We are pleased to present on behalf of Offaly County Council the Annual Report for 2012.

This report is a comprehensive look at the services provided by the County Council and the Town Councils in Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore during a very busy and productive year in the life of Offaly Local Authorities.

When it became evident some years ago that the delivery of public services would have to function in the context of an increasingly difficult financial environment, Offaly County Council resolved that it would do its utmost to ensure that the quality and level of services to its customers would continue to be maintained insofar as was practically possible. So not only is the production of this report an important exercise in accountability, but hopefully it will also encourage in the reader a positive reaction to the role played by the County and Town Councils in the lives of the people of Offaly.

Within the report are details of the progress made in advancing the Council’s various infrastructural commitments and projects, including roads, water, sewerage, housing and library services. The report outlines how the Council’s policies and proactive approach promotes and supports local businesses and enterprise while also encouraging small, medium and larger size industries to locate in Offaly. Highlighted in the report is
Council’s ongoing commitment to promote participation in community activities, through the support of both cultural and environmental programmes.

Some of the more noteworthy achievements in 2012 would include:

- Tullamore Waste Water Treatment Plant opened;
- National Waste Collection Permitting Office established with Offaly County Council the single nominated authority for issuing and reviewing Waste Collection Permits;
- Tullamore Central Library refurbishment completed and opened in August with record visits and loans;
- In partnership with Offaly Local Development Job Resource Centres were established in libraries throughout the county;
- Arts Plan 2012-2016 launched;
- Development commenced on Mount Lucas Wind Farm;
- William Grant & Sons announced proposal to develop Tullamore Dew distillery, warehousing facility and visitor centre in Clonminch, Tullamore;
- Jig Saw Project established;
- Mortgage to Rent Scheme introduced;
- Emergency Homeless Accommodation, managed by Simon and Tullamore Housing Association, opened;
- Four Multi-Use Games Areas developed in Crinkle, Edenderry, Portarlington and Rahan.

Improving co-ordination of public services and reducing costs without impacting negatively on customers is an enormous challenge. Achieving positive outcomes against this background would not happen without the collective input of the Elected Members, Chairpersons and Members of the Strategic Policy Committees, the Corporate Policy Committee, Area Committees, Management Team and Staff, together with the many voluntary and community organisations with whom the Council engages on a frequent basis. It is this spirit of collaboration and cooperation that has always been the hallmark of Offaly Local Authorities, and it may be hoped that this approach has been adequately reflected within these pages.
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**Offaly Local Authorities Annual Report 2012**
HOUSING, SOCIAL & CULTURAL SERVICES

SPC Chair
Molly Buckley MCC / Nichola Hogan MCC

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

Sectoral
Ms. Susan Ryan
Ms. Tessy Doyle
Mr. Joe O’Brien

Director Of Services
Seán Murray
Dermot Mahon, Housing
Martin Quinn, Housing
Mary Stuart
Sinead O’Reilly

Senior Executive Officer
Senior Executive Engineer
County Librarian
Arts Officer

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

Achievements and Constraints
There was a further increase in the number of applications for social housing supports in 2012 due to the ongoing economic downturn. 333 complete and validated applications were received in 2012 with each applicant attending an assessment interview. In addition, c.75 applications were received but rejected as incomplete. 323 applications were approved following assessment. 650 approved applicants were on the Housing list at year end. Increasing demand for social housing together with capital budget restrictions made it increasingly difficult for the Council to fully respond to the housing needs in the County.

A challenge to all areas of housing provision in 2012 was the increase in the number of applicants who are or have previously been home owners and who have fallen into mortgage arrears. It is expected that this trend will continue and indeed increase in 2013 as more homeowners find themselves in the repossession process. A new Mortgage to Rent Scheme was introduced in 2012 to assist home owners remain in their homes under tenancy arrangements.

The number of RAS / Leasing transfers achieved was 58. In addition, the waiting time for housing assessments was kept to a minimum due to the ongoing commitment of staff in providing quality customer services. 30 long-term and casual voids were brought back into stock.

Meeting customer demands for housing adaptation, housing aid for older persons and mobility grants continued to be a challenge. 57 grants were issued to the value of €875,000.
Continued suspension of Estate Management grants made it more difficult to engage with residents groups or to plan additional estate improvement works. Despite this, considerable progress was made in dealing with anti-social behaviour complaints and estate management issues in a number of locations. Emergency Homeless Accommodation was opened in Tullamore with Department approval received for a 6 unit facility managed by Midlands Simon in partnership with Tullamore Housing Association.

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

**Social and Voluntary Housing Output**

The housing stock stood at 1,089 at year end with an average occupancy rate of 98.5%. 103 tenancies were allocated in 2012 (compared to 108 in 2011) comprising:

- 5 under new housing acquisitions
- 30 under re-let of existing stock,
- 58 under the Social Leasing and RAS schemes,
- 2 allocated Halting Site units,
- 8 nominations to voluntary bodies.

No new social housing units commenced construction during the year but provisional approval for the construction of 8 units for older persons in Banagher has been received and work is expected to commence in late 2013. The Offaly Local Authorities housing capital drawdown for 2012 was €3.2m compared to €13m in 2010. The 2012 allocation enabled acquisition of 5 units in Kilcormac, conversion of 6 unsold affordable units to social in Clara and the resolution of a number of outstanding final accounts. It is anticipated that the combined capital budget for 2013 will be again be substantially reduced and will restrict activity to pre approved schemes. A Tenancy Deposit Scheme was successfully introduced in 2012 for all new allocations.

Approval was granted under the CAS Scheme for a new build 6 unit development for the intellectually disabled at Moylena, Tullamore and it is expected that work on this project will be completed in 2013. A total of 117 units of accommodation
have been provided in Offaly under the CAS scheme to date. CAS funding of €800,000 was approved for Tuath Housing Association for the acquisition of 5 units in Edenderry. Cluid Housing Association acquired 8 two bedroom units in Edenderry under the Leasing Scheme. These units were occupied by applicants from the Council’s social housing under a Payment and Availability Agreement.

**Housing Maintenance and Pre-Let Repairs**

Housing maintenance repairs continued throughout 2012 despite a significant reduction in the budget available and progress was made in bringing back into use homes that were void for periods of time. A review of Housing Maintenance structures was commenced in 2012 with proposals to reduce the number of maintenance areas from five to three across revised boundary areas being considered. Proposals to rebalance staff compliments in each area are also under consideration. Due to non replacement of staff it has become increasingly necessary to contract out housing maintenance works where local resources are no longer available. Funding will be required from ICR’s in 2013 to undertake some planned maintenance to older stock including requirements under revised septic tank regulations.

A panel of small works contractors was set up in 2008 and houses in need of major refurbishment continue to be contracted out to speed up turnaround time. This panel will be reviewed in 2013 to reflect shared service agreement with the Town Councils. Funding in the region of €425,000 was expended on pre-let repairs / energy efficiency upgrading to 30 houses that in some cases required considerable renovation prior to re-let.

**Regeneration and Remedial Works Programmes**

Remedial works schemes costing €90,000 were completed at Mooney Terrace, Kilcormac and St. Oliver’s Estate Geashill with €70,000 secured under the Department’s Sustainable Communities Fund and the balance from own resources. Fencing contracts to secure land holdings and complete boundary remedial works in a number of local authority estates were completed during the year. Remedial works schemes costing c.€90,000 were also commenced at Meadowlands, Kilcormac, Hill View Cloghan, The Walk Kinitty and Clonmullen Edenderry. Works include enhanced car
parking facilities, landscaping, boundary walls, back lane and footpath restoration, road lining, signage and drainage works. Each scheme was considered following consultation with local residents and will be fully completed in early 2013. Some funding will be allocated to complete remedial works at College View, Rahan but no funding is available for any additional remedial schemes in 2013.

Council provided funding for two demountable dwellings. There was considerable progress in reducing the DPG list in 2011 with 12 Disabled Persons Grants projects completed at various locations to the value of c.€300,000 with 90% of this cost claimed from the DoECLG. In addition, 2 DPG applicants were re-housed in alternative accommodation. Funding for projects under these schemes was extremely limited in 2012 with reduced funding allocated of €74,320 enabling completion of 2 DPG’s. Funding is available for two DPG’s in 2013 at a cost of c.€140,000. No additional DPG’s will commence in 2013 and all applicants will be advised that funding is no longer available for same. In addition, there are no resources available to purchase any new demountable dwellings and applicants will be advised of same.

Remedial Works scheme in progress at Mooney Tce, Kilcormac

**DPG’s / Demountable Dwellings / Improvement Works Scheme**
No IWS schemes were completed in 2012 while the
Energy Efficiency Programme/Radon Testing
20 housing units benefited from energy efficiency upgrades at pre-let stage. Total expenditure under the scheme in 2012 was €323,486 with €179,730 coming from own resources. Indications from the DoECLG are that resources will be extremely limited in 2013 under the EEP and with reduced ICR’s available to the Council some houses that become available in 2013 will have to be boarded up where funds are not available. The Council will attempt to secure maximum funding from the Department in order to ensure stock does not remain vacant for extended periods.

The Council received funding approval for two Pilot Based Projects at Kinclare in Clara (8 units) and Sr. Sennan in Edenderry (4 units). The initiative was targeted at improving the energy efficiency for fuel poverty areas. One of the main criteria was that the tenant must be in receipt of a social welfare fuel allowance. The works entailed pumping the walls with beaded insulation, increasing the depth of insulation in the attic and replacing all lights with CFLs.

The works have increased the BER ratings in Kinclare from G to E1 and in Sr. Sennan from D1 to C1. Funding of €4,000 was provided by OCC for the scheme with the balance of funds (€16,000) received from Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.

Affordable Housing and Part V
A total of 156 units have been acquired under the Part V process to date, 75 of which are Affordable units. 5 unsold Affordable units in Edenderry were transferred to Tuath Housing Association under CAS funding while the remaining 15 units remain allocated under the Rental Accommodation Scheme in partnership with Tuath Housing Association.

Funding received under CAS for the transfer of units to Tuath has been used to redeem existing HFA loans taken out to acquire the units in 2009. No social Part V’s were acquired during the year. It is anticipated that funding for the acquisition of social units under Part V will not be available in 2013 and alternative options will have to be considered where Part V agreements are being negotiated. Revised Guidelines on Implementation of Part V were agreed by Council in December 2009 to reflect changing circumstances. One Part V agreement was signed during the year to acquire lands in Rhode in lieu of cash payment. These lands are to be made available to the local community to develop a playground in 2013.

Technical Support Services
Housing unit continued to provide technical support services for Tullamore Library renovation project, Aras maintenance and services contracts together with energy efficiency contracting for swimming pools.
**Land Management**
Short-term land lettings were agreed at fifteen locations for grazing purposes generating a modest income during the year. An application for transfer of 1.56 ha at Kilcormac under the Land Aggregation Scheme was submitted in 2011 for consideration in 2012. Members agreed to the disposal of lands at Grogan and Sycamore Drive Ballycumber and at Gallen Ferbane and to the lease of lands at Ard Abhainn Banagher and Elderberry Drive Moneygall. Proceeds from land sales are principally used to offset against other land debit balances.

**Housing Assessment and Allocations**
103 tenancy allocations were made across the range of social housing options. The Housing waiting list stood at 650 at year end with the greatest demand from the Edenderry area. The increase in the number of applications received from homeowners who had their family home repossessed was particularly significant. It is expected that this trend will continue and possibly accelerate in 2013. A housing needs assessment update was completed and revisions and amendments to the Scheme of Letting Priorities were adopted by SPC and Council in June and October 2011.

Amendments introduced measures necessary to deal with the ever changing landscape of social housing applications and allocation.

**Tenant Purchase**
Tenant Purchase Scheme sales peaked in 2006 with almost 40 houses sold during the year, generating close to €2m. By contrast, two sales were finalised in 2012 generating €96,232 for Internal Capital Receipts. The Council contacted 935 households in July 2012 to remind them that the 1995 Scheme was closing in 2012. No new applications for TPS will be accepted in 2013. However, it is intended to introduce a new scheme providing for the sale of existing local authority houses to tenants on incremental purchase principles. In contrast to the 1995 scheme, the discounts provided under the incremental purchase principles will be based on household income rather than length of tenancy, thereby allowing low-income households to move into home ownership earlier than otherwise might have been possible.

The significantly reduced level of activity under TPS continues to have severe implications for the level of funding available to deliver programmes across a range of areas and the level of Internal Capital Reserves available for 2013 is now severely limited.

A new Tenant Purchase Scheme for long-standing tenants was adopted by members in March 2011. Under the 2011 scheme, 380 tenants were deemed eligible and were contacted with details of how to apply for the scheme. 68 applications were received from tenants and 63 valuations completed with tenants advised of valuations, discounts and balances remaining to complete the sales. Only one house
A sale has been completed generating €41,250 for ICR’s.

**Housing Rents**

A new computerised rent arrears package was introduced in 2011 and rent re-assessments were conducted on approximately 500 accounts in 2012. A draft Differential Rent Scheme was considered by Council in February 2012 but not adopted. A national DRS is expected to issue to local authorities in 2013. Considerable resources are required in order to adequately manage the housing rents system and manage arrears as they arise. Tenants in arrears are immediately notified to enter into payment agreements. Where no agreement can be reached or where the tenant fails to adequately address arrears, notice to quit may be issued. A Housing Rent Arrears Policy was adopted by Council in 2010 which outlines our procedures in this regard.

**Housing Loans**

Revised housing loan criteria were introduced in 2009 including the adoption of a Credit Policy. A Loan Arrears Policy was adopted in 2010 reflecting the increase in the levels of arrears being experienced by customers with local authority loans. Shared Ownership loans are no longer a housing option since June 2011. Two loan applications were received in 2012, no provisional approvals were issued. A revised Housing Loan Arrears Policy was adopted in 2012 including the introduction of a Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process. All customers in loan arrears will now be required to engage in the MARP process. To date, a number of revised loan terms have been agreed and the process will continue in 2013 to ensure all loan customers are in sustainable repayment agreements.

**Adaptation, Mobility and Older Persons Grants**

The sum of €875,000 was available in respect of Housing Grants for 2012 based on a revenue budget allocation of €100,000 and Internal Capital Receipts of €75,000. Outturn in 2012 was 57 grants approved under the following schemes; HAGS: 23 HAOP: 30, MAGS: 4

Over 1,000 grants have been processed under previous DPG / ERG scheme from 2005 to 2008 and from 2009 to 2012 under the HAG / MAG and HAOP schemes. Total expenditure on all schemes since 2005 is €12,755,000 of which OCC provided €3,282,000. At the end of 2012 there were 360 applications pending across the 3 grant categories. Average grant amounts paid in 2012 were €25,050 for HAG, €5,000 for MAG and €8,300 for HAOP. The Housing SPC recommended a reduction in the amount of maximum grants available under each category in 2013 subject to agreement by Council.

**Private Sites**

There was moderate activity in the sale of private sites in 2012 and a considerable debit balance remains on lands acquired and developed over the last number of years for this purpose. Revised criteria for the sale of private sites was adopted by Council in 2010 and sites made available for sale on the open market without restriction. 3 sites were sale agreed during the year leaving a balance of 46 sites available in 5 locations.
Rental Accommodation Scheme / Leasing Scheme
260 customers have transferred to the RAS scheme since inception with 35 transfers completed in 2012. Tullamore continues to be the priority as it represents the area of greatest need. While Tullamore will continue to be the focus for 2013 other eligible applicants will be supported in their area of choice as demand for participation in the scheme is actively identified. The sum of €1,370,000 was reserved to meet landlord payments in 2012. Although new properties / landlords will enter the scheme in 2013, the amount estimated to meet landlord payments remains unchanged from 2012, as rent reviews were carried out at regular intervals throughout the year, which achieved significant savings on existing contracted properties. Efforts will continue in 2013 to identify and secure good quality rented accommodation. A landlord inspection fee for properties proposed under RAS / Leasing was introduced in 2012, refundable once the property was successfully transferred under either initiative.

The Leasing Scheme was introduced in 2009 providing the opportunity to acquire long or short term leases on suitable accommodation in order to house persons on the local authority’s waiting list. The total number of individual Lease agreements concluded to date is 42 units, with 24 of those being signed in 2012. There is an ongoing requirement for units under this scheme in 2013 in the Council’s areas of high demand. Tenants accommodated in leased units to date have reported a high level of satisfaction with the quality of accommodation provided. The Council also received approval to lease 15 units in the Frankford housing scheme in Kilcormac and expect units to be available in early 2013.

Provisional approval was also received by the Department to go to tender for a Build to Lease Scheme for 8 units at School Lane Edenderry and it is anticipated that tender documents will issue to approved voluntary housing bodies in 2013.

Private Rented Accommodation – Enforcement of Standards
Offaly County Council oversees this function on a countywide basis and is closely linked to the Rental Accommodation and Leasing Schemes as the property inspections required are similar. Revised Standards and a revised system of Enforcement were introduced in 2009 requiring a more detailed level of assessment, inspection and compliance. 110 inspections were conducted which also included some properties which were the subject of complaints. Increased cooperation between the Community Welfare Section of the Department of Social Protection and the Council is envisaged in 2013 with a view to further identifying and inspecting substandard properties.

Social & Community Programme
Progress has been made to date under the 5 year Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2009-2013. The Programme seeks to provide 78 units of accommodation over its lifetime, with 35 units being provided to date. A mid-term
review of the TAP was completed by the end of 2011 and amendments to the Programme were formally adopted in June 2012. Two amendments to the TAP were approved by Council. The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee continued to meet quarterly to co-ordinate delivery of the Programme. Proposals for accommodation provision in the Tullamore area are progressing.

