

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

March & April 2020

THIS MONTH:

COVID-19 – Limerick City and County Council continues to provide essential services and support to HSE during pandemic

SHOP LIMERICK – New FREE unique online platform launched to help them trade while their doors are closed

RIVERFEST – Riverfest Limerick 2020 goes virtual

PROGRESS - Work on major capital infrastructure schemes ongoing

CONTENTS:

Economic Development Directorate

1. Trade & Investment	2
2. Strategic & Forward Planning	2
3. Local Enterprise Office (LEO)	2
4. Marketing & Communications	3
5. Urban Innovation	6
6. Innovate Limerick	7

Physical Development Directorate

1. Travel and Transportation Strategy	8
2. Mid-West National Road Design Office	8
3. Environment Strategy	8
4. Water Services	9

Community Development Directorate

1. Tourism, Culture & Arts	10
2. Property & Community Facilities	12
3. Urban & Rural Community Development	12
4. Libraries, Gallery & Museum	14

Housing Development Directorate

1. Strategic Housing Development	19
2. Regeneration Strategy Implementation	19

Service Operations Directorate

1. Housing Support Services	22
2. Planning & Environmental Services	28
3. Veterinary Services	28
4. Cemeteries	28

Capital Investment Directorate

1. Design & Delivery	29
----------------------	----

National and Regional Shared Services Directorate

1. HAP SSC	30
2. Fire & Emergency Services	30
3. Digital Services and EU Programmes	33

Support Services Directorate

1. Finance Services	35
2. Corporate Services, Governance & Customer Services	37
3. Schedule of Meetings	39
4. Access to Information	40
5. Business Improvement	40



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Economic Development Directorate

1. Trade and Investment

- Planning permission was granted for the construction of the Educate Together Secondary School in Castletroy and will lead to the creation of 100 jobs when fully operational (50 more in the construction phase).
- Limerick City and County Council received a donation of medical personal protective equipment (PPE) from its Sister City in Hangzhou, China, in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The consignment has been handed over to staff at University Hospital Limerick who will distribute it to those on the frontline. This gesture is in recognition of the growing economic, cultural and educational links between the two cities and regions. In December 2018, a formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Hangzhou, China, and Limerick City and County Council, took place to explore areas of co-operation and collaboration between Limerick and Hangzhou in economy, trade, tourism, education, and culture sectors.
- Limerick City and County Council, in partnership with Limerick Local Enterprise Office and Limerick Chamber of Commerce, commenced a series of free initiatives to assist businesses across Limerick to continue to trade safely through the COVID-19 Pandemic. At the end of April there were:
 - o 100 expressions of interest in the digital campaign logged on Council's CRM system.
 - o 117 businesses showcased on the Business Register (Limerick.ie/Shop).
 - o 20 e-Commerce companies showcased on the eCommerce platform.
 - o 25 businesses registered for training / mentoring with the Local Enterprise Office.

2. Strategic and Forward Planning

- A submission was made to Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the Draft National Marine Planning Framework.
- The Croom Local Area Plan 2020-2026 was adopted by the Elected Members at the Adare-Rathkeale Municipal District Meeting in March and came into effect on 14 April 2020.

3. Local Enterprise Office (LEO)

- Grants approved totalling €216,057 for seven projects with a job potential of 29 new full-time jobs over three years.
- 39 Trading Online Voucher Applications in April helping small businesses get online.
- 150 COVID-19 Business Continuity Voucher Applications received to support small businesses develop a continuity plan.
- 28 Business Mentoring applications allocated.
- Local Enterprise Week 2020 ran from 2-6 March with a variety of Courses and Events in the City and County.
- The key event of the week was the National Enterprise Awards 2020 where Mark Maher of Odyssey Studios took home the overall prize of Limerick Entrepreneur of the Year.
- Start Your Own Business Course, Instagram for Business, Trading Online Voucher Seminar, Presentation/Pitching Skills for Business, Brexit Customs Compliance Import and Export Procedures, Intellectual Property and Trade Marks Seminars and training took place.
- One-to-one business clinics, group business advice workshops and collaboration with Networking events.
- The Student Enterprise Awards County Final was cancelled due to COVID-19. The virtual judging awarded the following: winners for the 2019-2020



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Student Enterprise Programme: Senior Category - Agrimech from Villiers Secondary School, Limerick; Intermediate Category - Comestibles from Coláiste Chiaráin, Croom and Junior Category - 'EZ Tie Close' from Desmond College, Newcastle West. These winners will now be virtually judged in the National Enterprise Awards Final competition in May.

- In response to COVID-19, LEO reconfigured many of their activities and since mid-March is running Online Webinars, Virtual Training and Mentoring Programmes.
- Programmes include 'How to create Marketing Videos on a Budget' Webinar, a six-session 'Start Your Own Business' Online Programme, Food Webinars, 'Social Media Bootcamp' Online Programme, Cyber Security' Webinar, a five-week 'Leading Your Business Through COVID-19' online workshops, various Social Media for business webinars and many more.
- Courses specifically to support the Retail Sector going online such as Beginners and Intermediate Instagram, Facebook, Search Engine Optimisation, Retail Online Workshop.
- Developed a short video advising businesses how to sell online, as well as running a 'Selling Online' crash course webinar.

4. Marketing & Communications

Marketing

Brand Limerick

- Engagement with Brand Ambassador structure ongoing. A guide and accompanying video piece in production, highlighting the ease of leveraging the brand for individual businesses in production.
- Branded billboard created and installed at the exit road from Shannon Airport. Highly visible branded lightbox feature installed at Passport Control at Shannon Airport.
- Video asset created, highlighting the Limerick brand journey story for use at conferences, presentations, awards submissions etc.
- Met with representatives of Dublin.ie to provide advice and guidance on the development of the Limerick brand.
- Brand Limerick content and advertising featured in the *National Geographic Traveller* magazine and *Go Wild* magazine including front page cover.

