

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

## NEW PUBLICATION AND EXHIBITION

### **Amazing Lace**

*A History of  
the Limerick  
Lace Industry*

**LAUNCHED**



**NEW**  
**Jet Engine  
Powerboat**  
*launched by*  
**FIRE SERVICE**

# 5000

visitors during  
December to

# LCGA

(Limerick City Gallery of Art)

## Vision

- That the people of Limerick are supported by a professional, proactive and accessible local government structure at the heart of a wider public service.
- That Limerick is acknowledged for its inclusive participation of all its citizens in the development of their community.
- That Limerick is the desired location for business development, cultural enrichment and educational opportunity.
- That Limerick and the Mid-West will compete with other European destinations in terms of business, tourism, living and investment.

## Strategy

1. Empowering the citizen to participate in the development of their community, both rural and urban.
2. An environment for real economic development and job creation.
3. A new model of local governance and service delivery.

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

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# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



## Empowering the Citizen

### 1. Home and Social Development

#### Waiting List

Approved Applicants for Social Housing Support and Areas	Approved Applicants to the 31st of December 2014
Metropolitan District of Limerick	3,508
Municipal District of Adare	
- Rathkeale	290
Municipal District of Cappamore	
- Kilmallock	315
Municipal District of Newcastle West	
West	320
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,433</b>

#### Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

There are currently 1,144 RAS tenancies (883 private and 261 Approved Housing Bodies) being sustained by the RAS unit.

During 2014 there were 151 contracts completed with RAS landlords to facilitate RAS contract renewals or alternative RAS accommodation provision during 2014.

For the programme for inspection of standards for private rented accommodation, the 2014 target of 400 units for inspection during 2014 was fully achieved with a final inspection amount completed of 402 properties inspected.

#### Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

By the 31st December 2014, Limerick City and County Council had 210 HAP tenancies.

By year end a total of 485 HAP tenancies were being administered by the HAP Hub.

#### Home Improvement Schemes

Private Housing Grant Aid	Number of Grants paid at the 31st December	Euro Amount
MAGS (Mobility Adaptation Grant Scheme)	175	723,237
HAGS (Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme)	108	944,270
HOPS (Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Scheme)	280	1,229,157

#### Once Off Adaptation Grants for 2014

Claimed in Euro	Number of Grants
455,327.71	61

#### Stock Management and Construction

Voids Housing Stock 2014 Euro Allocation	Total Units	Completed at the 31st December 2014
915,968	94	94

Name of Programme	Number of Units for 2014	Number of Units Completed at 31st December 2014
Energy Efficiency Programme	545	545
SEAI Programme (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland)	904	904

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## Housing Construction Programme

Name of Scheme	Stage	Number of Units	Euro Allocation
Rathbane (SHIP – Social Housing Investment Programme)	Design Stage awaiting Departmental Approval	7	486,770

## Job Stimulus Programme

Name of Scheme	Stage	Number of Units	Euro Allocation
Hasset Villas	Design team tenders received	3	450,000
Kilmurry Court	Design team tenders received	6	900,000
Clare Street	Going to tender fo design team	6	1,000,00

## Traveller Accommodation Programme

Name of Scheme	Stage	Euro Allocation
Castletroy	Extension of three bays, project under construction	200,000
Bawney's Bridge	Refurbishment works substantially complete	150,000

## Voluntary Housing

There are a total of 1181 social housing units provided through the Voluntary Housing Sector in Limerick.

Progress on Voluntary Housing Schemes during 2014:

- Liskennett, Kilmallock (St. Joseph's Foundation) near completion.
- Maiden St., Newcastle West, (St. Vincent De Paul) completed and occupied.
- Brother Russell, Mulgrave St., (Novas) completed and occupied.
- Four houses purchased by Focus Ireland
- One property purchased by Daughters of Charity
- Cluid Abbeyfeale – ongoing.
- Cuan Mhuire received provisional approval from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government for construction of 5 units at Bruree.

## Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP)

The LRFIP was approved by Council in February 2014. The status of the regeneration programme as of December 2014 under the three pillars of regeneration is as follows:

### Social:

The Social Intervention Programme aims to influence how mainstream funds are applied to social policy

interventions to address social exclusion in the city, with specific focus on the regeneration areas. The strategy also aims to improve the coordination of the overall package of State funding into policy interventions in the regeneration areas. This is part of the "whole of government" approach. A total of 174 projects were supported across the city in 2014 under the social intervention fund. Many of the projects supported in 2014 are "legacy" projects and have been in receipt of funding from regeneration on a multi-annual basis. The largest number of project approvals was under the theme Community Participation and Empowerment followed by Education and Learning, Health and Well-being and Youth and Families at Risk.

The Council will introduce and implement an evaluation framework which will be a comprehensive tool for the monitoring of all grants in 2015. This will also seek to track outcomes from projects supported in earlier years. This should serve to shape future interventions and improve services to, and outcomes for, the communities.

### Economic:

2014 saw the introduction of a new funding stream focused on developing economic initiatives. A total of 17 projects were supported.

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A new "Hospitality and Skills Training Programme" came into operation in September at the LEDP with the first intake of 25 students resulting in a 90% progression rate into employment.

The objective for 2015 is to implement a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure successful outcomes and adjust focus as required. New initiatives are currently being developed with the focus on employment support, training/apprenticeships and sustainable projects focused on job creation.

### Physical:

Current Status	Number of Units
Schemes with Preliminary Departmental Approval	108
Schemes at Design Stage / Part 8 Planning	168
Schemes at Detailed Design Stage	106
Thermal Upgrade Project (Scope of Works/Cost Plan/Tender Stage)	202
Schemes at Construction Stage (incl. Thermal Upgrades)	116
Schemes Completed in 2014 (incl. Thermal Upgrades)	140

### Homeless Services

The Homeless Action Team is based at No. 2 Church Street, St. John's Square and is the first point of contact for persons who become homeless. The service is jointly staffed by the Local Authority, Department of Social Protection and the HSE, delivering a multidisciplinary approach to solving homelessness. The Council delivers a vast and extensive range of services to persons who find themselves homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Emergency accommodation was provided to 205 people in the week up to and including Sunday, 14 December 2014. Figures for seven-day periods during the previous months show 211 (June), 201 (July), 212 (August), 208 (September), 218 (October) and 229 persons (November) were accommodated in emergency hostels, transitional accommodation and long term supported housing throughout Limerick.

The Council's partnership funding arrangement with the HSE has ensured that our emergency accommodation providers have capacity to accommodate those who are willing to accept help.

### Rent Collection - Limerick City & County Council

Opening Balance @01/01/2014	Accrued Income	Total for collection	Receipts*	Closing balance @30/11/2014	% Collection
1,477,480	11,856,330	13,333,811	11,506,945	1,826,865	86.3

\*Bank receipts up to 31st Dec 2014

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## 1. LCDC/PPN/Social Inclusion

- LCDC - Local Community Development Committee meeting was held on 2nd December, 2014.
- PPN - A number of public information sessions in relation to the establishment of the Public Participation Network took place in December, 2014.
- Social Inclusion - Closing date for tenders under Stage 2 Procurement was 19th December, 2014 for SICAP (Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme). Tenders were opened on 22nd December, 2014.
- Social Inclusion Training - An agreement was reached in December, with the HR Department, to include a statement on Human Rights and Equality Training into the Council's 2015 Training Procedure.

## 2. Community Tenders

- Rathbane Golf Course - Tender published for Operator for Rathbane Municipal Golf Course on 19th December, 2014. Closing date for tender is 26th January 2015.
- Festivals Tenders - Assessment of Festival Tenders took place in December 2014.

## 3. Limerick Museum and Archives

- On 10th December Limerick Museum and Archives launched a new publication and exhibition Amazing Lace, A History of the Limerick Lace Industry celebrating Limerick's cultural heritage as a major producer of lace. The book traces the history of the lace industry which at one stage employed 1800 women making it one of Limerick's largest industries. The exhibition in the Museum, Istabraq Hall, showcases key pieces of Limerick lace from the permanent collection.
- The 2014 volume of the Old Limerick Journal, part edited in the Museum, was launched in December.