A revised Anti Social Behaviour Strategy was adopted in October 2010 in accordance with the provisions of the 2009 Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act. Pre-tenancy supports continued together with support for residents associations. Due to resource restrictions the Estate Management Grants were suspended in 2010 and it is not anticipated that this scheme will operate in 2013. An Anti-Social Behaviour Data Retention policy was agreed by the SPC at its November meeting to reflect recommendations issued by the Data Protection Commissioner.

Following on from the national Homeless Strategy ‘The Way Home’ (2009) and the relevant provisions of the 2009 Housing Act, a 3 year Framework Regional Homeless Action Plan for the 4 midland counties was adopted by the Council in June 2010. A more detailed Implementation Plan for Offaly was agreed at the December Council meeting. A 6 unit emergency facility for the homeless became operational in Tullamore in June 2012. The facility is provided by Tullamore Housing Association, in conjunction with Midlands Simon Community, the Offaly Local Authorities and the HSE. The availability of this facility provides a significant element of the solution to addressing the problem of homelessness in Offaly.

Homeless Action Teams (HAT) were established in all 4 Midlands Local Authorities in June 2012. The HAT works on an interagency basis and takes a case conference approach to dealing with complex cases. The Offaly HAT meets fortnightly and includes membership from OCC, TTC, HSE, Department of Social Protection, Probation Services, Midlands Simon Emergency Facility & Resettlement Service, Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service and the Community Liaison Nurse.

**Estate Management**

An Inter-agency Steering Group was established in Grove Street, Crinkle in 2010 to address social and environmental issues on the estate. The Group met every 2 months during 2012. An agreed Action Plan was developed and significant progress has been made in a number of areas. Significant achievements include; upgrade and allocation of long term voids in the estate, upgrade to existing multi-use games area and development of new playground facilities, completion of a community centre using one of the vacant houses which was officially opened during the summer.

The Percent for Art project was also completed involving the development of a web based TV station for the estate.
From Dereliction to….                       Renewal (Teach Tus Nua Grove St.)

The community cabin in Churchview Heights provided by the Council is managed by an active Management Group and continues to be used by local residents and state and voluntary agencies. A successful percent for art projects was also completed at Killane Edenderry based on local community participation.

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

Playgrounds / Multi-Use Games Areas
Funding was successfully secured for the development / upgrade of Multi-Use Games Areas from the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport under the Sports Capital Programme in the following locations;
- €15,745 for upgrade of Grove St., Crinkle MUGA;
- €48,450 for development of new MUGA at Churchview Heights Edenderry and Joseph’s Terrace, Portarlington;
- €39,812 for development of new MUGA at College View, Rahan.

All projects were completed in 2012 and costs were supplemented by an additional €40,000 from own resources as match funding requirement. The Councils Community Liaison Officer provided invaluable support to local residents associations in the establishment of committees to manage the facilities locally.

Churchview Heights, Edenderry MUGA completed 2012
The Council also progressed proposals under the Joint Playground Policy with Offaly Local Development Company and assisted with insurance cover for Edenderry Playground and site assessment and suitability at other locations including Clara and Rhode. A lease on lands was also agreed in Moneygall for development of playground facilities to open in 2013.

**College View, Rahan MUGA**

**Housing, Social & Cultural S.P.C.**

The SPC met 4 times during 2012 and the following issues were agreed and recommended to Council for adoption:

**SPC Policies, Programmes and Initiatives adopted**

- Art Plan 2012 – 2016
- Draft Differential Rent Scheme 2012
- Housing Grants Scheme 2012
- Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009 – 2013 (Review)
- Draft Homeless Implementation Plan 2013 - 2016

**Other Items considered and discussed by SPC**

- Homeless Forum and Homeless services;
- Draft Housing Grant Scheme 2013;
- Review of Caravan Loan Scheme;
- Housing Strategy for People with a Disability;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Data Retention Policy;
- Draft Consultation Allotment Policy 2012;
- Mortgage to Rent Scheme;
- Void Houses / Pre-let Schemes;
- Library Service Review of Opening Hours;
- The Gathering 2013;
- Film Offaly;
- Joint proposal to Music Generation for a grant towards Music Education Provision;
- Update on RAS / Leasing Schemes;
- Update on Library Development Plan;
- Tullamore Library and Arts Centre;
- Arts Initiatives 2012; and
- Playground Policy update.
LIBRARY SERVICE

Introduction
Throughout 2012 the Library service continued to work within the framework set out in the Library Development Plan 2010-2014: Planning for the future – connecting with the community. The plan sets out a vision for the library service to provide a socially inclusive library service open and accessible to all underpinned by quality customer service.

Considerable progress has been made with the delivery of the development plan, despite budgetary cutbacks and decreased staffing of library services. Library services like all public services are facing considerable challenges - budget cuts; public sector reform; impact of new technology and digital services. The library of the future has to respond to these challenges and changes.

The opening of Tullamore Central Library in Offaly Libraries marks a significant step in the development of a vibrant, customer centred 21st century library for communities in Offaly.

2012 continued with the pattern of increased visits, issues, internet use and membership. Since 2008 the library budget and staffing has decreased by 20% and 16% respectively in contrast to activity levels in libraries which have increased. Visits are now close to 225,000. The number of loans has increased by 14% to 248,441.

Library users are now using their own laptops and smart devices which has resulted in a 38% increase in wifi use and a 7% decrease in use of library computers. The annual membership has been increasing since 2008 and 19% of the population are now members of libraries. Total membership is 14,276.
Performance 2012
- Membership increase – 18% (14276);
- Visits increase 16% increase (224,850);
- Loans increase – 14% (248,441);
- Wi-Fi use increase of 38%;
- 41,306 internet sessions;
- Website hits increase of 44% to 63,094 hits; and
- Wide variety of events – Hullabaloo Festival, Bealtaine, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Heritage Week, Environmental talks, Author visits, Art exhibitions & much more.

Library Infrastructure

Tullamore Central Library opened on August 8th with record visits and loans. In the first six months of opening 83,000 loans were recorded. There were 73,000 visits to the library and 4500 people joined the library.

The library is almost completely self service. New self service terminals are located at the entrance of the library and 70% of all transactions are now handled by a dedicated self service area, freeing up staff to concentrate on service delivery. A new Smart Kiosk payment station enables members to pay fees and fines, top up accounts, book internet sessions and release print jobs.

Outside reading area

There are new roles for staff in relation to improving the customer experience with ICT and providing enhanced access to local history and memory. Supporting literacy and learning programmes, e-learning, self-learning are now key to the delivery of an enhanced library service.

There are spaces for everyone. A new dedicated Teens area has resulted in an increase in teen membership of 157%, increase in loans of books of 94% and an increase in DVD/audio loans of 158%.
Daingean and Kilcormac Libraries: Following the adoption of Budget 2012, the Library Service tried hard to maintain services in the face of cutbacks. To address these difficult challenges it was necessary to rationalise the opening hours of libraries in accordance with demand and staff resources available. Based on an analysis of activity levels opening hours in Daingean, Kilcormac and Banagher were reduced and staff hours were allocated to the busier full time libraries.

A group of students from Athlone Institute of Technology visit Daingean Library

Book and media resources
The reductions in funding allocated to books and media is impacting on the quality, range and depth of material available in libraries. Notwithstanding the funding challenges, the policy of acquiring all locally published material continues to be maintained. 10% of the books and media budget is now spent on e audio books and eBooks.

Technology
The objective of providing a 24 hour library on the web is progressing with an upgrade to the library catalogue and website. Online registration was added in 2012 and new members can join online and borrow eBooks from the website. Website hits have continued to increase as more services are added. All libraries now have dedicated e government pcs. Online learning is provided in the four full time libraries. Social media – library blog, face book and twitter are used widely to promote events, provide information and receive feedback.

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

- Encouraging local schools to visit libraries;
- Teacher membership;
- Hullabaloo Festival – Clara & Birr;
- Book clubs –Tullamore, Edenderry, Kilcormac, Ferbane, Clara & Birr;
- Children's book festival, author visits, reader development, art workshops, storytelling etc;
- Family Fun day – Edenderry;
- Summer reading challenge;
- National Poetry Day with local poets and Jean O’Brien;
- Offline Film Festival/Children’s Book Festival;
- Julia Donaldson’s reading challenge – Birr;
- Focus on literacy and reading;
- Celebration of 15 years of Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone; and
- The Pick of Dickens – Tullamore Library.

**Linkages and Cooperation**
The libraries continued to develop linkages with Heritage, Arts, HSE, Offaly Local Development Company, VEC and Offaly Historical and Archaeological society. Initiatives include:
- New partnership with Offaly Local Development Company supporting local communities by providing job resource centres in library buildings throughout the county;
- Digitisation and creation of a searchable web portal of all local newspapers from 1831–2011 (partnership with Offaly History and Heritage Officer);
- Offline at the Library – partnership with Birr Offline Festivals and libraries at Birr, Tullamore, Clara and Edenderry;
- Scien-tastic Workshop in Tullamore – partnership with Science Foundation Ireland;
- Pilgrims coat knitting project;
- Working with School Liaison officers to improve literacy e.g. Clara;
- Culture night and international Music day – Partnership with Arts Officer;
- Music at the library;
- Knitting at the library; and
- Offaly Crafty at Offaly Libraries.

*Operation Rainwater - Model of Watering system – Clara Library*
Storytime at the library

Music at the Library
**Marketing and Promotion**

Raising the profile of the library service, through the website, press releases and local radio continued to be a priority in 2012. The library website was updated on a daily basis to raise awareness of all activities in the library.

“Pilgrim’s coat” Tullamore Community Textile project

**Priorities for 2013**

1. Progress capital funding application to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government for refurbishment/new library in Edenderry for capital funding programme 2014-2016;
2. Continuous review of library services activities to include opening hours, staffing levels and evaluation of services based on budgetary cuts and non filling of staff vacancies;
3. Seek grant funding to assist in reducing energy costs in 5 libraries;
4. Continue with Health and Safety works – funding dependent;
5. Continue with priority maintenance works – Banagher & Edenderry;
6. Provision of a business information service in full time libraries;
7. Continue to focus on literacy and provide quality book and media materials to library users;
8. Improve e audio and e book material;
9. Provide online learning in four full time libraries;
10. Provision of a user friendly 24 hour web library;
11. Promote services to children and young people;
12. Continue to develop linkages and collaborative approaches to providing services; and
13. Continue involvement in local and national projects, events and exhibitions for the promotion of archives and local studies material.
ARTS SERVICE

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

Main Achievements in 2012

Launch of Arts Plan 2012-2016
In May 2012, the Director of the Arts Council Orlaith McBride and the Chairman of Offaly County Council launched Offaly’s second published Arts Plan.

Offaly County Council recognises the importance of the arts in developing vibrant and creative communities. It believes the best way to achieve this is to empower, support and resource individuals, groups and organisations to achieve their best potential, so that their continued achievements are sustainable into the future. We invest in the arts because we believe in the power of cultural engagement to support civic participation. Despite the difficult financial environment, Offaly County Council remains committed to protecting investments to date, albeit in varying and new directions. It is intended that this plan will chart the way for an effective use of combined resources, coupled with the commitment of individuals, organisations and agencies.

Offaly Youth Theatre performed at the launch of the plan, demonstrating the impact of investing on the arts for young people.
Utilising the Arts to combat Social Inclusion was the subject of a Joint Committee on Environment, Transport, Culture and the Gaeltacht who invited the County Manager, Arts Officer and Julie Spollen Chairperson of Anam Beo to make a presentation on the extent of provision through the arts in Offaly that addresses social inclusion.

Projects such as Anam Beo, Bealtaine, Hullabaloo and the use of the percent for art scheme were discussed as a unique experience to orientate individuals and groups towards greater participation in the life of their communities, an experience which promotes a greater sense of place and civic pride.

Public Art

In 2012, a series of commissions reflecting the Grand Canal was launched by Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on June 25th.

The work includes a documentary film, sound art, and a series of prints. The film A Grand Experience was shown on RTE to an audience reach of 565,000, the projects were featured on RTE’s Nationwide, and song Roots in these Lands won the RTE Radio 1 Breakthrough Bursary. The exhibition subsequently toured to Waterways Ireland Visitor Centre as part of the Tall Ship Festival programme and to Enniskillen.

The Kilcormac Cantata by Vincent Kennedy was shortlisted for a Business to Arts Award for Best Commissioning Practice by a Local Authority. The CD of the final performance was launched by Minister Deenihan on June 25th.
Birr Gateway Sculpture

Artist Ann Meldon-Hugh was selected to create a 'gateway' sculpture for Birr, as part of the Birr Public Realm Plan. The piece entitled Looking to the Future reflects the rich historical and cultural life of Birr. A public consultation process was undertaken to incorporate community ideas and involvement in the work. It will be installed in 2013 on the Tullamore Road.

Engage with Architecture

This collaborative project between the Arts, Heritage and Architecture Services aimed to encourage the public to actively engage with architecture. The project was funded by the Arts Council and received the highest level of funding nationally for the second year in a row. The programme included engagement with primary and secondary schools, public lectures, posters and exhibitions, including the 119 entries received for the design competition of Tullamore Arts Centre.

FilmOffaly

The 2011 FilmOffaly Award winning film, Toy Soldiers in partnership with Filmbase won best Short Film at the 2012 Galway Film Fleadh. This win represents 2 out of 3 wins at the festival which has placed FilmOffaly firmly on the radar of the Film Industry. FilmOffaly and OFFline Film Festival also hosted a film industry event at the Galway Film Fleadh attracting 300 people.

Mini Movies

In association with the OFFline Film Festival the Arts Office instigated a primary school filmmaking programme which involved 4 schools around Birr working with filmmaker Michael Fortune on short animations. In total 48 films were made by over 100 children who all attended their own premier at the festival.

Birr Theatre & Arts Centre

Birr Theatre & Arts Centre provides a valuable Arts resource to Birr and Offaly. In 2012 the Arts Service partnered with Birr Theatre on several community arts projects. The Council also provided €20,000.00 of funding to Birr Theatre in 2012.
**Culture Night**

From Polish music in Tullamore Library to a guided walk, Sculpture in the Parklands, Culture Night in Offaly treated the public to various free events as part of the national programme.

7 events took place with over 600 people attending.

**National Music Day**

A national one day event where music is performed for free in the public domain; Offaly events included: Tullamore Concert Choir in Dunne’s Stores, Tullamore Town Band in Tullamore Hospital, Miles O Bog Jazz in an empty shop in Birr, Mark Cunningham in Tullamore Library and St. Colmcilles pipe Band at Edenderry Town Hall.

**Offaly Youth Theatre**

Offaly Youth Theatre was launched in 2012 and provides professional drama instruction to young people aged 14 – 21. Aside from acting and stage skills it gives the young members the opportunity to develop socially and personally with confidence. There are chapters Tullamore, Birr and Banagher.

**Sculpture in the Parklands –Hedge School**

A three day professional development workshop for artists facilitated by Tom Meskell and Jean Conroy that trained artists in making art in the natural environment.
**Arts Act Grants**

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

**Festival Support**

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

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

**Bealtaine, Festival of Arts for Older People**

A county wide programme of events was coordinated and developed by the Arts Office in collaboration with the Library Service for the Bealtaine Festival. There were over fifty events organised by groups across Offaly. Active age over 55’s enjoyed art exhibitions, photography, poetry, song, dance, drama, music, poetry. From ‘Afternoons of Creativity’ to ‘Evenings of Opera and Musicals’, this festival provides entertainment to all over in Offaly.

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

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

**In November 2012, planning permission was granted for the centre at Kilbride Park, allowing the design to proceed towards construction tender.**
**Tullamore Community Arts Centre**

The community fundraising draw, raised €155,000. Work continued with the Board on the business planning, corporate fundraising, updating Dept on progress, website, refining the design, progressing charitable status and VAT registration.

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

There were 2 publications of the Midlands Arts and Culture Magazine. This free, 32 page magazine, highlights the diversity and quality of arts projects across the four counties and aims to create a greater national cultural identity of the Midlands. Midland Master Classes were delivered as professional development opportunities for artists in the Midlands.

**Hullabaloo Children’s Arts Festival**

In 2012, Hullabaloo took place in both Birr and Clara during the October midterm break.

Led by the Arts Office, in partnership with Birr Theatre and Arts Centre, Clara Family Resource Centre and the Library Service over 35 events were organised with an attendance of 85%. The festival featured a live broadcast by RTE Jr and was featured on RTE Radio 1 and the Sunday Independent.

**Music Generation**

In 2012, Offaly and Westmeath Arts Offices led a multi agency regional partnership application to Music Generation and on December 7th achieved €563,000 to roll out a 3 year Music Education programme for young people across the region.

The project aims to create a systematic and accessible programme of music education in pre schools, primary and secondary schools as well as community music opportunities. It will employ a full time Development Officer and p/time Administrative Officer and up to 30 musicians over a 3 year period. The project will being in 2013.