Limerick St. Patrick's Festival 2020

- Limerick St. Patrick's Festival celebrations were cancelled on 9 March in line with Government recommendations surrounding COVID-19. We continued to engage with the public in the lead-up to St. Patrick's Day by sharing photos and videos from past parades as far back as the 1950s, promoting the virtual parade on 17 March.
- A campaign report was produced capturing the marketing activities undertaken. Our social media campaign earned 2,861,796 impressions (number of times users saw our post), Limerick.ie/St. Patrick's Festival had 11,257 users and 31,198 pageviews from January - March 2020 and there was an audience reach of 703,195 through free media coverage.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Shop Limerick - Limerick Business Revival and Survival

- Limerick City and County Council has given local retailers a timely boost in the face of the Covid-19 crisis with the official launch of a FREE unique online platform to help them trade while their doors are closed, and connecting Limerick consumers with local suppliers for their shopping needs.

SHOP LIMERICK – Limerick.ie/Shop - has provided an opportunity for hundreds of retailers across the city and county to showcase their online offering with the development of the one-stop platform on the local authority's website, Limerick.ie.

Together with a promotional 'Shop Limerick, Save Livelihoods' campaign, the initiative has gone live just three weeks after the decision to create the online platform was made.

On Limerick.ie/Shop, the public can browse and buy from homegrown Limerick businesses, buy a local business voucher, find out about local neighbourhood food deliveries or where they can order a take-out from a favourite restaurant.

Since the initiative was announced in mid-April, more than 130 business across the city and county have already signed up and many more are now expected to enlist, with the marketing campaign also aimed at growing awareness among those businesses of the benefits of joining the free platform.

Limerick.ie/Shop has been developed by Limerick City and County Council in partnership with the Limerick Local Enterprise Office and Limerick Chamber on the back of conversations with a number of local and individual stakeholders, and born from a desire to support Limerick's business community.

- Commenced a multi-media marketing campaign, in partnership with the Limerick Local Enterprise Office and Limerick Chamber, aimed at increasing retail activity in Limerick through the COVID-19 shutdown and its aftermath.
- Development of supports for local retailers and e-commerce businesses, including 'Shop Limerick' – the virtual home of Limerick businesses on Limerick.ie

Virtual Riverfest Limerick 2020

- Social and digital campaign promoting virtual events for Riverfest Limerick 2020 - Fashion Friday with Celia Holman Lee, BBQ Demo with fire-fighting chef Paul Knapp, and Hermitage Green live gig in association with Dolans Limerick.
- Developed social graphics and digital graphics and created a dedicated Riverfest Limerick section on Limerick.ie

Other

- Limerick Economic Prospectus prepared and designed for digital distribution.
- Produced five Limerick.ie e-newsletters.
- Issued the Quarterly Limerick Business Bulletin.
- Provided updated imagery and editorial for *Limerick Best of Ireland Series 2020*.
- Marketing materials provided for a student-led University of Limerick Civic Engagement Campaign encouraging third level students to explore and experience Limerick City Centre.
- Supported University of Limerick International Education Division with the development of a student-focused Limerick guide.
- Brand Limerick merchandise supplied to Limerick COVID-19 Community Response Team.
- Marketing support provided to Limerick Bastille Day festival.
- Contributed content to five-page Limerick feature in Image Magazine March/April 2020 edition.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Social Media

March

- Continued to monitor, schedule and update social media channels with creative content to utilise our engagement with the public and put Limerick in people's minds.
- Posted 58 times on Limerick.ie's Facebook with followers now 26,761. Posts reached 7,267,848 users with 363,875 engagements.
- Tweeted 45 times on Limerick.ie's Twitter, @limerick_ie, with total followers now 18,023. Our tweets earned 206,200 impressions (no. of times users saw our tweet).
- Posted 20 times on Limerick.ie's Instagram and created 16 Stories with total followers now 10,928.
- Posted 15 times on Limerick City and County Council's LinkedIn with total followers now 4,379.

April

- Continued to monitor, schedule and update social media channels with creative content to utilise our engagement with the public and put Limerick in people's minds.
- Posted 58 times on Limerick.ie's Facebook with followers now 27,160. Posts reached 167,980 users with 31,449 engagements.
- Tweeted 43 times on Limerick.ie's Twitter, @limerick_ie, with total followers now 18,165. Our tweets earned 218,700 impressions (no. of times users saw our tweet).
- Posted 14 times on Limerick.ie's Instagram and created 16 Stories with total followers now 11,108.
- Posted 20 times on Limerick City and County Council's LinkedIn with total followers now 4,615.

Limerick.ie

March

A total of 111,863 people visited the Limerick.ie website in March 2020, a 27% decrease on the same period in 2019.

Content Report: 109 articles and 97 events were added to Limerick.ie in March 2020.

The most popular pages on Limerick.ie in March 2020 were:

1. www.limerick.ie
2. www.limerick.ie/council
3. www.limerick.ie/council/services/planning-and-property/apply-or-search-planning-application/search-planning
4. www.limerick.ie/discover
5. www.limerick.ie/council/services/housing/social-housing/housing-assistance-payment-hap

33% of website pageviews were in Discover section and 36% of pageviews were in the Council section.

April

A total of 83,725 people visited the Limerick.ie website in April 2020, a 44% decrease on the same period in 2019.