## 4. Library Service

- The Granary Library had almost 500 competition entries in the Children's Book Festival Competition this year. Prize-giving for the children was held on Thursday 11th December 2014. Some 60 outstanding entry winners were presented with Certificates of Achievement and the overall five winners received their prizes from Mayor of the Metropolitan District Cllr. Michael Sheahan.
- A Russian themed evening was hosted at the Granary Library on Monday 15th December. The audience were

treated to an evening of music, song and dance. There was a display of Russian photographs depicting different aspects of Russian culture and also some colourful Russian costumes on show. The Russian Community were delighted to avail of the Granary Library as a location to showcase their culture and the Irish audience were delighted with the evening.

- The book launch of "Focail agus Foclóireacht" by Timothy O'Neill Lane and Seán Mac an tSionnaigh took place at Abbeyfeale Library on 11th December, where over 80 people attended.

## 5. Arts Service

- The Arts Office interviewed five applicants for three studios spaces at Cappamore Arts Spaces. Three candidates were successful.

## 6. Limerick City Gallery of Art

- Four separate exhibitions were held in December. They included John Shinnor's - New Works; Andrew Kearney- The Meaning of Nothing; Artists' Rooms by Gillian Kenny and Michael Canning and the exhibition 'Collecting and Curating Limerick City's Art' 1936 - 2014.
- Overall visitors to the gallery for December was over 5,000.
- Visiting Writers Limerick launched the Limerick City of Culture Legacy Project on Friday 5th December 2014 of the poetry book 'Fream of a City' an Anthology of Contemporary Poetry, with a wine reception and readings which was attended by over 70 people.
- Reception to celebrate the signing of the Intercultural Cities Agreement, the launch of the 'Anti-Rumours' flyer and a ceremony for recipients receiving Irish Citizenship by the Intercultural Gathering Group was held in the gallery on the 18th December with an attendance of close to 200 people.

## 7. Fire & Emergency Services

- The new headquarters for Limerick City and County Council Civil Defence located at the Docklands Business Park, was purchased in December 2014 by Limerick City and County Council.
- A new jet engine powerboat went operational in the whole time fire service in December 2014. This boat is based at a purpose built floating pontoon at Steam Boat Quay, Limerick. The powerboat will assist the whole time fire service at water related incidents.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT****9. Environmental Updates****Burial Ground Awards Evening**

A Burial Grounds Awards Ceremony was held at the Woodlands House Hotel, Adare, County Limerick on Thursday, 11th December 2014. This was the seventh year of the awards ceremony which is to acknowledge the combined hard work and commitment of burial ground committees, community groups and individuals for the upkeep and maintenance of the County's burial grounds. As in previous years there were awards in two categories – Modern and Ancient. Approx 180 people attended the awards ceremony and the prizes were presented by Mayor of the City and County, Cllr. Kevin Sheahan.

Castlejane, Knocklong achieved the overall winner's award in the Ancient section and Kilcoleman, Rathkeale was named the overall winner of the Modern section.

**Food Safety**

- Official controls in meat processing continue to be delivered on behalf of FSAI under the service contract.

**Control of Horses**

- 21 horses were seized in December in the Metropolitan area bringing the 2014 total to 304. This is an increase of 82 on the previous year.
- Municipal Districts - 2 horses were seized in December bringing the 2014 total to 109. This is a reduction of 21 on the previous year.
- Overall the number of horses seized has increased from 352 in 2013 to 413 for 2014, an increase of 61.

**Control of Dogs**

- 41 dogs were seized or surrendered in December bringing the total for 2014 to 704.
- 47% of these dogs were re-homed which is 3% higher than last year. Given that the Kennel Assistant was only in place for six months of 2014 this is very encouraging and it is anticipated that the re-homing rates will improve further in 2015

**Awareness**

Team Limerick Clean Up (TLC) promotions

- 5,000 plus TLC Christmas decoration Packs have been distributed
- 750+ Letters sent introducing TLC to
  - businesses,
  - schools,

- sporting organisation etc
- 5 Introductory TLC talks to audiences of 150 +
- 50+ Jumpers were upcycled as part of TLC's Christmas Jumper Upcycling Events in conjunction with local Tidy Towns Groups at the :-
  - Hunt Museum, Limerick City Centre
  - Red Door Gallery, Newcastlewest