In preparation for this project two primary schools in Offaly, St. Mary’s Edenderry and Rhode NS performed in the National Convention Centre, Dublin in the intergenerational singing project Rain Falling Up with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.
Cultural Action Edenderry and Public Access Arts

The Arts Office has facilitated an action group to increase greater focus on the arts in Edenderry. The group have been looking at provision for young people, festivals and a place/hub which can provide this dedicated focus. Arising from members of this group is Public Access Arts, a small voluntary run centre in an empty shop on JKL St which aims to be centre/catalyst for increase access to the arts in the town. Its opening event in November 2012 was a ‘crowded room’ of 2,000 profiles of Edenderry people.
ENVIRONMENT & WATER SERVICES

**SPC Chair**
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick/ Cllr. John Leahy

**Members**
Cllr. Percy Clendennen
Cllr. Thomas McKeigue
Cllr. John Foley
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick
Cllr. Brendan Killeavy (TTC)

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

**Director Of Services**
Seán Murray

**Senior Engineer, Environment**
Tom Shanahan

**Administrative Officer**
Brian Pey

**Senior Executive Engineers**
John Connolly

**A/Senior Executive Engineers**
Jean Ryan

**A/Senior Executive Engineers**
Vivian O'Brien

The Water Services and Environment sections were amalgamated into one single section in May 2012, to help improve efficiency through sharing of senior staff resources and taking advantage of synergies between the two sections. Energy Management, wastewater sludge management, water and wastewater quality management and a number of other functions had cross-over between the individual sections, and the amalgamation brought these functions into a single department with combined administration. The staff efficiencies generated allowed for redeployment to the National Waste Collection Permit Office, and creation of a post to manage and promote energy efficiency in the organisation.

The National Waste Collection Permitting Office (NWCPO) was established within Offaly Co. Council as the single nominated authority for issuing and reviewing Waste Collection Permits in February 2012. The office has been fully staffed from existing Offaly Co. Council employees and as the office is self financing, this is generating significant savings for OCC.
The delivery of Water services throughout the county continues to be a challenge in terms of funding, regulatory compliance and customer expectation of service delivery.

The Government made a decision in 2012 to establish Irish Water, which will take over as the single water services authority, from the existing 34 County and City authorities in January 2014. The transition period will take a number of years and will pose many challenges such as dealing with the transfer of assets, IR and potential loss of overhead funding for the organisation. The roll out of Irish Water, which will take over as the single water services authority, in January 2014 from the existing 34 County and City authorities was commenced in 2012. The transition period will take a number of years and will pose many challenges such as dealing with the transfer of assets, IR and potential loss of overhead funding for the organisation. It represents a major transfer of function from Local Government to a Semi State Utility with among other things, implications for planning policy, economic development and customer service. It is likely that Local Authorities will continue to deliver water services through Service Level Agreements (SLA,s) with Irish Water. The SLA,s will be a challenge and an opportunity, as they will be performance driven but will retain a level of water services activity within Local Government.

Impact of Budget Reductions
The reduced budget allocations for 2011 and 2012, followed by the interim budget reduction in June 2012, has resulted in a total reduction of €2m in the annual budget for the delivery of water services since 2010. As stated in the 2011 and 2012 estimates meetings, water services is a 24hr/365 day service with a high element of fixed costs in terms of labour, energy and chemicals. Accordingly, cost savings can only be gained through reduced maintenance and repair with a consequent deterioration in asset quality, increased risk
of service disruption and most importantly an increased likelihood of higher cost through inefficient plant, leakage and crisis management.

The major impacts of reduced maintenance and repair tend to be deferred and cumulative. Hence, customers have yet seen little impact of the reduced water services budget, but unaccounted for water is increasing for the first time in recent years, several items of plant are in need of repair and response times are increasing.

It is therefore certain that by early 2013 there will be more frequent service interruptions and longer response times, along with an overall deterioration in quality standards. Any Extreme weather events that occur will exacerbate the overall situation. The extreme wet weather of 2012 has increased wastewater treatment and pumping costs significantly.

It will be increasingly difficult to fund capital works required to maintain and upgrade our infra-structure to meet the regulatory and service requirements challenge of the next few years. Reduced capital investment leads to increased operational cost through lack of capacity and upgrade of infra-structure.

**Public Water & Wastewater Service Delivery**

The recently published EPA Drinking Water Report shows that Offaly had a 100% microbiological compliance rate in 2011 and Offaly is one of only 10 Water Services Authorities that does not have a Water Supply scheme on the EPA Remedial Action list. However, in 2012 there was one e-coli exceedance on a public water supply scheme, and a localised boil notice affecting 10 houses was in place for a week. The last boil notice on a public water supply scheme was a precautionary notice in 2008.

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

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

The new WWTP and Sludge Treatment Centre for Tullamore became operational in 2012 under a 20 year operate contract. Clara WWTP expansion and Moneygal WWTP upgrades were also completed in 2012. Wastewater treatment will be upgraded in Belmont, Ballycumber and Shannonbridge in early 2013. This will mean that full secondary treatment will be provided in all public sewerage schemes in Offaly.

**Water Services Capital Schemes**

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

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

The construction of the new Wastewater Treatment Plant and Sludge Treatment Centre in Tullamore was completed in 2012 under a Design Build Contract, at a total estimated cost of €24m; €5.4m of which is provided by OCC. The new facility provides Tullamore with 45,000 Population Equivalent (PE) capacity and the County with 80,000 PE sludge treatment capacity.

The expansion of Clara Wastewater Treatment Plant from 4,500 PE to 9,000 PE was also completed in 2012, at an estimated cost of €1.8m; €1.1 will be provided through an SDC scheme.

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

Works under this programme were completed in Birr and Daingean in 2012. Notwithstanding that the scale of watermain replacement was small, excellent results were achieved with UFW being reduced to 1% in the Birr Project. Substantial watermain contracts are due to commence in Tullamore, Edenderry and Kilcormac in 2013.

The water services section also designed and tendered a major water supply trunk main to service the proposed Distillery Project for Tullamore, and will proceed to construction in 2013.

The following Schemes were completed in 2012:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>OCC Contribution</th>
<th>Funding Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade</td>
<td>€24m</td>
<td>€5.4m</td>
<td>WSIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara Wastewater Treatment Plant</td>
<td>€1.8m</td>
<td>€1.1m</td>
<td>SLI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moneyal Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade</td>
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<td>€50k</td>
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### Watermains Rehabilitation Contract 5
(Daingean & Birr)

<table>
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<th>Contract</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>€750k</td>
<td>€75k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WSIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rural Water Programme

The initial Capital Allocation to Offaly Group Schemes for 2012 was €22,000, which was very disappointing. The Rural Water Monitoring Committee allocated this to Tubber GWS, which was in need of urgent funding to develop a new source. OCC subsequently made an application for emergency funding for the scheme and a further €125,000 was granted by the DECLG to Tobber GWS. An application for €29,500 emergency funding for Clareen GWS was also approved by the Department in November. The total approved funding for the Rural Water Programme in 2012 amounted to €184,000.

An allocation of €500k for Small Public Schemes was also received. Unlike previous years, the Council did not have discretion on allocating this money as it was granted under a specific category to deal with wastewater.

The Council processed approximately €631k in subsidies to Group Water Schemes in 2012. A total of over €12K will be paid in well grants in 2012. All payments in respect of well grants and subsidy payments are recouped from the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government on a quarterly basis.
ENVIRONMENT

**National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPO)**

In 2011 the Local Government Efficiency Review Group recommended the transfer of the waste collection permitting role from the ten existing nominated authorities to a single designated national body. On the 1st February, 2012 Offaly County Council was designated as the National Waste Collection Permit Office and has since made significant progress in establishing and developing its operations.

Funding for the NWCPO comes from a levy of €2500 on each local authority and by application fees from waste collection permit holders. This has enabled the Office become cost neutral in the first year of operation with set-up costs, staffing and ongoing operational costs being fully met.

Between February and November 2012 the office processed 120 new applications 48, review applications, and completed 81 pre-application consultations. A total of 2,868 national waste collection permits are now held by the office with a further 123 applications pending review. National policy in this area is currently being developed and strengthened and additional regulations will issue as a result of the document ‘A Resource Opportunity’ issued by the Department in July 2012.

**WASTE MANAGEMENT**

**Derryclure Landfill**

The Council continues to operate a waste acceptance facility at the site, where waste from domestic customers and local businesses is accepted and transported off site for reprocessing.

Capping of two cells was carried out in 2012. Work was commenced to procure a gas utilisation project in conjunction with Westmeath and Laois County Councils.

![Capping Process Cell 1C](image-url)
Recycling Facilities
There are currently 44 bring banks in the County for glass, aluminium & steel cans recycling on both private and public sites. We are continuing to expand our textile bank infrastructure in order to provide additional services to the people of Offaly. The contract for servicing the bring banks was procured regionally with Laois, North Tipperary and Offaly County Councils participating.

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

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

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

Waste Management Plan
In 2012 the Midland Waste Management Region completed an evaluation of the current Waste Management Plan as required by the regulations. Following the evaluation of the Midlands WMP, it was recommended that the Midlands WMP be replaced for the following reasons:

(i) The Waste Framework Directive has mandated that a five step waste hierarchy replace the previous six step hierarchy, and that the hierarchy be included in legislation.

(ii) The new DECLG waste policy document: “A Resource Opportunity”, states that all waste management plans will comply with the proximity and self sufficiency principles. A key objective of waste management plans will be to ensure a sufficiency of waste management infrastructure within the state to manage municipal waste.

(iii) The new policy promotes a shared service approach to waste management planning in Ireland. It proposes to reduce the number of waste management regions from 10 to 3.

The existing plan will remain in place until the new plan is in place. The setting up of the three new regions to replace the existing 10, as recommended in the policy document will be the next step in the process.
Key challenges ahead are the diversion of biodegradable waste away from landfill; ensuring that all waste collectors operating in the county operate a pricing system that encourages recycling and waste minimisation.

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

**Awareness Programme**
Offaly County Council has continued to actively promote environmental awareness both in the community sector and schools. Over 90% of schools in Offaly have registered for the green schools programme. Currently we have 58 schools registered for the Green Flag programme and 39 of these have received their Flag.

We are supporting communities in their efforts to introduce community composting units into their local villages. We also support community projects such as anti-graffiti and hedge-planting initiatives and the Midlands Gateway initiative. We continue to promote and support litter awareness, especially during national spring clean week. We host tidy town seminars to facilitate groups participating in the national tidy towns programme.

We have, in conjunction with the County Enterprise Board and the EPA, developed closer links with the Business Sector and we continue to promote green business within Offaly.

The Awareness Programme will be broadened to include such topics as energy, water quality and conservation, and environmental protection.
PROTECTION OF NATURAL WATERS

Water Framework Directive
Offaly is affiliated to three River Basin Districts (RBDs); namely the Shannon International River Basin District, the Eastern River Basin District and the South Eastern River Basin District. We continue to implement an extensive operational monitoring programme of the rivers and groundwater within the county.

We have identified point and diffuse pollution pressures within each river basin district that may be having a negative effect on the quality status of the surface waters. These pressures were the basis of the Programme of Measures (POMs) set out in each of the River Basin Management Plans. These Programmes of Measures are designed to improve existing water status and maintain good status where it exists.

We continued to investigate activities and facilities, such as agriculture, septic tanks and commercial and industrial discharges to surface waters, within the catchment area of designated rivers with less than good status. We also continue to identify and implement remediation measures. A significant improvement in water quality was recorded by the EPA during the 2011/2012 round of biological monitoring.

Protection of Groundwater
Staff from the Environment Section implements the revised Code of Practice for the assessment of onsite waste water treatment systems for single houses. This code requires a far more comprehensive and onerous site assessment from the previous standard. We carried out investigations of Zone of Contributions of Public Water Supply boreholes and prepared Aquifer Protection Plans; based on the perceived risk from agricultural, domestic, commercial and industrial activities to the groundwater quality. This reflects a comprehensive approach by the Council to protect the raw water quality of our public supplies and by inference the health of the people of Offaly.

BURIAL GROUNDS
We commenced the implementation of the Council’s new policy on the provision of burial ground throughout the county, which gives greater responsibility and ownership of burial grounds to the local community. An extension to St. Mary’s cemetery, Edenderry was completed.

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY AWARENESS
Climate Change & Energy awareness continues to be a key area where the Council is required to show leadership in both promoting public awareness and in changing mind sets towards energy management. Responsibility for renewing the drive for energy use reduction in the council was assigned a specific role. Data returns were made to SEAI and base year

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calculations carried out. Training was carried out in energy reduction techniques and audits carried out in some facilities. This will be a high priority in 2013.

ANIMAL CONTROL & WELFARE

Stray Animal Control Service
Offaly County Council’s Veterinary section operates its dog control service in accordance with the Control of Dogs Act, 1986 involving:
- Collecting stray dogs/Taking in surrendered dogs
- Investigating sheep kills
- Investigating nuisance caused by dangerous dogs or dogs not under proper control

The Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010 came into force in 2012 and is being enforced by the Council to help maintain and improve the welfare standards of dogs bred in such establishments.

Under the Control of Horses Act, 1996, all local authorities are responsible for the control of horses in their area including the collection of stray horses on public or private land.

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

FOOD SAFETY
Offaly County Council’s Veterinary Department is responsible for carrying out functions in relation to Food Protection and Disease Control. It implements the terms and conditions of a Service Contract between the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and Offaly County Council in relation to the slaughter of food animals and imposes statutory controls on the production of meat, meat products and poultry. It’s principal functions in relation to food safety relate to small throughput Slaughtering Premises of which there are currently five operating in the County, to meat product and distribution premises of which there are three operating within the County.

Local government has been requested to review expenditure and funding requirements in this area. In October 2012 a report was issued by the Public Service Reform Oversight Group for Local Government which recommended various options for achieving expenditure savings and efficiencies through developing shared services by local authorities in veterinary services. Offaly County Council are currently examining possible shared service models which may be of benefit to the Council.
Priorities For 2013
The amalgamated section will implement the following programmes and priorities in 2013.

1. Implement the requirements of the Waste Directive as transposed by National Regulation;
   - Implement the provisions of the current Regional Waste Management Plan, its policies and targets. Commence preparation of a new Plan for 2014, subject to DECLG guidance and the formation of new waste management regions.
   - Implement a programme of inspections of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (To Be defined by EPA.)
   - Manage the National Waste Collection Permitting Office.

2. Implement the requirements of the Water Framework Directive as transposed by National Regulation and River Basin Management Plans;
   - Implement the River Basin Management Plans by carrying out the relevant Programmes of Measures at water body level.
   - Achieve 98% Compliance with Wastewater Discharge Licenses and and Urban Wastewater Regulations
   - Implement the requirements of the Water Pollution Act and its associated regulations.

3. Maintain and improve the quality of the environment by a programme of regulation, education, encouragement and monitoring
   - Implement the requirements of the Litter Act
   - Devise a single Litter Management Plan for Offaly Local Authorities. To replace the existing Town Council and County Plans
   - Encourage approaches to sustainable development under Local Agenda 21.
   - Develop a new Environmental Awareness Programme which reflects the broad environmental remit of the amalgamated Section. The new Programme will include promotion of awareness of energy conservation, water conservation, protection of water sources and water in pipe, as well as the traditional waste management and prevention awareness programme.

4. Implement the requirements of the Energy Services Directive as transposed by National Regulations.
   - Devise and implement an Energy Management Plan for Offaly Local Authorities.
   - Set up energy management structures and participate in the Midland Energy Authority programmes.

5. Implement the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan with regard to Water Services Infrastructure and the Environment.
• Implement the Flood Risk Management Guidelines in the assessment of development applications. This will include working with the OPW and other Local Authorities in the implementation of the CFRAM programme.
• Ensure Offaly Local Authorities meet the challenge of Climate Change and to ensure climate change considerations are incorporated into all future development and spatial planning. Implement the Council’s Climate Change Strategy 2009-2014.
• Report on planning applications with regard to water services infrastructure and environmental effects.

6. Provide required Veterinary Services for the County
• Provision of Veterinary services that impact on consumer health, animal welfare and environmental quality.
• Implementation of the requirements of the Control of Dogs Act
• Implementation of the Requirements of the Control of Horses Act

7. Provide safe drinking water to the County in accordance with the Regulations
• Maintain Current Water Quality Standards in both Public & Group Water Schemes. Further Develop remote monitoring of plants & Networks to achieve operational efficiencies and early response to quality and mechanical/electrical problems.
• Further Reduce Unaccounted For Water through increased monitoring of customer side leakage and network upgrades.
• Maintain Progress in resolving non-domestic customer issues.
• Prioritise repairs and maintenance on the basis of available resources.

8. Provide wastewater treatment in accordance with the Regulations
• Maintain and Operate Wastewater Treatment facilities in accordance with wastewater discharge licences and the UWwT regulations
• Carry out process improvement programmes on wastewater treatment facilities.
• Implement the sludge management plan for the county.

9. Capital Works Programme
• Progress the Water Servoces Investment Programme with priority for the following:
  o Commence the Domestic Water Metering Survey Project
  o Progress Watermain Rehabilitation Contracts 1,2,3 and 4 under WSIP.
  o Progress Improvements to Tullamore WSS.
10. **Other Programmes**

- Provision of adequate burial grounds for the needs of the county.
- Development of shared services with other departments and with external agencies.
- Commence work on the transition to Irish water.

In addition to the specific programmes of the section, we will be working closely with other sections to deliver some key cross-sectional objectives and services under the Offaly Local Authorities Change Management Programme.

11. **Implement the requirements of the Waste Directive as transposed by National Regulation**;

- Implement the provisions of the current Regional Waste Management Plan, its policies and targets. Commence preparation of a new Plan for 2014, subject to DECLG guidance and the formation of new waste management regions.
- Implement a programme of inspections of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (To Be defined by EPA.)
- Manage the National Waste Collection Permitting Office.

12. **Implement the requirements of the Water Framework Directive as transposed by National Regulation and River Basin Management Plans**;

- Implement the River Basin Management Plans by carrying out the relevant Programmes of Measures at water body level.
- Achieve 98% Compliance with Wastewater Discharge Licenses and and Urban Wastewater Regulations
- Implement the requirements of the Water Pollution Act and its associated regulations.