Content Report: 106 amenities, 52 articles and 48 events were added to Limerick.ie in April 2020.

The most popular pages on Limerick.ie in April 2020 were:

1. www.limerick.ie
2. www.limerick.ie/business
3. www.limerick.ie/council/services/planning-and-property/apply-or-search-planning-application
4. www.limerick.ie/council
5. www.limerick.ie/council/services/housing/social-housing/housing-assistance-payment-hap
6. www.limerick.ie/form/volunteer-form-limerick-covid-19
7. www.limerick.ie/council/newsroom/covid-19-coronavirus
8. www.limerick.ie/council/your-council/jobs
9. www.limerick.ie/business/digital-retail-supports/keeping-limerick-open-business
10. www.limerick.ie/council/how-can-we-help/contact-us



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

COVID-19

- Communications has played a central role in the Council's response to COVID-19. Members of MarComms are part of the Crisis Management Team set up to oversee activities of the Council in light of the pandemic.
- Communications has worked closely with all Directorates to ensure the messaging coming from the Council is clear and concise, and easy to understand.
- Produced print, social and radio adverts to inform the public about Limerick City and County Council's new trading arrangements.
- Dedicated COVID-19 section created on Limerick.ie to keep the public up to date with the impact on services as well as supports available.
- Dedicated COVID-19 Staff Updates section also created on Limerick.ie
- Communications is also working with its counterparts in the HSE, UL Hospitals, Garda, Third Level and Further Education Institutions, Shannon Group and other Local Authorities across the Mid West to combine our resources in getting the message about COVID-19 out to the public. We are using the #MidWestTogether.
- Issued 29 news releases from the Marketing and Communications Department and researched and wrote five speeches for the Office of the Mayor in March.
- Issued 20 News Releases from the Marketing and Communications Department in April.
- Produced and distributed the monthly Council Connect staff e-newsletter for March and April.
- In March: Tweeted 165 times on Limerick City and County Council's Twitter account, @limerickcouncil, with total followers now 14,285. Our tweets earned 410,900 impressions (no. of times users saw our tweet).
- In April: Tweeted 127 times on Limerick City and County Council's Twitter account, @limerickcouncil, with total followers now 14,448. Our tweets earned 364,800 impressions (no. of times users saw our tweet).

5. Urban Innovation

Living City Initiative

- The Urban Innovation Department holds fortnightly Advice Clinics in ENGINE, Upper Cecil Street, giving multi-disciplinary advice to property owners, potential property owners and landlords who want to avail of the tax incentive for qualifying renovation works. In attendance at the meeting clinics are the Fire Officer, Conservation Officer, Senior Architect and Town Planner.

	No. of Applications Received	Final Certs Issued	One-Stop Shop meetings 2020
b/f from 2019	19	6	n/a
March 2020	0	0	1
April	1	0	1
Year to Date	1	0	2
Total	20	6	2

+CityxChange

- Senior Architect, Rosie Webb, presented a +CityxChange Project Information Session highlighting progress on the formation of a Community Grid in Limerick at the 'Grow Remote' Limerick Chapter virtual meetup on Earth Day. The focus of the presentation was on highlighting positive environmental activities going on in the Limerick area by local groups. Grow Remote supports employees and businesses interested in the idea, opportunities and benefits of remote work.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



6. Innovate Limerick

- Innovate Limerick, through Film in Limerick, provided support for productions shooting in the Mid-West, including ongoing support for 'Foundation' shooting at Troy Studios, crewing support for TV drama 'Smother' shooting in Lahinch; location, permissions and crewing support for a feature film planning to film in Co. Clare and Limerick, and support for two BBC factual programmes planning to shoot segments in the City.
- Innovate Limerick / Film in Limerick supported the Inaugural Catalyst International Film Festival, which took place (virtually) in Limerick in March.
- Innovate Limerick, through Film in Limerick, launched a new partnership with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board to help develop the local film sector in the Mid-West and prepare aspiring and emerging filmmakers for employment in the screen industries. A number of new training and project development initiatives will be rolled out over the coming year.
- Innovate Limerick / Film in Limerick launched a new 10-part weekly webinar series in April, 'Wednesday Workshops.' Guests in April included: Lorcan Finnegan and John Mc Donnell, the Director and Producer of new Irish sci-fi thriller 'Vivarium,' Danish documentary Director, Camilla Nielsson, and L.A.-based Independent Producer, Alicia van Couvering. The free webinar series is targeted at training local aspiring and emerging film talent and is free to join.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



Physical Development Directorate

1. Travel and Transportation Strategy

Physical Development published the tender notice for the Management Plan for Westfields Wetlands in April. We are seeking recommendations on the management of Reed Encroachment, Water Level and Quality, Biodiversity and Invasive Alien Species, Amenity and Recreational Value and Stakeholder Engagement, Roles and Responsibilities. The closing date for tenders is 19 May 2020.

2. Mid West National Road Design Office (MWNRO)

N20 O'Rourke's Cross Road Improvement Scheme Compulsory Purchase Order 2020

The N20 O'Rourke's Cross Road Improvement Scheme Compulsory Purchase Order 2020, which was made and published by the Council in February, was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for confirmation on 2 March.

N24 Beary's Cross Road Improvement Scheme Compulsory Purchase Order 2020

On 6 March, the Council made the Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire land and extinguish rights of-way necessary to develop the N24 Beary's Cross Road Improvement Scheme.

This proposed road scheme comprises a new roundabout-controlled junction, alteration to the present junction layout, the construction of a new Regional Road R513 approach to the junction, the alteration of the existing N24 approaches to the junction, road and drainage impact attenuation, fencing, landscaping, public lighting, accommodation works and associated site works.