**2. Economic Development & Planning****1. Planning**

- Ninety five new planning applications were received during December 2014. Breakdown as follows; Domestic (64), House Developments (2); Commercial Developments (9); Retail (2), Educational (3), Agricultural (4), Other (11).
- A total of 1,120 applications were received during 2014
- Permissions were granted to re-develop the 'Hurlers' Service Station on the Dublin Road, additional classrooms in Our Lady Queen of Peace school in Janesboro and St Vincents School in Lisnagry, and improvements in the Loading/Unloading facilities at Aughinish
- An Taisce has appealed the decision to grant permission to CPL for an industrial development in Foynes
- Residential development of 102 houses in Adare was refused.
- Thirty six (36) housing estates were taken in charge during 2014.
- Patrickswell Local Area Plan public consultation concluded in December
- Material alterations to the Adare Local Area Plan and the Askeaton Local Area Plan were placed on public display during the month

**2. Economic Development/Property**

- Negotiations to acquire the Hanging Gardens in Henry Street completed
- Limerick City Business Association and Limerick City and County Council worked in partnership to deliver an engaging Christmas experience in the City Centre.
- A dedicated website to promote Christmas in Limerick was launched and hosted on Limerick.ie.
- Short term lettings on units in the Opera Centre site included Fab Lab and Limerick City Build.

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## 3. Innovate Limerick

- Agreement reached to dispose of 20% of the former Anderson building in Rathkeale.
- Funding arrangements for the Innovation Hub at the LEDP premises in Roxboro has been agreed with Regeneration and Enterprise Ireland totalling €650,000.

## 4. Marketing

Limerick Marketing concentrated its activity across three core economic sectors during 2014, namely tourism, retail, and investment marketing.

Highlights include; promotional campaigns around St Patricks Festival, Riverfest and Christmas; operation of the Street Ambassador programme in the city from June to August; Retail Investment prospectus prepared.

## 5. Local Enterprise Office

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is located in Patrick Street as part of the Economic Development and Planning Directorate. The aim of LEO is to promote entrepreneurship, foster business start-ups and develop existing micro and small businesses in Limerick to drive job

creation and to provide accessible high quality supports for Business. The LEO (County and City Enterprise Boards up to 14th April) had a very busy 2014 and some of the highlights are listed below.

- Grant aid of €764,374 approved for 37 business proposals
- Payments amounting to €511,026 made to 43 approved businesses
- Refundable aid of €157,000 paid out, this amount will be repaid over a 3 year period and will be used to supplement budgets to assist further business development
- 68 training and development events organised comprising of courses, seminars, networking events and covering topics such as Start your Own Business, Marketing, Finance, Social Media, Tendering, Retail Development and more.
- 856 participants on courses, seminars etc comprising 362 males and 494 females.
- 6 loan applications processed and submitted to Microfinance Ireland on behalf of clients.
- Finalist (Paddy Finn, Electricity Exchange) in the National Final of Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur.

## Financial Matters

### 1. Motor Tax On-Line

The number of motorists availing of motor tax on-line increased for December 2014. The figure for December 2014 was 59.05%. This was a recorded increase of 4.34% compared to the figure last June of 54.71%. Tom Gilligan, Head of Finance, is delighted with the response of motorists now availing of the on-line facility and is urging more people to continue to make use of this excellent service and help reduce the waiting times at peak periods, within the offices of the local authority.

### 2. Schedule of Municipal District Works

Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides that following adoption of the annual budget, a schedule of proposed works of maintenance and repair to be carried out during the financial year in each municipal district shall be prepared, for adoption by the Municipal District members. It is anticipated that the schedule will be prepared as soon as possible following the adoption of the annual budget.

Collection Rates 2014	Opening Balance 1 Jan €	Accruals €	To Collect €	Receipts €	Arrears €	%
As at 31 December	25,505,113	45,499,192	71,004,304	46,034,160	24,970,144	65

Collection Loans 2014	Opening Balance 1 Jan €	Accruals €	To Collect €	Receipts €	Arrears €	%
As at 31 December	598,023	1,749,692	2,347,715	1,795,424	552,291	76