13. **Maintain and improve the quality of the environment by a programme of regulation, education, encouragement and monitoring**

- Implement the requirements of the Litter Act
- Devise a single Litter Management Plan for Offaly Local Authorities. To replace the existing Town Council and County Plans
- Encourage approaches to sustainable development under Local Agenda 21.
- Develop a new Environmental Awareness Programme which reflects the broad environmental remit of the amalgamated Section. The new Programme will include promotion of awareness of energy conservation, water conservation, protection of water sources and water in pipe, as well as the traditional waste
management and prevention awareness programme.

- Devise and implement an Energy Management Plan for Offaly Local Authorities.
- Set up energy management structures and participate in the Midland Energy Authority programmes.

15. Implement the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan with regard to Water Services Infrastructure and the Environment.
- Implement the Flood Risk Management Guidelines in the assessment of development applications. This will include working with the OPW and other Local Authorities in the implementation of the CFRAM programme.
- Ensure Offaly Local Authorities meet the challenge of Climate Change and to ensure climate change considerations are incorporated into all future development and spatial planning. Implement the Council’s Climate Change Strategy 2009-2014.
- Report on planning applications with regard to water services infrastructure and environmental effects.

16. Provide required Veterinary Services for the County
- Provision of Veterinary services that impact on consumer health, animal welfare and environmental quality.
- Implementation of the requirements of the Control of Dogs Act
- Implementation of the Requirements of the Control of Horses Act

17. Provide safe drinking water to the County in accordance with the Regulations
- Maintain Current Water Quality Standards in both Public & Group Water Schemes. Further Develop remote monitoring of plants & Networks to achieve operational efficiencies and early response to quality and mechanical/electrical problems.
- Further Reduce Unaccounted For Water through increased monitoring of customer side leakage and network upgrades.
- Maintain Progress in resolving non-domestic customer issues.
- Prioritise repairs and maintenance on the basis of available resources.

18. Provide wastewater treatment in accordance with the Regulations
- Maintain and Operate Wastewater Treatment facilities in accordance with wastewater discharge licences and the UWwT regulations
• Carry out process improvement programmes on wastewater treatment facilities.
• Implement the sludge management plan for the county.

19. **Capital Works Programme**
• Progress the Water Services Investment Programme with priority for the following:
  o Commence the Domestic Water Metering Survey Project
  o Progress Watermain Rehabilitation Contracts 1, 2, 3 and 4 under WSIP.
  o Progress Improvements to Tullamore WSS.
• Optimise Small Schemes Allocation under the Rural Water Programme.

20. **Other Programmes**
• Provision of adequate burial grounds for the needs of the county.
• Development of shared services with other departments and with external agencies.
• Commence work on the transition to Irish water.

In addition to the specific programmes of the section, we will be working closely with other sections to deliver some key cross-sectional objectives and services under the Offaly Local Authorities Change Management Programme.
PLANNING, ECONOMIC & LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Spc Chair
Cllr. Sinead Dooley

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

Director Of Services
Declan Kirrane

Senior Executive Planner
Andrew Murray

Administrative Officer
Phyllis Hughes

Architect
Rachel McKenna

Heritage Officer
Amanda Pedlow

Administrative Officer
David Minton, Economic Development

Architect
Catriona Hilliard, Community & Enterprise

Sports Partnership Co-ordinator
Eamon Henry

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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

County Development Plan 2009-2015
The Offaly County Development Plan 2009-1015 expires on the 18th January 2015. Preparatory work for the review of the plan was carried in 2012 and the review formally commenced on the 28th November 2012. Public information evenings on the review of the plan were held in Birr, Edenderry, Ferbane and Tullamore in December.

Variations to the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015
During 2012, 2 separate variations to the plan were adopted.

Variation no. 1 provided for the inclusion of the Core Strategy into the development plan, as required by the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010. The elected members adopted Variation No. 1 at the Council’s monthly meeting on 20th February 2012. In addition, the variation also allowed for the removal of the Portarlington Town Plan from Volume 2 of the plan as a joint Local Area Plan was being prepared in conjunction with Laois County Council.

On the 21st May 2012, Variation No. 2 of the Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015 was adopted to
include a town plan for Clara.

Variation No. 3 to the plan was prepared in 2012 – to allow for the removal of the Riverstown village plan from Volume 2. It is anticipated that this variation will be made in 2013.

Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016
2 year progress report
This report on securing the objectives of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, was completed in June 2012. The report highlighted the need for the plan to be varied to allow for the inclusion of a Core Strategy.

Variations to the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan
Variation No. 1 of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan was adopted in July 2012. The reason for this variation was to amend the written statement and zoning map to allow for general industrial use to be open for consideration within the Business / Employment land use zoning and in particular to allow for such use in the Southern Environs Masterplan area.

Preparatory work has been undertaken in 2012 to prepare variation No. 2 to the plan to include a Core Strategy and amend the land use zoning map relating to the Open Space buffer in the southern environs master plan area.

Birr Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016
Preparatory work has been undertaken in 2012 to prepare variation No. 1 to the plan to include a Core Strategy and to include the Riverstown village plan into the Birr Plan.

Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2012
Throughout 2012, work continued in conjunction with Laois County Council on the preparation of the joint Local Area Plan for Portarlington. The plan was adopted in October 2012 and is the first joint Local Area Plan prepared for a town in Offaly.

Strategic Policy Committee Meetings
During 2012, four meetings of the committee were held and the Committee considered the following matters:

- Review of Joint Local Area Plan – Portarlington
- Review of Clara Town Plan
- Core Strategy – Tullamore & Environs Development Plan
- Core Strategy – Birr and Environs Development Plan
- Retail Planning Guidelines
- Engage with Architecture Project 2012
- Conservation Grants – Structures at Risk Fund 2012
- Update on Quarries - Section 261A of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended
• Progress in relation to completion of Unfinished Housing Estates
• Draft Guidelines in Development Contributions
• Updates on Planning & Development Legislation
• Consideration of initiatives to promote and support Economic Development and Tourism in the County
• Work Programme 2012

**Development Management**

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

**Planning Applications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr.</th>
<th>No. of Applications</th>
<th>No. Granted</th>
<th>No. Refused</th>
<th>Total Decided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>557*</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>449*</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>347*</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>313*</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*This figure includes applications which were invalid)

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

The continued downturn in the economic activity, particularly in the construction sector, has been reflected in the number of planning applications received in 2012. 313 planning applications have been received in 2012 which compares with 347 for 2011.

The downturn in the planning applications has afforded the opportunity to the Planning Department to focus on other areas of activity, such as the review of derelict site files the taking in charge of housing estates, the resolving of unfinished housing developments and a more consistent and concerted effort in relation to enforcement, preplanning consultation meetings for economic development and compliance issues

Section 261A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, required notices to be issued to quarry owners and operators by 23rd August 2012. The purpose of s261A was to determine whether quarries were contrary to the EIA and / or Habitats Directives. 152 quarry files were opened in Offaly. The following notices were issued; 15 no. 3a notices (requiring application for substitute consent), 8 no. 4a notices
(requiring issuing of an enforcement notice), 3 no. 5a notices (also requiring issuing of an enforcement notice), 2 no. splits (i.e. 3a and 5a combined), 58 no. did not require a notice, and 67 no. were no longer quarries. Reviews to An Bord Pleanála were sought on 13 quarries, on which Offaly County Council made submissions.

Derelict Sites were taken over from the Environment Section in 2009. There were fifteen site inspections during 2012. There were 42 Derelict Sites files opened at the end of 2012 and one file was closed during the year. 9 sites which were entered on the register in 2011 were valued in 2012 and demands for derelict site levies were issued. All planning applications were screened for Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment in order to ensure compliance with the EIA Directive and Habitats Directive.

**Structures at Risk Fund**

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

SRF 12001: Former Estate Workers Cottage Geashill - €10,000 for repairs towards roof, chimney and rain water goods.

SRF: 12002: Annabrook House Shinrone - €15,000 for repairs to windows and doors.

**Unfinished Housing Estates**

The findings of the National Housing Development Survey 2012 showed that Co. Offaly has one of the lowest levels of unfinished housing developments and vacant residential units nationally.

**Scanning Project**

During 2012, the scanning project continued, whereby planning applications can be viewed on the internet. This allows the public to view planning applications at a time and place of their choosing rather than being restricted to office hours.

**Compliance/Enforcement**

Warning Letters: 71

Enforcement Notices: 17

District/Circuit Court Cases: 8

Prosecutions Initiated: 17

During the year, 49 enforcement files were opened. An enhanced screening process was put in place during 2012 whereby the alleged breach is summarily investigated to avoid unwarranted cases being opened. 71 warning letters and 17 enforcement notices were issued. Regular meetings are held with the Council’s legal advisers to ensure that all cases are pursued in a timely manner. Recovery of costs where the Council is
successful in prosecution is a serious and real concern presently.
Development Contribution Scheme
Details of amounts received and disbursed as circulated to members, with the Budget as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipts</td>
<td>€000’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Available – November 2011</td>
<td>5,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions Received Dec 2011 to Nov 2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Contributions – Customers</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water &amp; Sewerage: Dev. Contributions – Town Councils</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbursements Dec 2011 – Nov 2012 (see below)</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved for Capital Projects not yet allocated</td>
<td>2,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Available</td>
<td>3,515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocation of Funds – since last report to Council, November 2011</th>
<th>000’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Schemes 2012 Rural Water Programme</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Contribution Scheme Recycling Facility at Barnan</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved for Current Projects – Not Yet Allocated</td>
<td>2,866</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Offaly Local Authorities Annual Report 2012

### OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR DISBURSEMENT AS AT NOVEMBER 2012:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>Funds Available €000’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dev. Cont. Scheme – Amenities</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev. Cont Scheme – Infrastructure</td>
<td>2109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev. Cont Scheme – Wastewater(incl TTCC327k, BTC €8k)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev. Cont Scheme – Water(incl TTC €321k, BTC €9k)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl. Dev. Cont. 2004 – Edenderry Sewerage Scheme</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl. Dev. Cont. Scheme 2004 Car Parking</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl. Dev Cont. Scheme ’04-Crinkle Booster Pump</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl. Dev Cont. Scheme ’04– Daingean upgrade Sewerage</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont. Scheme ’04 - Portarlington</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont –Clara Quarry</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont – Road Imp &amp; Main Drumcraw</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont Sch Communication Masts</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont Rd Imp Tullaroe Clareen</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont Daingean Sewage Treatment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont Upgrade Clara Sewerage Scheme</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont Ballinagar WW Treatment Upgrade</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spl Dev Cont Rd Improvement To N80 – Clara</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3515</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The role of the Economic Development Office is to promote economic development in Offaly and liaise with commercial and industrial companies looking to locate their business in Offaly. We aim to support small, medium and larger size industries with information, data and continuous communication.

In difficult times Offaly Local Authorities has adopted friendly and flexible policies that assist businesses emerge and expand in our towns and across the County. Through our Development Plan and Area Planning instruments we encourage sustainable development of our County providing the necessary infrastructure to facilitate business and the social requirements that allow communities to prosper.

Working through these difficult times 2012 saw a number of green shoots emerging on the business and employment front.

- **Welcome Home Tullamore Dew**

Over the past 16 months Offaly County Council has engaged with representatives from William Grant and Sons (WGS) over the proposed distillery, visitor centre and warehousing development located in Clonminch, Tullamore. The proposed site is divided in ownership between Offaly County Council (24 acres) and Coillte (33.6 acres). The site is located adjacent the N52 Tullamore By-Pass and is currently accessed beside the Clonminch Hi-Technology Park. The block of land is in the Southern Environ Masterplan area of the Tullamore Town and Environ Development Plan 2010-2016.

On the 28th March 2012 William Grant and Sons announced they were committing their future to Tullamore and constructing the proposed distillery,
visitor centre and warehousing facility.

- **Mount Lucas Wind Farm**
  In December 2012 Minister for Energy Pat Rabbitte turned the sod on a new wind energy project in County Offaly. Some 30 turbines are to be erected at Mount Lucas as part of a €140 million Bord na Móna investment. The wind-farm will be capable of generating enough energy to power 50,000 homes and over 150 people will be employed in the construction of the wind farm. This project demonstrated the potential which Offaly has for “the development of significant renewable energy projects”.

- **Emerging Wind Farm Sector in Offaly**
  2012 was a good year for the emerging wind farm sector with a number of large scale announcements relating to a network of wind farms in Co Offaly that could produce electricity for export to the UK. A number of announcements were made by companies such as Mainstream Power, Element Power and Bord na Mona of their intentions to expand in this sector creating thousands of construction jobs and hundreds of future permanent positions. The Planning Authority in Offaly County Council published it’s Wind Strategy in 2009 which has helped immensely in attracting companies to utilise the landscape of Offaly for wind power.

**Economic Development Committee**
One of our more fundamental roles is building relationships and working on an interagency basis to generate sustainable employment with agencies like the IDA, OLDC, Enterprise Ireland, Offaly County Enterprise Board, Shannon Development and FAS. We work within the framework of the County Development Board Strategy to ensure Social, Cultural and Economic Development for Offaly. Two major projects progressed by the Committee in 2012 is:
- Offaly Innovation and Design Centre
- Free public Wi Fi in Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry

**Support to West Offaly and North Offaly Development Fund**
The Economic Development Office is secretary and support worker to both the West Offaly Enterprise Fund and the North Offaly Development Fund. Although a very difficult economic year there have been some positive stories. Biotricity have received planning permission for a site adjacent to Rhode Business Park. It would be expected that they would act as a large draw to other companies from that particular industry. Biotricity will take in raw biomass sourced from forestry and agriculture crops which will be chipped, dried and then turned into Biofuel pellets. We have also had a number of expressions of interests in site inside Rhode Business Park.
Outlook for 2013
In the current economic climate it is extremely important that we explore all avenues of opportunity and become creative at leveraging funding and generating positive options for the County of Offaly. Some of our intentions for 2013 include:

- Continue to aggressively pursue business and employment opportunities available for location in Offaly.
- Work in partnership through a strengthened Economic Sub Committee of the County Development Board in order to promote Offaly as a destination to do business.
- Support the closer alignment of County Enterprise Boards with the Local Authority under the new structures of ‘Local Enterprise Offices’. We see this as an opportunity to improve the service to our customers starting businesses in Offaly.
- Deliver local actions under the National ‘Action Plan for Jobs’
This year provided new challenges with radically reduced budgets from both Offaly County Council and the Heritage Council. However due to the resilience of the sector a surprising amount was still achieved. The level of volunteer work in Offaly heritage sector is very strong.

The Heritage Officer works with the Offaly Heritage Forum which is made up of state agencies, communities and NGOs, coordinating and liaising on heritage projects. The forum meets four times a year for site meetings and discussion, with working groups meeting when necessary. The Offaly Heritage Plan sets out the work programme for a five year period. The Heritage budget from the County Council is supplemented by Heritage Council funding. The Heritage Office often draws down additional funding schemes and works in partnership with other groups to maximize outputs.

Reports and project updates are posted on www.offaly.ie/heritage and email updates are issued to those who register with heritage@offalycoco.ie.

**Heritage Awareness**

The *Engage with Architecture* programme received funding for the second year and took place during the month of March. The heritage interest aspect included interviews carried out by Irish Life and Lore exploring lives in different types of buildings and featured the Molloy Family from the thatched house in Killurin, Mrs Kennedy of Quigley’s shop in Banagher, the Earl and Countess of Rosse, Alan Linley, Lock Keeper and Billy Kelly, Blacksmith. These are presented as slide shows with images taken by James Fraher and can be downloaded from the Offaly You Tube channel. Orla Murphy gave two talks on ‘Mapping Towns’ and Denis Duggan gave his perspective on ‘Irish Architecture from 1920 to the Present Day’. Council Architect, Rachel McKenna developed a series of posters documenting aspects of architecture in towns for Banagher, Clara, Daingean, Portarlington, Ferbane. Shem Caulfield recorded historic iron work in Geashill and worked with the National School to develop their own poster – this event was enhanced by the demonstration of blacksmithing by Stephen Quinn.

**Heritage Week** continues to get busier each year for the 9 days in August and new events this year included Angela Jupe’s tour of historic gardens, Fancroft Mill exploring its Quaker Heritage and a tour to see follies in north Offaly. The Clara Bog Visitor Centre, now in its second year, hosted a strong programme of events for Heritage Week and throughout the season. It is a great addition providing interaction with this aspect of the natural heritage.
Offaly Naturalists’ Field Club
15 events were held in 2012 over 22 days, including summer school and the geology weekend in September both led by John Feehan. Notable in 2012 was the arrival of bryophyte events on the programme.

Annual Seminar
The commitment to host an annual seminar was kept despite budget cuts and Friday 23rd November saw the launch of Geashill, the Evolution of its Architecture by Council architect Rachel McKenna. On the Saturday morning, Noel Bugler, NPWS ranger brought a group to the new bird hide on the Little Brosna Callows while the alternative was a tour of the new Tullamore Dew visitor Centre which opened in September. The OHAS hosted the afternoon session with talks by Alex Copland from BirdWatch Ireland on the dipper bird nest box project, Maeve Sikora from the National Museum on recent donations and Gertie Keane on placename recording in the Killeigh area. The final talk was from Shem Caulfield, a photographer from Kilkenny, who is championing the art and workmanship that went into the making of wrought iron gates.

In November a seminar called Heritage as an Engine for Economic Growth was run by the Heritage Council as part of a series of 7 seminars throughout Ireland. They partnered with Offaly Heritage Office, Offaly Local Development Company and the County Enterprise Board.