Notice of the Compulsory Purchase Order was subsequently published in the Irish Independent and the Limerick Leader. 17 landholders are directly impacted by the proposed scheme and they have been issued with Statutory Notices. The Compulsory Purchase Order was also submitted to An Bord Pleanála for confirmation in March.

Landowners, lessees and occupiers can make objections to the compulsory acquisition of land and extinguishment of private rights-of-way that affect them to An Bord Pleanála. Any objections to the extinguishment of public rights-of-way can also be made to An Bord Pleanála.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Government restrictions on access to Council Offices, owners, lessees and occupiers of the land and or their agents, and members of the public, are restricted in inspecting the two above-mentioned Compulsory Purchase Orders and accompanying deposit maps. The Council has therefore extended the time for the submission of objections in respect of both Compulsory Purchase Orders to An Bord Pleanála to 5.30 pm on Friday 31 July 2020

3. Environment Strategy

Let it Bee – Wild Flower Meadows to be created around Limerick City

Limerick City and County Council is to develop its programme of Wild Flower Meadows around the City as part of our commitment to climate action, enhancing biodiversity and to celebrate Limerick's year as a European Green Leaf City.

Grass and Wild Flowers to be left uncut until the Autumn

Grass and wild flowers will be allowed to grow in these areas until Autumn to provide food for wild bees. In September, these areas will be cut down and the cuttings removed. This will reduce the nutrient levels in the soil, thus encouraging wildflowers to naturally colonise the areas.

The areas which will be left uncut are:

- Childers Road from the Parkway Roundabout to the Roxboro Roundabout.
- The Old Cork Road opposite Georgian Village.
- Condell Road from Shannon Bridge to the Coonagh Roundabout.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



- The Dock Road Roundabout to the Quin's Cross Roundabout.
- The central reserve from the Coonagh to Clondrinagh roundabouts.

Since 2018, grass cutting has been delayed in a number of areas to allow the dandelions to flower and provide an important early food source for pollinators. This initiative was hugely popular with the public and received an overwhelmingly positive response.

In addition, wild flower meadows were developed at Corbally Meadows, Childers Road and College Park. A subsequent study of the species diversity in these areas by Botanist, Dr. Tom Harrington, concluded that all were found to have a range of plants of value to pollinators, in particular at Corbally Meadows.

This year, the Council is taking things a step further and, in a number of pilot road verges, grass will be left uncut until Autumn to allow the areas to develop into meadows so as to provide food for wild bees and other pollinators. Pollinators are an essential element of our ecosystem, and they need to be protected. Limerick City and County Council is an official partner to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, which is leading the way in 'pollinator protection.'

This means the Council agrees to support the ethos of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan; to consider the plan in its policies, plans, and management decisions where possible; to carry out one pollinator-friendly action in the first year of signing up, and plan to carry out at least three more within the following five years.

Our *Let it Bee* signs explaining what is happening will be erected in all areas where the meadows are growing.

This was accompanied by a twitter campaign using the hash tags:
#beefriendlylimerick #letitbee #EGLALimerick2020



4. Water Services

The following capital works were completed by Irish Water in April:

1. Sewer extension on the Rathkeale Road, Adare.
2. Water main loop replacement at Barrington Street, Pery Square and Hartstonge Street.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Community Development Directorate

1. Tourism, Culture & Arts

TOURISM

- Tourism Officer gave presentation to Masters Students at Griffith College on the Tourism Development Strategy and Limerick City and County Council's tourism work programme.
- Tourism Officer met with West Limerick Heritage Group and updated them on tourism developments in West Limerick.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events have been cancelled or postponed. In addition, many establishments have temporarily closed and amenities are no longer accessible to the public. Tourism Department Staff have been in contact with several tourism businesses to offer advice and assistance.

CULTURE AND ARTS

OPEN CALLS

- **Grants under the Arts Act Funding Call Out - deadline extended**

This year's Grants under the Arts Act is by online submission. Applications for this funding stream opened on 19 February. The Grants under the Arts Act Scheme support projects that stimulate public interest in the arts, promote the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts, or assist in improving the standards of the arts. This funding is available to amateur, community or voluntary groups, or organisations, and individual arts practitioners. Due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), the closing date for applications was extended to Wednesday 15 April 2020 and 52 applications were received and are being processed.

- **Individual Arts Bursary Awards Scheme 2020**

Limerick City and County Council invites applications from professional artists who wish to be considered for a Bursary of up to €4,000 for the development of work/professional skills. Artists based in Limerick City and County Council's administrative area, or operating substantially within Limerick City and County, can apply for a

Bursary in multiple art forms, including Visual Arts, Circus, Dance and Literature. Applications for this funding stream opened on Monday 27 April. The closing date for applications is Wednesday 3 June 2020.

- **Dolores O'Riordan Music Bursary Award 2020**

Dolores O'Riordan, singer, songwriter and lead vocalist with The Cranberries, was one of Ireland's most enduringly popular artists. This music bursary is an award to honour her memory and to support a Limerick professional musician to develop their career.

Limerick City and County Council invites applications from professional musicians who wish to be considered for a Bursary of up to €4,000 for the development of work/professional skills. Artists based in Limerick City and County Council's administrative area, or operating substantially within Limerick City and County, can apply for a Bursary. Applications for this funding stream opened on Monday 27 April. The closing date for applications is Wednesday 3 June, 2020.

