Co. Cork
1-2 Oct 2015	AILG Autumn Seminar Maurice Shortall, Pat Fitzpatrick, Michael McCarthy, Patrick O'Neill, Breda Gardner, Joe Malone, Pat Dunphy, Ger Frisby, Eamon Aylward, Peter Cleere, David Kennedy, Kathleen Funchion, Melissa O'Neill	Clonakilty, Co. Cork
9-10 Oct 2015	LAMA Conference - The Lobbying Act Pat Dunphy, Fidelis Doherty, Ger Frisby, Peter Cleere, Michael McCarthy, Joe Malone, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Maurice Shortall, Breda Gardner, David Kennedy, Pat Fitzpatrick	Kilkenny
17 Oct 2015	AILG Training Module 5 - Roads, Transportation & Safety Maurice Shortall, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Pat Fitzpatrick, Pat Millea, Michael McCarthy, John Brennan, Peter Cleere, Michael Doyle, Matt Doran, Pat Dunphy, Ger Frisby, Eamon Aylward	Cork
27 Oct 2015	AILG Training Module 5 - Roads, Transportation & Safety David Kennedy, Breda Gardner	Carrick-on- Shannon
4-5 Nov 2015	Local Government Environment Policy Joe Malone	Carlow
6-8 Nov 2015	Consumer Rights Bill Pat Dunphy, Melissa O'Neill	Clonakilty
10 Nov 2015	AILG Training Module 6 - Septic Tanks, Ground Water & Water Pollution & Registration of Lobbying Act 2014 Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Pat Fitzpatrick, Pat Millea, Michael McCarthy, John Brennan, Andrew McGuinness, Peter Cleere, David Kennedy, Michael Doyle, Joe Malone, Pat Dunphy, Ger Frisby, Eamon Aylward, Malcolm Noonan	Ennis
14 Nov 2015	AILG Training Module 6 - Septic Tanks, Ground Water & Water Pollution & Registration of Lobbying Act 2014 Matt Doran, Breda Gardner	Dublin
20-21 Nov 2015	Urban Regeneration & Housing Act 2015 Andrew McGuinness	Galway
27-28 Nov 2015	Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 Andrew McGuinness	Galway
4-6 Dec 2015	A Practical Guide to Budget 2016- Cllr David Kennedy	Clonakilty,

11-13 Dec 2015	EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 Pat Fitzpatrick, John Brennan, Matt Doran, Eamon Aylward	Carlingford, Co. Louth
11-12 Dec 2015	The Town Renewal Plan Peter Cleere, Ger Frisby, Michael McCarthy	Galway
18-20 Dec 2015	Mobile Marketing of Tourist Destinations Breda Gardner	Clonakilty, Co. Cork

Appendix 2

Financial Reports

Details in respect of the Income and Expenditure Account Statement for 2015 will be included in the final Report.