Publications
Geashill, the Evolution of its Architecture by county architect Rachel McKenna is a hard back, 110 page A4, landscape book, in full colour and was published by Offaly County Council. A free copy was given to each resident of Geashill village. It can be purchased for €14.99 from Midland Books and the OHAS.

John Feehan’s comprehensive work, the Geology of Laois and Offaly was prepared and sent to the printers for the launch in 2013. This is a phenomenal collation of a life’s knowledge of geology of the two counties. In addition to the publication of the book, John has prepared a number of film clips explaining key geological sites in the county. These will be hosted on the Offaly heritage you tube channel and should be most useful for educational purposes and for visitors to the county. All three aspects received funding support from the Heritage Council.
National Museum of Ireland
A number of archaeological finds were donated to the National Museum in 2012. They included a donation of a decorated quern stone from Patrick and Mary Dunne from Ballymacmurrough townland and the donation of a stone axe head from Stephen Powell from Clonbeale. As Offaly does not have a county museum all the archaeological artefacts found in Offaly are looked after by the National Museum. In addition a loan agreement was drawn up for the sheela na gig from the Figile river to be displayed in Edenderry library. Keeper of Irish Antiquities Ned Kelly gave a talk on sheela na gigs in the library during Heritage Week.

Follies Trust
Following a submission made to the Follies Trust and a tour of sites in Offaly, Sadleir’s Tower on Mullagh Hill owned by the Dillon family was selected as a project the Follies Trust would like to assist with. The first step was that conservation architect Margaret Quinlan prepared a report to guide works. It is planned that works on site will commence in 2013. The interest from the Follies Trust led to a booked out tour of follies during Heritage Week in August.

Placename Recording
Following recording of placenames in the Slieve Blooms in 2010 and Broughal in 2011, Gertie Keane carried out comprehensive recording of placenames in the Killeigh area over the summer of 2012. Her methodology differed in that she recorded the whole area systematically noting where field names were no longer known too.

Birr Public Realm Working Group
This group continues to meet monthly. In 2012 the Town trail was updated and revised. Tenders were issued for a project in Cornmarket Square. A sculpture for the Tullamore road was commissioned under the Percent for Arts project. A programme with the Chamber of Commerce and Dulux led to many of the buildings in the historic core being repainted.

Durrow Monastic Site
2012 saw the establishment of a working group chaired by Marcella Corcoran Kennedy TD to pursue all options to make the site at Durrow accessible and to promote it to the public.
Tidy Towns Federation and Mentoring Programme
This in house structure with C&E to support groups.
Three evening talks per year and site visits are arranged as well as providing assistance with 3 – 5 year plans.

Forges and Wrought Iron Gates Recording and Awareness
Maurice O’Keeffe of Irish Life and Lore returned to the county to interview a number of people about blacksmithing in Offaly. These interviews are available from the Offaly Library Service. In addition photographer Shem Caulfield recorded a number of gates in the Geashill / Killeigh area, highlighting the uniqueness of each hand made wrought iron gate and the different style. Shem recorded a number of gates and their details in the Geashill and Killeigh area this summer. An A1 poster of Offaly gates was produced and is available from the Council.

Digitisation of Offaly Newspapers
This was a joint project between Offaly Local Authorities and the OHAS, part funded by the Heritage Council. The papers include the Midland Tribune, Tullamore Tribune and Offaly Independent.

Daingean Town Hall
The heritage office worked with the Trustees of Daingean Town Hall to carry out repairs to the Courthouse/ Town hall. The budget was not sufficient to conserve the whole building so the focus was on the entire roof and the right hand courtroom. The works were over seen by Howley Hayes conservation architects and 75% funding was received from Offaly Local Development Company.

Castles of Offaly project
Work continues with the National Monuments service on collating information and surveying the 200 castles in Offaly. Publication of Adobe PDF documents will begin in 2013.
COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE

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

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

Offaly County Development Board (CDB) is concluding on the OCDB the 2002-2012 Strategy.

The CDB was concentrating on the 4 priority areas as identified in the CDB Action Plan 2009-2012
• Education and Skills (Lifelong learning);
• Creation/retention of employment and Enterprise;
• Sustainability – which in 2012 been taken over the tourism as a capacity builder for the county;
• Social Inclusion–Monitoring and reviewing the Local Anti-Poverty Strategy;
• Other projects undertaken by the Community & Enterprise Department in 2012 include;

• The CDB STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Scholarship Programme;
• The Community Smoke Alarm Scheme;
• Bike Week;
• Offaly Play Day;
• Chairing the Offaly County Childcare Committee.
The Community and Enterprise Department works closely with Offaly Local Development Company and also provides a link between the County Development Board/Offaly County Council and the Offaly County Childcare Committee, the Midland Regional Drugs Task Force, and the Rural Transport Programme among others.

**Offaly SIM Group**

In 2012 the SIM Group continued its networking and co-ordination role. The group commenced an audit of the Anti Poverty Strategy and the SIM Workplan. The group identified the opportunity for teens to work with technology, for tourism, and assisted in the development of the Clara Family Resource Centre ‘You Tubes’ project with the school, which saw the development of 3 projects related to The Gathering. SIM have identified other issues for support through the set up of a Networks for Mens Sheds, in 2013.

**Tourism Interagency Group**

This group met several times and produced the May – October 2012 Calendar of Events, for use by the tourism industry in and out of the county. Current membership is Offaly County Council, Offaly Local Development Company, Offaly County Enterprise Board, Failte Ireland and Shannon Development.

This group met several times in 2012 and produced the May – October 2012 Calendar of Events, for use by the tourism industry in and out of the county.

The Tourism Interagency Group has supported the preparation stage of The Gathering 2013. The group

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Prep in Clara Family Resource Centre, for the Clara You Tubes project, re advance PR for The Gathering

The Offaly SIM Group meets bi-monthly and brings together agencies and organisations in the County that have a remit around combating poverty and exclusion.
works closely with the national agency partners, and proposes to work more closely in 2013 with Offaly tourism industry members in an effort to prioritise the regional focus which could benefit tourism in this county. The group welcomes the ongoing work by individual organizations. Where they can assist in Tourism opportunities, they work closely with the organisations to develop these projects.

**Traveller Interagency Group**
This group were established via support from the Department of Justice, and met three times in 2012. A further sub group was established in the preparation of the first involvement of Offaly in Traveller Pride Week in June 2012. Overall, the group have identified various issues on which they can collaborate, have sourced the funding and produced a programme of events for ‘Traveller Pride Week’, and in early 2013 will develop an interagency Strategy in this area.

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

In 2012 Offaly Comhairle identified Enterprise as a focus area. A Conference brought together almost 200 young people and addressed issues that included workshops and presentations on this topic. It is now planned that these will be further explored in a ‘boot camp’ and a ‘dragons den’ project in 2013.
**Offaly Jigsaw Project** Through an application by Offaly County Development Board, supported by research from 2011 from Comhairle na nÓg re mental health support services for young people, Offaly was selected as a new Jigsaw site. Jigsaw projects across Ireland work with communities to better support young people's mental health and well being. By late 2012, staff were recruited and premises were identified. Early 2013 will see the service progress.

**The Offaly Community & Voluntary Forum**

Offaly Community & Voluntary Forum has increased its membership to 435 member groups. The Forum is 10 years in existence and has become representative of the community.

The Forum has been active in a range of areas including networking, information sharing, training, and policy development. The Forum currently has a part-time community development worker, based in Offaly Co Co, other resources in other organizations and on a voluntary capacity within the community.

Projects for 2012 that the OCC Forum/community worker and colleagues engaged in include:
- Implementation of a county Tidy Towns Network;
- Managing a county Community Alert Network;
- Organisation of Offaly Mental Health Talk Week in collaboration with all the agencies involved;
- Assistance re the C&V Forum organisation of the Tullamore Town Christmas Market; and
- Preparation and training to develop an Age Wise strategy for the county.

**Offaly Sports Partnership**

Offaly Sports Partnership is a sub group of Offaly County Development Board, hosted by the Community & Enterprise Section of Offaly County Council. Below is an outline of some of the Partnership’s undertakings in 2012:

- Implementation of New Strategic Plan;
- Operation Transformation;
- Sport for People with a Disability;
- Promoting Inclusion through our Local Sports Heros;
- Meet and Train Groups; and
- Sports Integration.
ROADS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

SPC Chair
Tony McLoughlin MCC

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

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

Director Of Services
Frank Heslin
Charles McCarthy, Roads

Senior Engineer
Joe Coleman, Roads

Senior Executive Engineer
Mary Flynn Kenny

Administrative Officer
Eoin O’Ceilleachair

Chief Fire Officer
Dennis Gibbons

Health & Safety Officer

Tullamore Bypass (€700,000 – 2012)
Completed scheme opened to traffic in 2009. Estimated Cost was 100M including land acquisition. Allocation in 2012 covered supervision of outstanding defects and settlement of final account. The three year defects period concluded on the 23rd October 2012.

Banagher Link Road Phase 2
This section of new road is 330 metres in length and links the Lusmagh Road with the Crank Road. Additional funding of €200,000 was sought and received from the DOT in 2011 to complete this improvement scheme which also includes sections of the existing Crank Road and Lusmagh Road.
The works were completed and opened to traffic in early 2012.

**National Roads Bridge Rehabilitation Project - Offaly County Council were the lead authority for bridges in Offaly, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny and Meath ( Allocation €100,000)**

The bridges in all 5 Counties were tendered under one contract. The successful Tender was submitted by Wills Bros Mayo. The County Offaly bridges included in the tender involved the total removal and replacement of Cox’s Bridge on the Clara Road Tullamore (N80) and minor improvement works were also carried out on Charlestown Bridge Clara (N80). The works were completed in early 2011 and the €100,000 allocation in 2012 related to retention monies held back from the contractor until the end of the defects period.

**National Roads Pavement and Minor Improvement Schemes 2012**

The initial allocation under this heading from the NRA in 2012 was €3,100,000. Additional funding of €1,276,857 was sought and received from the NRA during 2012 bringing the total allocation for 2012 to €4,376,857. The location and details of the schemes are as follows: -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scheme Details</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>N62 Cloghan to Ferbane</td>
<td>€1,107,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N62 Derrinlough and Doon</td>
<td>€2,564,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N80 (R420) Tullamore to Clara</td>
<td>€705,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>€4,376,857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Cloghan to Ferbane and the Tullamore to Clara schemes were planned, designed, tendered and supervised by the Road Design Section of Offaly County Council. The Derrinlough and Doon schemes were designed by NRA consultants with the assistance of the Road Design Section of Offaly County Council.
National Roads Surface Restoration of Skid Resistance Schemes 2012

Additional funding of €535,526 was received from the NRA for the restoration of skid resistance on the N52 and N62 at the following locations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N52</td>
<td>Kennedys Cross</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N52</td>
<td>Idle Corner</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N62</td>
<td>Ballyegan</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N62</td>
<td>Boolanarig</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N62</td>
<td>Galross Cross</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N62</td>
<td>Derrinlough</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N62</td>
<td>Crancreagh</td>
<td>2600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific Improvement Grants 2012
(Allocation €600,000) - Schemes undertaken and completed under this heading are as follows:

1. R402 Pavement Overlay between Mountlucas and Edenderry (€200,000)
2. Construction of new roundabout and junction layout at New Road/Church Road/Tanyard intersection in Tullamore. (€200,000)
3. Bridge improvements (€200,000) at 13 locations as follows: - Ballycon, Cloncrean and Borneiss in the Edenderry Area; Wilton, Lynally and Anagharvey in the Tullamore Area: Liffey Mills, Bridge Street Birr, Clonlisk and Nealstown in the Birr Area; Derrynagun, Ballyboy and Lumcloom in the Ferbane Area.

Safety Schemes on National Roads (2012 Initial Allocation €140,000; Final Allocation €847,319)
Safety Schemes carried out at the following locations in 2012:

1. Kilcruttin Junction Improvements Tullamore;
2. N62 Route Treatment Birr to Roscrea;
3. N52 Riverstown Wall Birr;
4. N80 Route Treatment Tullamore to Killeigh to County Boundary;
5. N80 (R402) Cox’s Bridge junction definition Tullamore;
6. New Road Junction Improvements Tullamore;

Safety Schemes on Non-National Roads
(Allocation €185,000)
Projects commenced/completed at the following locations in 2012:

1. Installation of safety barrier and signage on the R400 at Derrygreenagh on the Rhode to Rochfortbridge road;
2. Installation of Pedestrian Crossing on the Ferbane Relief Road;
3. Installation of signs and periodic speed limits at rural schools;
4. Junction definition, signing, lining and kerbing at Whiteford Cross Birr;
5. Road Improvements at Fahy Hill Rhode.

**Regional Signposting** (Allocation €110,000)
The following Regional Roads were allocated funding for the installation of poles and new signs in 2012:
- 1. R490 Moneygall to Cloughjordan;
- 2. R491 Shinrone to Roscrea;
- 3. R492 Shinrone to Blackbull;
- 4. R445 Old N7;
- 5. R446 Old N6.

**Multi Annual Road Restoration Programme**
(Allocation €3,579,230)
Under the 3 year (2011 – 2013) Restoration Programme Offaly County Councils allocation is €4,076,950 per annum. In 2012 this would have allowed Offaly Council complete 40 restoration improvement schemes. The allocation of €3,579,230 allowed for the completion of 35 schemes.
### Own Resources Allocation to County Roads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Estimates Allocation €</th>
<th>Allowance for Machinery Yard &amp; Stores €</th>
<th>Ineligible Expenditure on NNR Grants €</th>
<th>Actual Allocation to Area Engineers €</th>
<th>% Increase (+) or Reduction (-) In Actual Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,023,906</td>
<td>134,920</td>
<td>170,000 (E)</td>
<td>**888,986</td>
<td>-8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,291,700</td>
<td>325,979</td>
<td>172,000</td>
<td>965,721</td>
<td>-25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,291,700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,291,700</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,303,740</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,303,740</td>
<td>-14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,515,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,515,000</td>
<td>+2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,486,647</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,486,647</td>
<td>+3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,443,347</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,443,347</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Reduced further in July 2012 by €80,000 to €808,986

*E - Estimate*
As can be seen from the above table the actual fund available to the Area Engineers for ordinary maintenance on Local Roads has decreased steadily from **2008 to 2012**. The actual decrease amounts to **€706,014 or 47%**. The greatest reduction occurred from 2010 to 2011 of 25% and this was due to an allowance for the machinery yard and stores and also a requirement to take into account ineligible expenditure against Department of Transport Grants. There is approximately 1600 kms of local roads in the County and this amounts to 76% of the total road network. **We have gone from spending €947 per km on the Local Road Network in 2008 to €505 per km in 2012, a reduction of 46%**. The effect of this is the level of service is greatly reduced. Less maintenance including patching is carried out resulting in a deteriorated County Road network. This in turn can lead to an increase in public liability claims.

The grant allocations from the NRA and DTTS are used to supplement the County Roads allocations by carrying out as much as possible of the grant works by direct labour. However the 2010 Memorandum on Non-National Road grants limits the eligibility of certain expenditure against state grants. This means that we are more dependent on our own resources to pay wages, allowances, travel & subsistence etc. **During 2012 it has been a struggle to maintain an acceptable level of service based on the allocation provided from our own resources.** The Area Engineers have to prioritize patching in order to save money and stay within budget. In 2012 traffic counts were carried out on local roads in an effort to prioritize expenditure in relation to a future patching programme. Busy roads will attract a higher priority rating than less busy roads and patching will be prioritized on that basis. **The 2012 allocation should be increased as any further reductions in this allocation will see a dramatic fall off in the maintenance/condition of the County Road network.**

**Public Lighting**

- **NRA Allocation €102,160**;
- **Offaly Co Co Allocation €467,000**;
- **Tullamore TC Allocation €87,000**;
- **Birr TC Allocation €36,000**

This allocation is divided approximately 60% energy and 40% maintenance. The long term objective of Offaly County Council is to replace the existing inefficient lamps (orange/yellow) on the public lighting network over a 5 year period at a cost of €800,000.

Similar to 2011 savings have been achieved in 2012 on the maintenance element of public lighting. The public lighting network consists of network (light on pole where you also have overhead electrical wires) and non network (light only with no overhead wires) poles. It
is a requirement of the ESB that shared assets are de-bundled i.e. separate light from ESB apparatus. It is an objective of Offaly County Council to carry out this de-bundling on a phased basis. The estimate to carry out this work for the County is approximately €500,000. Any savings made in the maintenance budget at present are re-invested in the asset de-bundling. The asset de-bundling is progressed as funding allows.

Unfortunately the Public Lighting budget Allocation was reduced in July by €62,000 giving a 2012 revised allocation of €405,000. This budget cut reduces our ability to upgrade the public lighting network.

It is proposed to re-tender the public lighting maintenance in conjunction with the neighboring local authorities in early 2013.

**Smarter Travel** (Allocation; €424,000)
Funding of €424,000 was received from the DTSS under the smarter travel initiative for the following projects in 2012:

1. R420 Cycle route from Tullamore to Clara to Moate €400,000;
2. Active Towns Walking & Cycling Strategy for Birr & Edenderry € 24,000.

These projects were commenced/completed in November and December 2012

**Winter Maintenance**
(2012 NRA Allocation €158,800; 2012 DTTS Allocation €162,863 – Total €321,663)
The 2012 allocation is €190,487 less than the 2011 allocation. This is mainly due to the fact that the NRA and the DTTS are now procuring the salt and allocating an allowance to each Local Authority. The 2011/2012 season was mild in comparison to the previous 2 years with a minimum requirement to salt any roads.