- **Strategic Fund**

The Strategic Fund for Culture and Arts Scheme supports applications to national and international funding bodies to help leverage funding by offering a percentage of any funding awarded, in the event of a successful application. Four letters of support were provided for the Arts Council Arts Grant.

Five letters of support were issued, one each to Arts Council Artist in the Community Scheme, Arts Council Opera Commissions Award, Arts Council Opera Projects and Production Award, Arts Council Theatre Residency Scheme and Science Foundation Ireland Discover Award.

- **Creative Ireland Funded Projects**

Limerick Culture and Arts Office staff attended the Creative Ireland Co-Ordinators' briefing on 9 March.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Donal Mór O'Brien Sculpture, St. Mary's Cathedral

The Sculpture of Donal Mór O'Brien was commissioned by St. Mary's Cathedral Limerick to reimagine one of the trees that had to be removed from the boundary walls of the Cathedral due to the damage they were doing to the walls. Limerick native, Will Fogarty, Fear Na Coillte Chainsaw Sculptures, set to work on bringing to life the 12th Century King who was the last King of Munster, his Palace thought to be on the grounds of the great St. Mary's Cathedral, which was one of the churches he founded in Munster on becoming King. He now stands majestically, looking over the City that he once ruled.

Kathleen Turner Album, Like a Lion

The second video for the Album, Puzzle, was released on April 7. It deals with issues of vulnerability and confusion. It features the highly experienced aerialist and choreographer, Lee Clayden, using the apparatus of the spiral, which is in constant circular motion.

• Creative Ireland: Made in Limerick Grants 2020

The Creative Ireland Made in Limerick Grants Scheme is offered as part of the Limerick Creative Ireland Programme to deliver activities taking place in 2020. This Grants Scheme consists of three Strands: Strand 1. Creative Minds: Nurturing and Supporting Creative Practitioners; Strand 2. Creative Citizens: People Creating and Accessing Culture at their Doorstep; and Strand 3. People, Places, Networks: Enhancing our Local, Cultural and Creative Infrastructure – Spotlight on Heritage. The closing date for applications was Wednesday 1 April 2020. 15 applications were received and the Assessment Panel met remotely on Friday 17 April.

• Creative Youth-Forum Sharing

At the heart of the Creative Ireland Programme is collaboration and the importance of this principle was demonstrated on 8 March with the Creative Youth Forum Sharing event at the Irish Aerial Creation Centre. This event was opened by Councillor Kieran O'Hanlon, Chairperson of the Community, Leisure and Culture Strategic Policy Committee, who was deputising for the Mayor.

Arising from Creative Days for Future Creators, this is the first public platform displaying the work undertaken on those Creative Days between three youth groups, Irish Aerial Creation Centre Performance Group, the Irish Chamber Orchestra's Youth Orchestra and the Limerick Youth Dance Company, all in receipt of funding from the Creative Ireland Programme.

This sharing event saw young people working on Aerial (Trapeze, Spirals, Cocoons), Music and Dance, exploring the art forms and responding to each other in a series of creative group performances. Sight, sound, movement and rhythm were in synergy.

PROGRAMME

• Young People, Children and Education

In accordance with HSE guidelines during the Coronavirus (COVID-19), the Integrated Dance, County Limerick Youth Theatre and Limerick Youth Choir programmes have been suspended. Helium Arts Children's Creative Health programmes is focusing on on-line delivery as services in UHL Paediatric Outpatients have been suspended.

• Festivals and Events Strategy Development

The development of a strategy for festivals and events in Limerick is underway and in March the strategy steering committee met with Festivals International to receive a presentation on research undertaken to date following extensive stakeholder engagement and consultations carried out in February.

• Ireland's St. Patrick's Celebrations Cancelled

Ireland's St. Patrick's Festivals were cancelled by National Government on 10 March due to COVID-19. Limerick had been selected as a Tier 1 Partner with Fáilte Ireland to promote Ireland's St. Patrick's Celebrations. It has been decided that in light of the festival cancellation, the 50th Anniversary Celebrations for the International Band Championships will be rescheduled for 2021 given that it did not take place this year.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Riverfest

It was decided this month that Riverfest 2020 will be postponed. This decision was taken in consultation with Emergency Management and a review took place to consider an alternative date later in the year. After discussion, a decision was made to cancel the 2020 festival, and replace it with a "Virtual Riverfest" over the May Bank Holiday weekend.

Supporting Limerick Festivals and Events

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are working with grant recipients of the Festivals and Events Grant Award to support revised programming and rescheduling of festivals currently proposed for March and April 2020. To date, Limerick Sings and South and Proud have confirmed postponement, while Fresh Film suspended some of its programming, diverting most of it online. We have received additional enquiries from festivals due to take place in May and are working with these organisers on an ongoing basis as the situation unfolds.

2. Property & Community Facilities

DERELICTION AND VACANCY

Derelict Sites: March	
Inspections carried out	66
Statutory Notices issued under the Derelict Sites Act	25
Cases closed through engagement	5
Properties entered onto the Derelict Sites Register	1
Properties put forward for Compulsory Acquisition	10

BIN WAIVERS

Bin Waivers Issued: March	36
Bin Waivers Issued: April	11

ALL HOUSE PURCHASES - APRIL STATUS

Category	Balance c/fwd	Sale Closed	Balance b/fwd
Regeneration	4	3	1
Part V	9	1	8
SHIP	12	11	1
Buy and Renew	13	2	11
Derelict / Vacant	10	10	0

3. Urban and Rural Community Development

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Projects Approved under LEADER PROGRAMME:

- Initiative Madam Olda Fitzgerald, Glin Castle Food Fair - €6,483.00.
- Caherconlish/Caherline Community Council CLG - €200,000 for Millennium upgrade (Provisional Approval).
- Pallasgreen/Templebraden Community Council - €181,750 for Pallasgreen Community Centre Energy Efficiency Renovations and Retrofit.
- Ballyhoura Development CLG for a Cooperation Project under Living and Learning Communities were fully approved for €81,600.
- Under Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2018-2022 (SICAP), the following SICAP reports/plans were approved at LCDC meeting held on 3 March 2020: Annual Plan 2019 End-of-Year Performance Reports.
- 2019 Key Performance Indicators were exceeded by the three Implementing Partners - Ballyhoura Development CLG, PAUL Partnership and West Limerick Resources CLG.
- The 2020 annual budget was increased by 3% bringing Limerick's SICAP budget to €2,250,989.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

LIMERICK SPORTS PARTNERSHIP (LSP)

Limerick Sports Partnership has had a record number of participants (1,400) attending Health and Fitness initiatives across Limerick in March. These programmes included:

- Men on the Move
- Kids Great Limerick Run training programme
- Discover Fitness
- Teenage Fitness
- Desk to 5K
- Cool Movers Fitness
- Community Walking
- Adapted Men on the Move
- Women on Wheels Turbo

Additional community-based programmes have been delivered at the two Community Sports Hubs in Garryowen and Croom where Physical Activity Facilitators are in posts.

Another 10 individuals completed the LSP 22-week Boxing Clever Education and Fitness programme for individuals on a path to recovery from Addictions. These participants will receive a QQI Level 5 in Health Related Fitness and Community Addiction Studies.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the LSP team is creating Online Videos and Resources to look after the Physical and Mental Health of our individuals and communities across Limerick. Please see the following link which will direct you to these resources: <https://www.limericksports.ie/index.php/covid-19>

HEALTH and WELLBEING

- 47 applications received for the Healthy Ireland Community Mental Health Small Grant Initiative. These are being reviewed in light of the current COVID-19 situation.
- A Healthy Cities and Counties Network meeting with Department of Health officials took place in April. Limerick City and County Council was represented at this meeting which covered updates on the national #InThisTogether campaign and Round 3 Healthy Ireland funding.

AGE FRIENDLY

In the last number of months, PLACE-EE facilitated the coming together of older and younger people in intergenerational workshops. Older citizens shared their rich store of memories and artefacts with younger participants.

This information was captured digitally and is now live on a cultural archive (<https://place-ee.informatik.umu.se/>). This website is a place where members of the four different communities participating in the project have stored and shared cultural heritage, knowledge, and skills. Visitors can find photos, stories, video clips, and more.

The Archive also includes materials that show how the younger and older people worked together and their views on the value of this intergenerational working. The Archive was created by intergenerational teams working in the four PLACE-EE project areas – Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland (Limerick), Iceland and Sweden. It contains a wide range of material relating to life in years gone by – traditions, crafts, song, music, employment, history, and household life.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK (PPN)

- Secretariat met twice and progressed PPN governance priorities.
- Limerick PPN now has a Facebook page. Significant communications continued on social media, website and via email on opportunities, news and developments relevant to the PPN membership.
- An on-line information session took place for PPN members on the broadband and CCTV plans for Limerick. This was delivered by Digital Services staff of Limerick City and County Council. Links to the presentations are available on www.limerickppn.ie.
- Limerick PPN is represented on the Limerick COVID-19 Community Response Forum by the PPN Secretariat Facilitator.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

GENERAL

COVID-19 has meant changing the way we work and engage with our partner organisations. However, work has continued on a range of programmes, with staff participating in virtual meetings with the Limerick Integration Working Group, Age Friendly Programme, Comhairle na n-Óg, Childcare Committee, Intercultural Cities, UNESCO, WHO, Connecting for Life, and attending international Webinars on a range of topics related to the above.

4. Libraries, Gallery & Museum

LIBRARIES

- World Book Day and International Women's Day were the major events marked in libraries in March before the COVID-19 closure of all branches to the public.
- In Newcastle West Library, World Book Day was celebrated on 3 March with a visit from popular Limerick Author, Róisín Meaney. Róisín read stories to 30 children and their teachers from Mahoonagh National School. This was a very enjoyable morning for all the children who travelled by bus from their school. The support of schools for these occasions illustrates the close relationship between libraries and schools in developing a love of reading. Dooradoyle Library invited two pre-school groups to enjoy story-time, nursery rhymes, songs and a craft activity. Also, classes from Let's Educate Together, Limerick, and St. Paul's N.S., took part in the Mystery Maze and Book-hunts. These activities are used by libraries to help children to become familiar with the library stock and layout. Watch House Cross branch welcomed Suzanne and Hazel from Little Voices for World Book Day. Commotion in the Ocean in the company of sharks and whales, penguins and polar bears was the chosen story for a rapt audience of young readers. In addition, Author, Etain McCooey, entertained a group of children with her book 'Deefers Day Out,' combining an interactive storytelling session with music and songs for classes from Thomond Primary School.
- International Women's Day was celebrated a little early on 5 March in Newcastle West Library. For over a century, International Women's Day has been recognised throughout the world as a day on which women's struggles for equality and economic justice are marked and their achievements celebrated. The library put together an evening of word, music and song to inspire and gladden the heart. Special guest on the evening was Dr. Theresa Reidy, a Senior Lecturer and Head of Department at the Department of Government and Politics in University College Cork. A native of Kilmeedy, Dr. Reidy's talk was titled "Women of the 33rd Dáil: Slow Progress on Equal Gender Representation." Also joining in the celebrations were the Yukeladies, a group of ukulele playing women from Limerick, as well as members of the new generation of young female singers from the Susan Browne School of Music. With an audience of over 80 people a wonderful evening was enjoyed by all.
- On March 10, 50 students from Scoil Mhuire agus Íde visited Newcastle West Branch for local History research. This was part of their Leaving Certificate history project. Also on March 10 Coding for Juniors took place between 5.00pm and 6.00pm and this was facilitated by "Mobile IT."
- Digital Skill classes for older people continued in participating libraries in the early days of the month.
- An Art Exhibition exploring the theme of love and separation by Romanian Artist, Crina Leonte, was on display in Newcastle West until 12 March.
- At Dooradoyle Library, Meditation classes continued on 3 March. Gaeilge Le Chéile continued on 7 March. Class Visits from St. Pauls N.S. and Redhill continued up to 12 March. On 11 March, almost 100 First Year students from Coláiste Chiaráin in Croom visited the library. Many of the first year students joined the library for the first time and others were regular library users. They were given a tour and general information regarding the use of the library, including a presentation on the use of the library online resources.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