The Co Council salted roads on 25 nights during this period. In 2011 a review of the salting routes was carried out with the objective that no driver was out longer than approximately 3 hours salting at any one time. A further review of the Winter Service Plan and Salting Routes was again carried out in 2012. In this review we had the benefit of traffic counts which were carried out on all the Regional Roads in the county during 2012. The traffic counts allowed us to prioritize salting on Regional Roads and resulted in a number of additional roads over the previous salting plan as follows:

- R438 – Cloghan to Anglers Rest;
- R356 – Wynnes Cross to Banagher;
- R436 – Fertbane to Clara;
- R357 Cloghan to Shannonbridge;
This new system will operate for the 2012/2013 season.

At the beginning of the season in Mid October all depots had 1024 tonnes of salt in stock. The normal procedure is pre-salting (rate of 10.00 gms/sq.m) starting at 7.00pm. A typical night’s usage is approx 35 to 40 tonnes of salt. Therefore at the beginning of the season we had sufficient salt for between 25 and 30 nights.

When the new 1000 tonne salt storage barn is completed in Birr, Offaly County Council will have a county wide salt storage capacity of 2240 tonnes allowing a spreading capacity of between 55 to 60 nights.

Winter Maintenance Equipment
(Funded by the NRA)
In 2012 we have made progress on the following issues:

1. Construction of new 1000 tonne salt storage barn for Birr;
2. Purchased a new 9.0 cu. metre salt spreader to be put into operation in the Ferbane Area in the 2012/2013 winter maintenance period;
3. Purchased 1 new snow plough;
4. Installation of new automatic brine making equipment at Ballydrohid Depot Tullamore and Croghan Road Birr;
5. Installation of SATNAV and GPS tracking units in all 4 Salt Spreaders.

Road Traffic (Speed Limits) (County of Offaly) Bye Laws 2011 (Amendments 2012)
The elected members of Offaly County Council adopted the "Road Traffic (Speed Limits) (County of Offaly) Bye Laws 2011(Amendments 2012)” at its monthly meeting held on the 18th June 2012. There were 2 amendments as follows:-

1. The re-classification of the N80 from a national road to a regional road meant that the default speed limit reduced from 100 kph to 80 kph. This amendment re-instated the speed limit to 100 kph;
2. The 60 kph speed limit on the Rathangan Road Edenderry was extended a further 200 metres towards Rathangan.

These amendments came into effect from the 1st July 2012.

Health and Safety
Health and Safety objectives were set out at the beginning of the year with the management team. The main focus was to improve on the Health and Safety performance of 2011 and ultimately provide a safer working environment for all employees of Offaly County
Council and members of the public.

There was an overall reduction in the accident ratio up to November 2012 when compared to the same period in 2011. Senior management continued to provide leadership in order to raise the profile of safety within Offaly County Council. Safety Committee’s in Offaly County Council met a number of times during the year to raise health and safety issues and more importantly to try and provide practical solutions to eliminating or reducing the risk to employees. The Safety Committee’s have been a useful communication tool for employees from different departments enabling them to interact and learn how health and safety improvements can be achieved within their areas.

During 2012 a number of inspections have been carried out with the Health and Safety Authority. These inspections have been used to raise awareness in areas that need slight improvements, however overall the inspections reflect the improvements which have been made by all employees during the year. The focus for Offaly County Council in 2013 will be to continue to build a close relationship with the local Health and Safety Inspectors and take on board the valuable advice issued by them.

The Offaly County Council online health and safety system was updated on the ‘I Portal System’ during the year. Improvements were carried out in conjunction with the suggestions made by staff members who use the I Portal System on a regular basis. This system has now become a valuable safety aid for employees when managing health and safety in their areas.

Internal health and safety inspections continue to be an integral part of Offaly County Councils system, and this has been well received by all employees this year. These inspections have helped to highlight areas for improvement and to prevent potential accidents from occurring. Internal inspection templates were developed to standardize the process of these inspections and were used by staff at all levels during the year. These inspections will continue throughout 2013.

Health and safety training continues to be at the forefront of improving health and safety awareness among staff and ensuring that staff are competent for carrying out the tasks in hand. In 2013, Offaly County Council will continue to ensure that relevant staff complete the statutory training they require.

The health and safety information, which is being developed at a national level and any new legislation will continue to be examined at local level and where deemed appropriate integrated into Offaly County Councils Health
and Safety System. This process will continue throughout 2013 with the aid of the Safety Committee Group.

**Efficiencies achieved in 2012**

1. Review of winter maintenance routes and procedures and presentation of a Revised Winter Service Plan to the Transportation and Emergency Services SPC;
2. Reviewed and confirmed Offaly County Council’s existing traffic calming policy at SPC level;
3. Purchased a new 9.0cu.metre salt spreader;
4. Commenced the installation of automated brine making systems in Tullamore and Birr salt depots;
5. Constructed a new 1000 tonne capacity salt barn in Birr;
6. Achieved savings in Public Lighting Maintenance;
7. Designed and tendered Regional Signposting in-house;
8. Design/tendering/supervision of National Road Minor Improvement Schemes in –house;
9. Supervised and constructed 3 major safety and minor improvement schemes on the N62 between Birr and Ballinahown;
10. Adoption of Road Traffic (Speed Limits)(County of Offaly) Bye Laws 2011 (Amendments 2012);
The aim of the Offaly County Council Fire Authority is to protect the public from fire and to preserve life and property. The Fire Service is an organisation established and maintained in accordance with Sections 9 and 10 of the Fire Services Act, 1981. Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service provides a total fire service to the community 24 hours a day every day of the year. The Fire Authority provides a number of services ranging from the emergency response to incidents such as fires, road traffic accidents, chemical incidents, etc. to ensuring the fire safety of the community and built environment through certification, inspection, enforcement and education. The Authority also provides information and training on fire safety management and fire fighting.

Operations
In 2012 Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service were alerted to 586 incidents, made up of 467 fire calls and 119 non-fire emergencies. The response to these calls came from 5 stations located throughout the county.

Section 26 Plan
The Section 26 Fire and Emergency plan formed the basis for the Fire Service work program 2012. The 2012 budget of €2.9 million maintained the Fire Service mainly due to the reduction in calls in 2012.

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

Significant resources have been made available for training within the Fire Service with an expected spend of €130,000 for training alone in 2012. In addition the Councils commitment to training for fire fighters, and research into the latest equipment and technology ensures that our fire crews are best equipped to respond quickly, safely and effectively to the full range of emergency incidents that we attend.

The training centre in Tullamore was utilised for training internally and by other Local Authorities. Income of €80,000 was generated in 2011.

Fire Prevention & Building Control
Offaly County Council Fire Service assessed over 70 Fire Safety Certificate, Dangerous Substances, and Disabled Access Certificate applications. The fire authority also gave advice on planning referrals, and dealt with 114
licensure applications. A total of 372 fire safety inspections of public premises took place.

Offaly Fire service is actively involved in the Community Smoke Alarm Project and fire alarms were installed in 350 homes in Offaly during 2012. The Fire Service also delivered the Fire Safety Schools program to all primary schools in the county.

The Building Control function of Offaly County Council is integrated into the fire service. This relates to the processing and reception of commencement notices and maintaining the register of same as per the building control regulations. This also includes the inspection and monitoring of new works to monitor for compliance with all the requirements of the Building Regulations, 1997. In total there were 99 inspections of 33 buildings carried out, which represent 27% of new buildings notified to the local authority.

**Major Emergency Management**

Both the Local and the Regional Major Emergency Plan were maintained, reviewed and revised by the Major Emergency Development Committee, the Regional Working Group and the Regional Steering Group. Offaly County Council participated in a regional major emergency exercise in Tullamore in October 2012.

**Civil Defence**

Civil Defence provided emergency response capability, and supported the community and events throughout 2012. Over 60 Civil Defence duties were carried out during 2012, providing Ambulance/First Aid cover and logistical support to various events such as: 10k walks; Cycling races; Football matches; Charity events; Community activities; St. Patrick’s Day parades; Equestrian events; and the Tullamore Phoenix festival. The largest duty in terms of manpower and resources, were the Tullamore Livestock show. Civil Defence worked in conjunction with other agencies such as the HSE Ambulance service, Gardai, Irish Red Cross, Order of Malta and Offaly Fire & Rescue Service.
INTERNAL SERVICES (incl. CORPORATE SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCES, FINANCE, INFORMATION SYSTEMS)

CORPORATE SERVICES
Director of Services: Seán Murray
Senior Executive Officer: Monica Cleary
Partnership Facilitator/Administrative Officer: Gerry Bruton

FINANCE
Head of Finance: Declan Conlon
Financial Management Accountant: Thomas Mawe
Administrative Officer: Mary Gaughran

HUMAN RESOURCES
Director of Services: Declan Kirrane
Senior Executive Officer: Ann Dillon
Administrative Officer: Paula Donovan

INFORMATION SYSTEMS
Director of Services: Frank Heslin
Head of I.S.: Hugh O’Donoghue
I.S. Project Leader: Ray Bell
I.S. Project Leader: Eileen Jackson

CORPORATE SERVICES

Functions
The main functions of the Corporate Services section include:

- To provide an efficient and professional secretariat to the Council and their committees.
- To make information available to the members in a timely, convenient and flexible manner to allow for informed decision making.
- To maintain and update the register of electors.
- To implement the Student Grant Scheme in a fair and efficient manner.
- To develop initiatives to increase cross-departmental awareness and input to the development of corporate policies.
- To improve communications internally and externally on Local Authorities activities.
- To ensure best practice is applied in securing value for money in the management and maintenance of corporate property.
Support Services
There are 21 Councillors on Offaly County Council. The Corporate Services section provides a secretariat service for meetings of the County Council. The Council normally meets on the third Monday of each month, excluding August. In addition an Annual Budget Meeting and an Annual Meeting must be held. In all, 14 council meetings were held in 2012.

At the Annual Meeting, held on 18th June 2012, Councillor Peter Ormond was elected Cathaoirleach and Councillor Liam Quinn was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

The May monthly meeting, held on 21st May 2012, was held in Mountbolus Community Centre. After the meeting the Members visited Teach Failte - Acquired Brain Injury Foundation Ireland which is located in Mountbolus.

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

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

The Corporate Policy Group met on 11 occasions during 2012.

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

The following Chairpersons were elected to chair the SPC’s at the Annual meeting:
- Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services – Cllr. N. Hogan
- Planning, Economic and Local Development – Cllr. S. Dooley
- Transportation and Emergency Service – Cllr G. Plunkett
- Environment and Water Services – Cllr. J. Leahy

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Total Poll</th>
<th>% Turnout</th>
<th>Votes in Favour</th>
<th>Votes Against</th>
<th>Invalid Ballot Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>10,699</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edenderry</td>
<td>15,570</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferbane</td>
<td>11,859</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullamore</td>
<td>18,585</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total on the Register</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,713</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Supplements to the Register of Electors were produced in 2012, i.e., for the Referenda held on 31st May and 10th November 2012. The total number of Presidential Electors (eligible to vote in a Referendum) on the Register of Electors on 31st May was 54,422. The total number of Presidential Electors on the Register on 10th November was 54,123.

Referendum on the Thirtieth Amendment of the Constitution (Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union) Bill 2012, 31st May 2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Total Poll</th>
<th>% Turnout</th>
<th>Invalid Ballot Papers</th>
<th>Valid Poll</th>
<th>Votes in Favour</th>
<th>Votes Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laois-Offaly</td>
<td>106,297</td>
<td>51,654</td>
<td>48.59</td>
<td>30,655</td>
<td>20,741</td>
<td>258</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above data from www.referendum.ie

Thirty-first Amendment of the Constitution (Children) Bill 2012, 10th November 2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Total Poll</th>
<th>% Turnout</th>
<th>Invalid Ballot Papers</th>
<th>Valid Poll</th>
<th>Votes in Favour</th>
<th>Votes Against</th>
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<tr>
<td>Laois-Offaly</td>
<td>108,495</td>
<td>34,715</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>34,592</td>
<td>18,563 (53.66%)</td>
<td>16,029 (46.34%)</td>
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Above data from www.referendum.ie

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

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

- Mr. Brian Pey, Administrative Officer gave a presentation on Grove Street Interagency Steering Group;
- Ms. Niamh Dowler, Community Forum Support Worker briefed the meeting on *Offaly Mental Health Talk Week*, 12\(^{th}\) to 16\(^{th}\) November 2012 and briefed the members on other initiatives, including the Community Watch Network, which the Community Forum are progressing; and
- Ms. Catherine Roundtree, Offaly JigSaw Project Manager informed the members that she would be implementing the JigSaw model developed by HeadStrong in Offaly. She advised that a JigSaw hub would be established in Tullamore and she proposed to meet various community groups and schools throughout the county. JigSaw, she informed the members, works with persons aged 12 to 25 and their parents.

**Presentations to Oireachtas Members**
The Management Team met members of the Oireachtas in 8\(^{th}\) October 2012 and provided an update with regard to the operations of Offaly Local Authorities.

**Swimming Pools**
Corporate Services administer the Council’s support grants for swimming pools.
# Offaly County Council Members

## Birr Electoral Area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carroll, John</td>
<td>The Ring, Birr</td>
<td>(057) 91 20976</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllrjohncarroll@eircom.net">cllrjohncarroll@eircom.net</a></td>
<td>Non-Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clendennnen, Percy</td>
<td>Kinnitty, Birr</td>
<td>(057) 91 37076</td>
<td><a href="mailto:percy.clendennnen@gmail.com">percy.clendennnen@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ormond, Peter</td>
<td>Kyleogue, Shinrone, Birr</td>
<td>(0505) 47079</td>
<td><a href="mailto:peter.ormond@gmail.com">peter.ormond@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLoughlin, Tony</td>
<td>Main Street, Birr</td>
<td>(057) 91 21376</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cllrtonymcloughlin@eircom.net">cllrtonymcloughlin@eircom.net</a></td>
<td>Non-Party</td>
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## Edenderry Electoral Area:

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bourke, Noel</td>
<td>Killane, Edenderry</td>
<td>(046) 97 31295</td>
<td><a href="mailto:noelbourke@hotmail.com">noelbourke@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzpatrick, Eddie</td>
<td>Benfield, Clonehyrke,</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:eddiefitzp@eircom.net">eddiefitzp@eircom.net</a></td>
<td>Non-Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foley, John</td>
<td>Kilane, Edenderry</td>
<td>(046) 97 32332</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@johnfoley.ie">info@johnfoley.ie</a></td>
<td>Non-Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogan, Nichola</td>
<td>8 The Sycamores, Edenderry</td>
<td>(086) 384 0320</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nhogan@lawlibrary.ie">nhogan@lawlibrary.ie</a></td>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plunkett, Ger</td>
<td>Ballycrystal, Geashill</td>
<td>(057) 93 43854</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gerardplunkett@hotmail.com">gerardplunkett@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinn, Liam</td>
<td>Edenderry Road, Rhode</td>
<td>(087) 916 3066</td>
<td><a href="mailto:liamjg@gmail.com">liamjg@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
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## Ferebane Electoral Area:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dooley, Eamon</td>
<td>Na Tullaig, Aughaboy, Ferebane</td>
<td>(090) 64 54510</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eamondooley@hotmail.com">eamondooley@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanniffy, Constance</td>
<td>Doon, Ballinahown</td>
<td>(090) 64 30106</td>
<td><a href="mailto:connieh@iol.ie">connieh@iol.ie</a></td>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leahy, John</td>
<td>Glendine, Kilcormac</td>
<td>(087) 207 3226</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@johnleahy.net">info@johnleahy.net</a></td>
<td>Non-Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moylan Ryan, Sinead</td>
<td>Woodbank, Shannonbridge</td>
<td>(057) 91 51113</td>
<td><a href="mailto:smoylanryan@gmail.com">smoylanryan@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Fianna Fáil</td>
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## Tullamore Electoral Area:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buckley, Molly</td>
<td>Moylena, Clara Rd, Tullamore</td>
<td>(057) 93 41357</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mollybuckley@eircom.net">mollybuckley@eircom.net</a></td>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfield, Johnny</td>
<td>Ballincanty, Blueball, Tullamore</td>
<td>(057) 93 54027</td>
<td><a href="mailto:butterfield.ias@eircom.net">butterfield.ias@eircom.net</a></td>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolan, Dervil</td>
<td>10 Cormac Street, Tullamore</td>
<td>(057) 93 23530</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dervildolan@eircom.net">dervildolan@eircom.net</a></td>
<td>Non-Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dooley, Sinead</td>
<td>Rahan Road, Sragh, Tullamore</td>
<td>(057) 93 51828</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sineadtdooley@gmail.com">sineadtdooley@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>Non-Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>McKeigue, Thomas</td>
<td>Spollanstown, Tullamore</td>
<td>(057) 93 41519</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tommymckeigue@eircom.net">tommymckeigue@eircom.net</a></td>
<td>Fine Gael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, Danny</td>
<td>Lugamarla, Mountbolus,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rowland, Paddy</td>
<td>Knockowen Road, Tullamore</td>
<td>(057) 93 52917</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dannyowens@eircom.net">dannyowens@eircom.net</a></td>
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<td>Connie Hanniffy</td>
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<td>Tony McLoughlin</td>
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<td>“The Tragic Impacts of Major Flooding and Freezing Spells”</td>
<td>20th – 22nd January 2012</td>
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<td>“EU Funding &amp; Functions”</td>
<td>27th – 29th January 2012</td>
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<td>“Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2009”</td>
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<td>LAMA Spring Seminar 2012</td>
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<td>26th – 27th April 2012</td>
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<td>Association of County &amp; City Councils Annual Conference 2012</td>
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<td>“The Councillor and the Environment”</td>
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<td>“Getting to grips with the Nation’s Debt”</td>
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<td>“Pride in our County – Pride in our Place”</td>
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<td>Byrne/Perry Summer School</td>
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<tr>
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<td>“Reform of Local Government: Implications and consequences for councillors, provision of services and communities”</td>
<td>6th – 8th July 2012</td>
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<td>Percy French Summer School</td>
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<td>Education (Amendment) (Protection of Schools) Birr 2012</td>
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<td>A.M.A.I. Centenary Annual Conference</td>
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<td>LAMA Autumn Seminar 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Constitutional &amp; Political Reform and the Councillor”</td>
<td>5th – 6th October 2012</td>
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<td>“Collecting Local Government Revenue: Dealing with households on low incomes”</td>
<td>12th – 13th October 2012</td>
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<td>“Septic Tank Case Studies, Solving the Problems”</td>
<td>19th – 20th October 2012</td>
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<td>“Debt Settlement”</td>
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<td>AOIFE Conference 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Education for Work Initiatives”</td>
<td>9th – 10th November 2012</td>
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</table>
Freedom of Information - Statistics:
In 2012 under the Freedom of Information Act, the total numbers of applications were as follows:

- 14 applications received by Offaly County Council;
- 0 applications received by Birr Town Council;
- 1 application received by Tullamore Town Council; and
- 0 applications received by Edenderry Town Council.