- On 12 March, the Irish Deaf Society held a meeting for learners and teachers.
- The Inis Artists' Exhibition was running until the library closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- The Age Action Computer Course and the Ballyhoura Digital Skills Course continued on 3 and 10 March.
- The Granary Library continued to maximise use of its designated community room where over the first 12 days of March, prior to the closure of libraries due to the COVID-19 restrictions, 29 different meetings/events/activities took place in the room, benefiting community groups, seniors groups, music enthusiasts, book lovers, adult learners, children and more - from digital skills to meditation classes, book clubs to Limerick Lace workshops, children's storytimes to English-language conversation classes, information workshops about fostering children, to knitting groups.
- In the month of April, the national programme "Spring Into Storytime" transferred to a digital format with library staff and authors recording storytelling sessions and posting them online through all available social media. The response to this Initiative has been very positive and library staff were happy to develop new skills to make this project a success.
- Library staff also created videos to promote Limerick Library's suite of online resources available to all library members from their own homes. A theme of "We're Always Open" attracted the attention of those not usually able to access library services with free newspapers, magazines, e-book, e-audio books, training courses and language learning.

LIMERICK MUSEUM

- "GATHERING THREADS," an exhibition by celebrated Limerick Artist, Gerry O'Mahony, was opened on Thursday 5 March and was available to view until the Museum closed due to COVID-19 on 12 March.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE RESPONSE TO COVID-19

LIBRARIES

Books for the HSE:

- Limerick City and County Library service is partnering with Mid-West Mental Health Services and HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare to provide book stock and other materials to patients in acute units at hospitals in Limerick and to care facilities for vulnerable people who need to, but for various reasons cannot, self-isolate and will be staying in special care facilities during the COVID-19 crisis. The library was asked to become involved as health care providers are very conscious of looking after people's mental health needs while they are in a period of isolation. The positive benefits of books and reading to mental health and wellbeing are well-known and the Library service was keen to get involved in this project. An initial shipment of 1,000 books was dispatched for use in special care facilities in the Limerick region.

Online Story time Sessions:

- *Spring Into Storytime* is a national storytime Initiative celebrating the importance of families reading together and sharing stories. In a new Initiative, children's storytime sessions are now available online thanks to cooperation between local library services and Irish publishers. Story and craft sessions are currently available to view at Limerick Libraries' Facebook pages with more sessions to follow as *Spring into Storytime* continues throughout April and May. <https://www.librariesireland.ie/services/right-to-read/spring-into-storytime/digital-storytimes>



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Digitised Local History Collection:

- Limerick City and County Library has created a vast online resource of local studies material, including books, journals, local studies files, genealogy resources, etc. This material is all freely accessible on the library section of the [limerickcity.ie](http://www.limerickcity.ie) website. The library also has a YouTube channel which features talks, library concerts and documentaries. These free online resources are being promoted to the general public by featuring them on our library Facebook page, which has more than 3,000 followers, and by alerting our mailing contact list of about 600 people. <http://www.limerickcity.ie/library/localstudies/>

Loan of 3D Printers:

- Limerick Library's 3D Printers have been made available to our online printing partner Surfbox for the production of face shields for use by the HSE as part of a national campaign to facilitate printing for 18 hours per day.

E-Resources:

- Our E-resources including e-books, e-magazines, e-newspapers and a wide range of online education courses have been widely promoted through the Council's Twitter, Facebook and [Limerickcity.ie](http://www.limerickcity.ie) website, and are currently being heavily used by the public. Designated staff are available to help any member of the public to access these services. New library membership is available without leaving your home. Existing loans have been extended for all library members. <https://www.limerickcity.ie/council/services/community-and-leisure/libraries/library-e-services>

LIMERICK MUSEUM

- Limerick Museum, in partnership with the People's Museum, has launched a project on Limerick's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Both Museums are asking Limerick people, both at home and in the Limerick diaspora, to send in their stories and images which will form the basis for a future exhibition.

- Limerick Museum, in partnership with Sporting Limerick, has made a series of short films showcasing Limerick's sporting history and the Museum's GAA Collection. They are being uploaded to YouTube and [Limerickcity.ie](http://www.limerickcity.ie).
- Limerick Museum has enhanced its online presence by adding the PDFs of *Limerick in the First Dáil* and other recent exhibitions to the [Limerickcity.ie](http://www.limerickcity.ie) website.

LIMERICK CITY GALLERY OF ART (LPGA)

- LPGA developed a children's activity pack which will be updated on a fortnightly basis.
- LPGA is working with Three Muses Project on developing an online app for the activity pack which was originally published as a PDF.