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

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

279 Student Grant renewals were awarded by Offaly County Council in the 2012/2013 academic year. €1,692,649.67 was spent on 2012/2013 Student Grants during this period. This money is recoupable from the Department of Education & Skills, except for a fixed contribution made by Offaly County Council. The administration of the scheme is a service provided by this Council to students and parents in County Offaly.

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

During 2012 the Internal Auditor undertook a number of audits and the findings and recommendations from each audit were reported to management. The Internal Auditor also undertook follow up audits to assess the implementation of the recommendations from the previous audits.
The Audit Committee in Offaly County Council consists of five members: Mr. Peter Scully, Committee Chairman, Cllr. Connie Hanniffy, Mr. Brian Gunning, Mr. Paddy Hughes and Mr. Tom Feighery. The Audit Committee met 4 times in 2012.

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

**County Coroners**
The total expenditure was €259,987.05 (including salary) in respect of coroners’ inquests in 2012.

**Exhibitions held in Áras an Chontae**
A number of art exhibitions were held in Áras an Chontae during 2012.

**Partnership Committee**
The Partnership Committee held 4 meetings in 2012.

Mr Jason Leigh, replaced Mr. Joe Dwyer on the Committee as a SIPTU Representative.

The Committee considered a number of important issues during the year and considered reports on the proposals to establish Irish Water, the Service Plans and Budget Saving Measures for 2012. In the last quarter of 2012, the Committee noted that the LGMA were establishing a Working Group to examine Workforce Plans, including an exercise which conducted a review of the number of staff at the senior grades in local authorities, a re-evaluation of specialist posts and a review of inter-changeability between posts. The Committee were briefed on the proposals for the updated PMDS Process.

Following proposals from the national HR Officers Group it was agreed that the Partnership Committee would include Equality issues on their meeting agendas.

At the request of the County Manager, the Committee acted as a forum to advise staff on the Change Management Initiative, which commenced in November 2012.

At a national level LANPAG issued a document “New Direction for Workplace Partnership in the Local Authority Sector”, a national seminar was held in April attended by all stakeholders to examine the document and consider the future direction for Partnership in the local government sector.

Three issues of the Staff Newsletter Inside View circulated during the year.
FINANCE

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

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

Our Services
The Finance Department deals with both the short and long term financing of all the Council’s operations, both of a Revenue and Capital nature. This involves:
- Monitoring and controlling income and expenditure;
- Arranging financing requirements;
- Treasury Management; and
- Compliance with all statutory and financial accounting principles, which apply to all monies paid by or to the Council.

The Council’s revenue and day-to-day expenditure is funded from sources such as:
- Commercial Rates;
- Local Government Fund;
- Government Grants; and
- Housing Rents, Planning Fees, Commercial Water Charges, NPPR, Household Charges and other Fees.

MAIN SECTIONS WITHIN FINANCE

Financial and Management Accounting
Financial reporting is the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS), other statutory returns, reporting to external agencies and dealing with the Local Government Audit process. Management Accounting is the preparation of quarterly management reports to assist with budgetary control and the decision-making process within each directorate. The Annual Budget process is managed in this section, in consultation with all the service divisions. This section provides variance analysis, costing information and other financial information required by internal and external customers.
Central Revenue Collection
This section mainly deals with the recovery of Commercial Rates, Housing Rents, Housing loans, Water billing, and other charges - collection and receipt of all monies due to the Council.

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

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

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

General Ledger/AgressoSupport
This group manage the central Financial Management system and ensure proper control over all the organisations assets and liabilities. Compliance with the national accounting code of practice and enforcement of DECLG circulars also fall within its remit.

Risk Management
Coordination of the Risk Management function within Offaly County Council.

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

MAIN REPORTS PRODUCED BY FINANCE

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

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

Quarterly Management Reports
The quarterly management report provides details of the income and expenditure for the various services provided by the council. The actual results are compared to Budget and all variances investigated to assist with the
monitoring and control of the Budget.

**DECLG/IMF Quarterly Reporting**

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

**Motor Taxation Office**

This office issues vehicle and driving licences and processes other transactions such as change of ownership for pre-1993 vehicles, certificates of roadworthiness, vehicle registration certificates vehicle licensing arrears The Section also produces information for Gardai and other Local Authorities, e.g. penalty points, traffic fines, parking fines, etc. The Motor Taxation Office is open to the public from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., including lunchtime, Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays. Payment can be made at the counter, electronically and through postal application. In 2012, this office generated approximately €10.0m in revenue, handled over 90,000 transactions (52% over the counter, 10% via post and 38% was processed online)

**Revenue Collection Service Indicators**

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

- Rents 89%
- Commercial Rates 92%
- Housing Loans 59%
- Non Domestic Water Charges 67%
## DRAFT INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2012

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

### Expenditure by Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; Building</td>
<td>€6,541,058</td>
<td>€6,345,829</td>
<td>€195,230</td>
<td>€680,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads Transportation &amp; Safety</td>
<td>€18,665,362</td>
<td>€14,667,246</td>
<td>€3,998,116</td>
<td>€4,358,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Services</td>
<td>€10,939,396</td>
<td>€3,220,802</td>
<td>€7,718,594</td>
<td>€7,974,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Management</td>
<td>€3,301,926</td>
<td>€406,599</td>
<td>€2,895,327</td>
<td>€3,163,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Services</td>
<td>€6,287,355</td>
<td>€1,625,645</td>
<td>€4,661,710</td>
<td>€2,663,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation &amp; Amenity</td>
<td>€2,765,236</td>
<td>€429,378</td>
<td>€2,335,858</td>
<td>€2,501,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Education, Health &amp; Welfare</td>
<td>€3,353,013</td>
<td>€3,087,254</td>
<td>€265,758</td>
<td>€278,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Services</td>
<td>€6,744,184</td>
<td>€3,929,265</td>
<td>€2,814,919</td>
<td>€1,572,893</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Expenditure/Income**  

|                      | 58,597,531 | 33,712,018 |

### Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Government Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rates</td>
<td>€8,978,296</td>
<td>€7,899,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Fund - General Purpose Grant</td>
<td>€12,404,208</td>
<td>€13,273,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension Related Deduction</td>
<td>€1,118,375</td>
<td>€996,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Charge</td>
<td>€2,078,800</td>
<td>€2,083,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers**  

|                      | (€305,834) | 1,058,615  |

**Transfers from/(to) Reserves**

|                      | (€990,683) | (€3,231,170) |
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,296,517)</td>
<td>(2,172,555)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Reserve @ 1st January 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4,071,700)</td>
<td>(1,899,145)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Reserve @ 31st December 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5,368,218)</td>
<td>(4,071,700)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Capital Account Summary**

*Extract from The Draft Annual Financial Statement for the Year ended December 31, 2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance (Debit):Credit @ 1 January</td>
<td>10,284,358</td>
<td>14,499,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure (Incl Transfers)</td>
<td>(17,504,568)</td>
<td>(29,046,207)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income (Incl Transfers)</td>
<td>14,481,494</td>
<td>24,831,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance (Debit):Credit @ 31 December</td>
<td>7,261,284</td>
<td>10,284,358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HUMAN RESOURCES

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

Workforce Planning and Analysis
In 2012, almost 20 significant data requests issued to the HR department from the Local Government Efficiency Review Office, the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Value for Money Unit of the Local Government Audit Service and the Local Government Management Services Agency and other sources.

A report on Workforce Planning in the local government sector issued to all Local Authorities in late 2012. This set out the required staffing levels at senior and managerial grades and the on-going requirement to examine all indoor and outdoor staffing levels with a view to ensuring the optimum and most efficient staffing levels for the delivery of local government services.

Moratorium on Public Service Recruitment
Offaly County Council continues to comply with the moratorium on public service recruitment. This Council has had a policy of non-replacement of retiring/departing staff since September 2008 except where an essential, statutory or public health and safety need exists. Offaly Local Authorities have sustained an almost 27% reduction in staffing levels since 2008 without any significant reduction in service levels. It is recognised and acknowledged that staff continue to deliver efficient and effective local government services to the citizens of Offaly in the context of reduced staffing and financial resources.

Notwithstanding the moratorium, Offaly County Council held the following competitions in 2012;
- Acting Executive Technician (Environmental);
- Acting Senior Staff Officer (Confined);
- Acting Senior Executive Engineer (Confined);
- Acting Executive Engineer (Confined);
• Temporary Relief Branch Librarian;
• Temporary Senior Resident Engineer (Water Services Capital Programme);
• Retained Fire Fighter Clara; and
• Retained Driver Mechanic Clara (confined)

In all there were 138 applicants, 74 candidates were interviewed and 40 candidates were placed on panels in 2012.

**Industrial Relations and the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014**

2012 saw the continued implementation of Local Action Plans under the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 (Croke Park Agreement).

Offaly County Council reported savings of over €1.5 million for the period April 1st 2011 to March 31st 2012, and €255,625 (excluding payroll savings) for the period April 1st 2012 to December 31st 2012 under the following headings in the agreement;

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

A revised action plan for 2012 – 2013 for Offaly Local Authorities, also under these headings, was also prepared in consultation with trade unions in early 2012.

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

**Training & Staff Development**

Corporate level training was provided in response to service and organisational needs in 2012. 550 staff participants undertook a total of 163 training days on programmes including water services, health and safety, information technology, planning, library services, housing, roads, public lighting, child protection, energy, major emergency management, procurement and staff welfare among others.

Financial support for staff wishing to pursue third /higher level qualifications relevant to their work was discontinued in 2009 and remained in suspension in
2012 for budgetary reasons.

**Information Systems solutions for HR – the CORE system**

Offaly County Council continues to work with other Local Authorities and the Local Government Management Agency in the development of reporting systems which will maximise the use of the data available through the CORE information system including the production of regular reports to management which will assist them in the design and management of service delivery.

**Staff Notes 2012**

The following staff members retired during 2012:

- John Rattigan, Foreman;
- John Wynne, General Operative;
- Donal Treacy, Lorry Driver;
- Margaret Sherlock Boland, Assistant Staff Officer;
- Catherine Bowe, Clerical Officer;
- Denis Mooney, Foreman;
- Rose Cassisdy, Assistant Staff Officer;
- Mary Hynes, Branch Librarian; and
- Joseph Larkin, Town Foreman.

Two serving employees of Offaly Local Authorities, John Verdon (Information Systems Analyst) and Pat

Rosney (Foreman) died during 2012 and are sadly missed by their colleagues and friends in Offaly County Council.

**Service Indicators**

Total % of working days lost to sickness absence in 2012 was 4.13%

The total spend on Training and Development was 2.83% of productive payroll (target is 3%).

*Social Club Charity Walk 2012*
INFORMATION SYSTEMS

In 2012 the Information Systems department continued implementing a series of initiatives designed to lower costs and increase efficiencies in the organisation.

The main projects that were progressed during the year were:

- Facilitating the growth of business on the Edenderry and Birr Broadband MANs which were successfully lit during 2011 and are now commercially available;
- Facilitating Airspeed Networks to deliver the Schools Broadband Scheme in the Ferbane area;
- Evaluation and decision to move GIS platform to ARCGIS resulting in savings in licensing costs;
- Continued development of a Green ICT policy which included:
  - Completing Phase 3 of the development of SAN and Virtualisation technologies in the Council’s main ICT Server Room and DR facility.
  - Continued implementation of Energy Saving technology on all Council PCs.
  - Upgrade of all PCs/Laptops etc to latest OS – Windows7
  - Continued deployment of Multi Function devices to replace individual printers, scanners and photocopiers.
  - These initiatives will result in savings in communications, energy and maintenance costs in line with the the National Energy Efficiency Plan and a reduction of the organisation’s carbon footprint in the medium term;
- Implementation of revised structures for broadband connectivity between the Council’s office locations in Tullamore and to Government Networks, again resulting in lower communications costs for the organisation;
- Completion of all ICT requirements regarding the re-development of the County Library Headquarters in Tullamore;
- Completion of Phase 1 online portal requirements for the National waste Collection Permits Office, now based in Aras an Chondera; and
- Upgrade of Mail system to Exchange 2010.
TULLAMORE TOWN COUNCIL

Director of Services: Declan Kirrane
Town Clerk: Martin Daly
Senior Executive Engineer: Paul Devaney

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

Elected Members of Tullamore Town Council
• Councillor Laurence Byrne (Cathaoirleach June 2012);
• Councillor Sinead Dooley;
• Councillor Molly Buckley;
• Councillor Declan Harvey;
• Councillor Brendan Killeavy;
• Councillor Tony McCormack;
• Councillor Tommy McKeigue;
• Councillor Sean O’Brien; and
• Councillor Paddy Rowland.

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

Highlights of 2012
• Supporting the development of a distillery by William Grant & Sons at Clonminch;
• Maintaining street cleaning services, thereby contributing to maintaining the town’s ’Clean to European Norms’ status in the IBAL Litter League improving by 3 places from the previous year;
• Winning a silver medal in the annual Tidy Towns Competition;
• Establishment of Tullamore Working Group with the aim to work in partnership to further define Tullamore’s unique selling points and build on its distinctive strengths as a great place to invest in, live in, work and visit;
• Review and adoption of Parking Bye-laws;
• Supporting the re-opening of Tullamore Dew Visitor Centre by William Grant & Sons following a major refurbishment and investment programme;
• Completion of Part 8 process for Tullamore Arts Centre;
• Supporting of Summer Arts Programme in Kilbrook & Puttaghaun housing estates;
• Assisting in the establishment of the Jigsaw Project; and
• Siac Construction Ltd appointed as contractors, and Temporary Access Licence obtained from Waterways Ireland, for Tullamore Canal Corridor Project.

Joe Larkin, Town Foreman, retired in October 2012 after 43 years service, pictured with family, colleagues and members of Tullamore Town Council.

Representatives to Various Bodies:

Vocational Educational Committee:
A.M.A.I.:
Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.:
Offaly Strategic Policy Committees:
Tullamore Leisure Ltd:
Offaly County Development Board:
Tullamore Sports Link Ltd.:
Tullamore/Chandler Sister Cities
Tullamore Arts Centre Ltd
Environment & Water Services Strategic Policy Committee
Transportation & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee

Cllr. Brendan Killeavy
Cllr. Laurence Byrne
Cllr. Sean O’Brien
Cllr. Tommy McKeigue
Cllr. Paddy Rowland
Cllr. Brendan Killeavy
Cllr. Molly Buckley
Cllr. Paddy Rowland
Cllr. Sean O’Brien
Cllr. Tony McCormack
Cllr. Tommy McKeigue
Cllr. Buckley
Cllr. McCormack
Cllr. McKeigue
Cllr. Harvey
Cllr. Killeavy
Cllr. Rowland
EDENDERRY TOWN COUNCIL

Director of Services: Declan Conlon
A/Town Clerk: Therese O’Meara
Senior Executive Engineer: Damien Grennan

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

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

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

Representatives to Various Bodies
Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland: Councillor Fergus McDonnell; Councillor Liam Hogan.

Barrow Drainage Board: Councillor Finian O’Neill.

Elected Members of Edenderry Town Council
- Cllr. Patricia Brady, Fine Gael;
- Cllr. Mary Breen, (Cathaoirleach), Fianna Fáil;
- Cllr. Noel Cribbin, Non-Party;
- Cllr. John Foley, (Leas Cathaoirleach), Non-Party;
- Cllr. Liam Hogan, Fine Gael;
- Cllr. Fergus McDonnell Non-Party;
- Cllr. Jim Murrin, Non-Party;
- Cllr. Finian O'Neill Fianna Fáil; and

Issues Developed andProgressed In 2012
During the year the Councillors were actively involved in the promotion of all aspects of life in Edenderry. To this end, a €1,000 contribution was given to the first ever St. Patrick’s Day committee who organised a very successful parade in the town. A further €1,000 was donated to EASA Edenderry Addressing Substance Abuse.
The traditional lighting of the Christmas lights and tree occurred at the Town Hall in December with a magical Santa and sleigh for all the children with gifts for all. A collective approach from Edenderry Chamber of Commerce and Community, FAS, Edenderry Town Council members and Offaly County Council staff organised and constructed a well lit Christmas tree, Townhall and street lighting.

Edenderry Town Council members this year were delighted with the progress being made on the R402 Edenderry to Enfield Road, a project they have lobbied for continuously. It is hoped that this new road construction will improve the link with Dublin and hence open up Edenderry for new business and industry. Members met with newly formed business association ECUBS and have plans to work collectively on certain aspects of promoting Edenderry as a place to visit, work and do business.

Joint Policing Committee carried out their 2012 work plan - this included the establishment of new residence and neighbourhood watch groups, worked towards securing old derelict sites and cooperation between agencies to deliver a successful and safe Halloween.

Tremendous success was achieved by Edenderry Senior Football team winning the Senior Football title. Members were so impressed with the positive lift given to the town in 2011 that they decided to hold a civic reception to honour the team and management. This event took place 3rd February, 2012 in the Town Hall, Edenderry. A second victorious football win was achieved by St Mary’s Secondary School in winning the All-Ireland College A football final. A special medal presentation took place at Johnstown House Hotel, Enfield to which Edenderry Town Councillors were invited and presented certificates to all players and management as well as overall gift for the school.
BIRR TOWN COUNCIL

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Michael Loughnane
Director of Services: Frank Heslin
Town Clerk: James Hogan
Town Engineer: Anne Healy

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

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

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

The following are the elected Members of Birr Town Council:-
- Councillor Tony McLoughlin, Non-Party;
- Councillor Denis Sheils, Non-Party;

- Councillor Noel Russell, Fianna Fail;
- Councillor John Carroll, Non-Party;
- Councillor Michael Loughnane, Fianna Fail;
- Councillor Michael Campbell, Fine Gael;
- Councillor Denis Tierney, Fianna Fail;
- Councillor Brian Whelahan, Fine Gael; and
- Councillor Bernadette Fanneran, Fianna Fail.

General Overview of 2012 Activities
2012 was another positive year for both the Council and Birr town with a number of important projects completed and a continuation of the visual enhancement of the town.

Among the main highlights of the year were:-
- Overlay at the Cherry Tree Junction;
- Completion of accessibility works at various locations in Birr;
- Road restoration at the entrance to Sandymount Avenue;
• Road restoration of the lanes at the rear of High Street;
• Road restoration on road to soccer field;
• Road restoration at Whiteford Cross to Syngefield Cross;
• Pre-letting repairs carried out on 20 houses;
• 41 houses were insulated;
• 23 houses are now signed up to the Social Housing Leasing Scheme;
• Water pipes, which were subject to freezing, were re-laid;
• Post and panel fencing erected at Scurragh and Cappanale;
• New wall erected at McAuley Drive;
• Realignment of kerbing at Cappanale;
• Tullamore Road Gateway project was completed;
• Works commenced on the Roscrea Road Gateway;
• 16 new Litter Bins were provided;
• Replacement of fencing along the Camcor riverside walk – 120m to date;
• Worked in partnership with Birr Tidy Towns and TUS on projects such as street cleaning, gardening and grass cutting;
• Footpaths provided on the Tullamore Rd, Riverstown Rd. and Roscrea Rd;
• Repair to the wall and removal of trees at Gallow’s Hill;
• Completion of the Salt Barn at the Croghan Rd;
• Ongoing attention to the issue of Derelict Sites;
• Maintaining the Housing Stock;
• Maintaining street cleaning services in the town.

REPRESENTAIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES:
Vocational Educational Committee: Cllr. John Carroll Cllr. Bernadette Fanneran
Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.: Cllr. Michael Loughnane
Offaly Strategic Policy Committee Cllr. Michael Loughnane
Oxmanton Hall, Theatre & Arts Centre: Cllr. Bernadette Fanneran Cllr. Denis Tierney
Meitheal Birr: Chairperson, Town Council
## Service Indicators 2012

### Housing

#### Housing Vacancies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Total number of dwellings in local authority stock</td>
<td>1,751</td>
<td>1,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Total number of dwellings excluding those subject to major refurbishment projects</td>
<td>1,748</td>
<td>1,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Overall % of dwellings that are empty (excluding those subject to major refurbishment)</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>1.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. % of empty dwellings unavailable for letting</td>
<td>80.95%</td>
<td>95.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. % of empty dwellings available for letting</td>
<td>23.31%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Average Time Taken to Re-let Available Dwellings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The average time taken (in weeks) from notification of date of vacation of dwelling to the date when all necessary repairs are carried out which are deemed necessary to re-let the dwelling.</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The average time taken (in weeks) from works (above) being completed to the date of the first rent debit.</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Housing Repairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of repairs completed as a percentage of the number of valid repair requests received.</td>
<td>98.63%</td>
<td>97.77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Traveller Accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Traveller families accommodated as a percentage of the targets set in the local Traveller accommodation programme.</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
<td>57.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Enforcement of standards in private rented sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Total number of registered tenancies</td>
<td>2,243</td>
<td>2,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. No. of dwelling units inspected</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. No. of inspections carried out</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Number of dwellings inspected as % of registered tenancies (i.e. B as a % of A)</td>
<td>3.34%</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### H6  Grants to adapt housing for the needs of people with a disability

<p>| | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Average time taken (in weeks) to process applications under the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme, including any necessary inspection(s), from the date of receipt of a valid application to the date of decision on the application.</td>
<td>12.43</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Average time taken (in weeks) to process applications under Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability, including any necessary inspection(s), from the date of receipt of a valid application, to the date of decision on the application.</td>
<td>39.12</td>
<td>51.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### H7  Pre-Tenancy Familiarisation Courses

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Total number of local authority tenants.</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. % of new local authority tenants who have been offered pre-tenancy familiarisation courses.</td>
<td>97.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Roads Indicator

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1  Road Restoration Programme</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. No. of kilometres of local &amp; regional roads improved &amp; maintained under the Restoration Programme per annum.</td>
<td>97.707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. No. of kilometres of local &amp; regional roads constructed under the specific improvements grants scheme per annum.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Motor Taxation Indicator

#### M1

**Number of Motor Tax Transactions which**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. are dealt with over the counter</td>
<td>52,420</td>
<td>50,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. are dealt with by post</td>
<td>8,886</td>
<td>7,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)</td>
<td>21,279</td>
<td>31,886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage of motor tax transactions which**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D. are dealt with over the counter</td>
<td>63.47%</td>
<td>55.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. are dealt with by post</td>
<td>10.75%</td>
<td>8.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)</td>
<td>25.76%</td>
<td>35.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### M2

**Time Taken to Process Motor Tax Postal Applications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) from receipt of the application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. On the same day</td>
<td>7,624</td>
<td>7,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. On the 2nd or 3rd day</td>
<td>1,168</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. On the 4th or 5th day</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Over 5 days</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc issued) from receipt of the application**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. On the same day</td>
<td>85.80%</td>
<td>86.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. On the 2nd or 3rd day</td>
<td>13.14%</td>
<td>9.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. On the 4th or 5th day</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Over 5 days</td>
<td>0.82%</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### M3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Taken to Process Driving Licence Applications</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of driving licence applications which are dealt with from receipt of the application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. On the same day</td>
<td>2,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. On the 2nd or 3rd day</td>
<td>1,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. On the 4th or 5th day</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Over 5 days</td>
<td>5,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of driving licence applications which are dealt with from receipt of the application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. On the same day</td>
<td>26.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. On the 2nd or 3rd day</td>
<td>12.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. On the 4th or 5th day</td>
<td>5.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Over 5 days</td>
<td>56.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### M4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public opening hours:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average number of opening hours per week</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

#### Water Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E1</th>
<th>Unaccounted for Water</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unaccounted water (UFW) as a % of total volume of water supplied under the water supply schemes that the local authority is responsible for.</td>
<td>47.00%</td>
<td>47.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E2</th>
<th>Drinking Water Analysis*</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong> of drinking water analyses results in compliance with statutory requirements with regards to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. public schemes</td>
<td>99.30%</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. private schemes (where appropriate)</td>
<td>96.10%</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Drinking Water Analysis was not reported in 2011 Final Report
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waste Segregation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of households who receive a waste collection service and are provided with segregated waste collection for:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Dry recyclables</td>
<td>84.29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Organics</td>
<td>7.51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Waste Sent for Recycling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household waste collected from kerbside which is sent for recycling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Percentage</td>
<td>23.87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Tonnage</td>
<td>3,306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Tonnage of household waste recycled, which arises from waste collected from recycling facilities (i.e. bring banks, civic amenity sites, transfer stations and other recycling facilities)</td>
<td>3,930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Waste Sent for Landfill</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household waste collected which is sent to landfill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Percentage</td>
<td>76.12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Tonnage</td>
<td>10,544</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recycling facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of Bring Sites in the local authority area</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of Civic Amenity Centres in the local authority area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glass</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Bring Sites for recycling Glass</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling Glass</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of facilities for recycling Glass</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: The national returns for E3, E4 and E5 will be submitted by NWCPO directly to the LGMA for onward transmission to local authorities.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cans</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Bring Sites for recycling Cans</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling Cans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of facilities for recycling Cans</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Textiles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Bring Sites for recycling Textiles</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling Textiles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of facilities for recycling Textiles</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Batteries</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Bring Sites for recycling Batteries</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling Batteries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of facilities for recycling Batteries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Bring Sites for recycling Oils</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling Oils</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of facilities for recycling Oils</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Materials</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Bring Sites for recycling Other Materials</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of Civic Amenity Centres for recycling Other Materials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of facilities for recycling Other Materials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of locations for recycling per 5,000 of population</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Litter Prevention and Enforcement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Number of full-time litter wardens</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Number of part-time litter wardens</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Number of litter wardens (both full and part-time) per 5,000 population</td>
<td><strong>0.39</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.33</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Number of on-the spot fines issued</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Number of on-the-spot fines paid</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Number of prosecution cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Number of prosecutions secured in cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Number of notices issued (under sections 9,15,16,17 and 20 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997)</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Total Number of prosecutions taken (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Number of prosecutions secured (all prosecutions under the Litter Acts 1997 to 2003)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage (%) of areas within the local authority that are:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K. unpolluted (i.e. litter free)</td>
<td>26.50%</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. slightly polluted with litter</td>
<td>38.23%</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. moderately polluted with litter</td>
<td>35.30%</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. significantly polluted with litter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. grossly polluted with litter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- **A.** Total number of cases subject to complaints concerning environmental pollution (relating to waste, litter, water pollution, noise pollution, air pollution)
  - Total: 1139
  - Investigated: 1179
  - Resolved: 982
  - Enforcement procedures: 154

- **B.** Number of complaints investigated
  - Total: 1179
  - Investigated: 756

- **C.** Number of complaints resolved where no further action was necessary.
  - Resolved: 671

- **D.** Number of enforcement procedures taken
  - Total: 81

### Percentage (%) of Schools participating in environmental campaigns

- **A.** primary schools
  - Total: 87.88%

- **B.** secondary schools
  - Total: 100.00%
## Fire Service Indicator

### F1 Fire Service Mobilisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Full-time stations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Part-time stations</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average time, in minutes to mobilise fire brigades in respect of all other emergency incidents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Full-time stations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Part-time stations</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### F2 Percentage of Attendances at Scenes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of attendances at scenes in respect of fire where:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. First attendance is at scene with 10 minutes (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. First attendance is at scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes (10-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. First attendance is at scene after 20 minutes (&gt;20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of attendances at scenes in respect of all other emergency incidents where:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D. First attendance is at scene with 10 minutes (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. First attendance is at scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes (10-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. First attendance is at scene after 20 minutes (&gt;20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### F3 Fire Prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Total number of fire safety certificate applications received</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Total number of fire safety certificate applications processed (including cases deemed invalid)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Total number applications deemed invalid</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Planning and Building Control

### Indicator: Planning Applications - Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Houses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of applications decided</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of decisions which required the submission of Further Information</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of decisions where an Extension of Time was agreed to by the applicant [Section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of time (in days) to decide an application where Further Information was sought</td>
<td>77.09</td>
<td>77.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Applications granted</td>
<td>87.20%</td>
<td>93.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Applications refused</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
<td>6.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed, by An Bord Pleanala</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Developments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of applications decided</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of decisions which required the submission of Further Information</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of decisions where an Extension of Time was agreed to by the applicant [Section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of time (in days) to decide an application where Further Information was sought</td>
<td>79.50</td>
<td>78.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Applications granted</td>
<td>92.31%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Applications refused</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed, by An Bord Pleanala</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Applications

| NOT requiring Environment Impact Assessment | Number of applications decided | 222 | 215 |
| Number of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks | 132 | 148 |
| Number of decisions which required the submission of Further Information | 87 | 67 |
| Number of decisions where an Extension of Time was agreed to by the applicant [Section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000] | 0 | 0 |
| Average length of time (in days) to decide an application where Further Information was sought | 76.13 | 75.87 |
| Percentage of Applications granted | 92.79% | 95.35% |
| Percentage of Applications refused | 7.21% | 4.65% |
| Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala | 88.89% | 66.67% |
| Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed, by An Bord Pleanala | 11.11% | 33.33% |

### Applications Requiring Environment Impact Assessment

| Number of applications decided | 2 | 6 |
| Number of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks | 0 | 1* |
| Number of decisions which required the submission of Further Information | 2 | 3* |
| Number of decisions where an Extension of Time was agreed to by the applicant [Section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000] | 0 | 0 |
| Average length of time (in days) to decide an application where Further Information was sought | 76.50 | 88.00 |
| Percentage of Applications granted | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| Percentage of Applications refused | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Percentage of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| Percentage of cases where the decision was reversed, by An Bord Pleanala | 0.00% | 0.00% |

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* One application required the applicant to submit a Natural Impact Statement in accordance with Part5 XAB of the Planning & Development Act 2001-2011 as amended. This file remained on hold until the N.I.S. was received hence the decision was made outside of the 8 week period. The decision was made within 276 days.

Another application required the applicant to submit an E.I.S. A request for Further Information was issued to the applicant. Where, in the case of a planning application accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement a planning authority request Further Information the authority shall make its decision within 8 weeks of the Further Information being complied with. In this instance the decision was made within 109 days.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planning Enforcement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Total number of cases subject to complaints that were investigated</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Total number of cases subject to complaints that were dismissed</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Total number of cases subject to complaints that were resolved through negotiations</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Number of enforcement procedures taken through warning letters</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Number of enforcement procedures taken through enforcement notices</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Number of prosecutions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planning Public Opening hours</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average number of opening hours per week</td>
<td>31.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Planning Consultation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Number of pre-planning consultation meetings held</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Average length of time (in days) from request for consultation with the local authority to actual formal meeting for pre-planning consultation</td>
<td>8.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Buildings Inspected</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buildings inspected as a <strong>percentage</strong> of new buildings notified to the local authority</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Offaly Local Authorities Annual Report 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>P6</strong></th>
<th><strong>Taking Estates in Charge</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The number of residential estates for which the planning permission has expired, in respect of which formal written requests for taking in charge (from residents or developers), were on hands at the beginning of the year.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Number of estates that were taken in charge in the year.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Number of dwellings in respect of estates that were taken in charge in the year.</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. % of residential estates for which planning permission has expired (as above) not completed to the satisfaction of the planning authority in line with the planning permission.</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Number of estates in respect of which enforcement action was taken in the year in question and/or the bond was called in.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Number of estates in respect of which works were undertaken by the authority to bring the estate to taking in charge standard.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rev1</strong> House Rent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from House Rent</td>
<td>87.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of arrears:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Up to 4 weeks old</td>
<td>5.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. 4-6 weeks old</td>
<td>6.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. 6-12 weeks old</td>
<td>7.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. More than 12 weeks old</td>
<td>79.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rev 2</strong> Housing Loans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due from Housing Loans.</td>
<td>63.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of arrears:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Up to 4 weeks old</td>
<td>2.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. 4-6 weeks old</td>
<td>2.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. 6-12 weeks old</td>
<td>2.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. More than 12 weeks old</td>
<td>91.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rev 3</strong> Commercial Rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount collected at year end as a percentage (%) of amount due</td>
<td>81.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rev 4</strong> Refuse Charges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage (%) of households paying refuse charges (including waivers) at year end</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rev 5</strong> Non-Domestic Water Charges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Collected at year-end as a percentage (%) of amount due</td>
<td>55.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Corporate Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong> Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. certified leave</td>
<td>4.91%</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. uncertified leave</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong> Staff Training and Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure on Training &amp; Development as a percentage of total payroll costs</td>
<td>5.64%</td>
<td>2.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Service</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Library Public Opening Hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. <strong>Average number</strong> of opening hours per week for full-time libraries</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. <strong>Average number</strong> of opening hours per week for part-time libraries (where applicable)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. <strong>Percentage</strong> (%) of full-time libraries that have lunchtime openings.</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. <strong>Percentage</strong> (%) of full-time libraries that have evening openings.</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. <strong>Percentage</strong> (%) of full-time libraries that have Saturday openings.</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Library Visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of visits to full-time libraries per 1,000 population</td>
<td>2,101.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Library Stock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Annual expenditure on stock per head of population (county/city wide)</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. <strong>Books</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. <strong>Other items</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for:</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4</td>
<td>Internet Access through Libraries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of internet sessions provided per 1,000 population</td>
<td>575.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Recreational Services

### Indicator: Children’s Playgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. 0.12</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. 0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Indicator: Local Authority-Facilitated Leisure Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,589.35</td>
<td>1,547.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Community Participation

### Indicator: Participation in local Youth Council/Comhairle na n-Óg scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Indicator: Groups Registered with the Community & Voluntary Forum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>431</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>