LIMERICK SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

- The LSP has linked with Strengthening Families to deliver Information packs around helping recipients support their Physical and Mental wellbeing.
- Support services in the City have been provided with equipment in order to support individuals in disadvantaged communities to participate in Physical Activity.
- 20 Turbos have been provided to women registered for the WOW Cycling Programme. These cycling sessions are now delivered remotely using YouTube links and session plans.
- We have hosted two online campaigns where participants record their sessions and submit to compete to win Prizes. A campaign is running for primary schools around Active Schools Week to create an obstacle course and over 56 schools have registered. We have also created a similar competition for companies to promote National Workplace Wellbeing Day.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The LCDC is responsible for oversight of the implementation of SICAP and Healthy Limerick. SICAP is delivered on the ground by Local Development Companies.

In response to COVID-19, the Local Development Companies (PAUL Partnership in the City, West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development) have prepared Local Response Plans for each of their areas for continued implementation of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation (SICAP) Programme. Services have been maintained by the Local Development Companies by making one-to-one support available to people at risk of social exclusion through telephone contact. The Companies are also making provision to move other services delivered under SICAP in education and training on-line.

A new Initiative by the Local Food Partnership, supported by Healthy Ireland, is being rolled out across the Local Development Companies to coordinate the provision of food supplies and meals on wheels and other food services to households in need. Need for such services is due to reduced incomes or isolation linked to COVID 19.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY FUND

On 9 April last, the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Mr. Michael Ring TD, launched a €2.5 million fund to support community and voluntary groups involved in the delivery of COVID-19 community response efforts as part of the Community Call Initiative. The funding was allocated on the basis of population, with Limerick receiving €88,883 of funding.

On 17 April the Community Development Department invited applications from groups and organisations across Limerick City and County for the fund. The COVID-19 emergency funding covers both capital and current costs for groups that are providing support and services within their communities. Priority is to be given to groups and organisations that incur costs in the delivery of frontline services with the majority of grants being up to €1,000. However, consideration is to be given to grant higher amounts where an exceptional need is identified.

The closing date for receipt of applications was Thursday 30 April. In excess of 70 applications ranging from €500 to €10,000 for the COVID-19 Emergency Fund were received.

Limerick COVID-19 Community Response

In mid-March, following a series of meetings between staff of Limerick City and County Council, Limerick GAA and An Garda Síochána, Limerick COVID-19 Community Response was initiated. The Response Management Team worked on putting in place a structure that would support our communities through the very difficult period we had just entered into, with schools closing and the first mention of cocooning, in order to protect those most vulnerable to contracting the virus (COVID-19). The team established to manage this response immediately identified two main areas of focus: those who required assistance and those who wished to offer assistance.

- Limericks COVID-19 Community Response Call Centre, which is based in Munster GAA Headquarters, Áras Mumhan, Castletroy, is operating 8am-8pm, seven days per week. The Freephone number 1800 832 005 has been set up and all calls for assistance of any kind come through on that line. A dedicated email address **covidsupport@limerick.ie** has also been set up, for those seeking assistance who wish to log their request electronically. A Limerick City and County Council staff member manages this email address and responds to queries received. A contingency Call Centre has also been established at Limerick City and County Council's Library in Dooradoyle. This facility will serve as a backup location, in the event of an issue arising at the Call Centre in Castletroy.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



- During the period, 25 March to 29 April, the Call Centre received 1,076 calls. All calls have been closed, following successful completion of the requests received. There were 239 follow-up calls made to check in with people who requested a service. The following is a breakdown of all calls, by service type, received by volunteers at the Call Centre:
 - Collection and Delivery of Services: 409
 - Social Isolation Service: 57
 - Meal Service: 26
 - Garda Síochána Service: 83
 - Other Health Services: 40
 - Other Request: 477
- For individuals wishing to volunteer their time or services, an online registration pathway has been set up. Anyone interested in volunteering is requested to email volunteer@limerick.ie, from where they will be guided through an online application process.
- A peer-to-peer chat service called "Reaching Out, Staying Connected" was launched on 20 April. To date, there are 28 individuals who receive a regular call from a cocooning older person who will phone for a chat and to help pass the time. This initiative was set up in response to requests for such a service from older people who reached out to the Call Centre. They indicated that they are not speaking to, or hearing from, anyone for days at a time. We offer people a daily telephone support call whereby a member of our Older People's Executive, part of the Limerick Age Friendly Programme, will check in to see how the person is doing, they will engage the person in a general chat to give the person an opportunity to connect. We are currently identifying individuals directly through our Call Centre, and are putting plans in place to expand the service as the need arises.
- At the request of the Government, a COVID-19 Community Response Forum has been established in each Local Authority area. In Limerick, the Forum is chaired and co-ordinated by the Chief Executive, Dr. Pat Daly, and the Elected Members are represented by the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Michael Sheahan. The Forum's 37 members meet regularly by web meeting to receive briefings on all aspects of Limerick's community response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Housing Development Directorate

1. Strategic Housing Development

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT (SPOC)

The new process for a single point of contact in Limerick City and County Council, to deal with all house refurbishments, has commenced and emergency works were carried out in March and April in order to return vacant properties for allocation as quickly as possible. This fast-tracking of works for small-scale repairs was assigned to a number of contractors to complete, while ensuring the HSE guidelines for safe working are adhered to at all times.

The current scheme consists of 119 houses and progress to date has been significant allowing a number of houses to be allocated during this crisis.

LEASING PROGRAMME

With the cessation of inspections of occupied properties, teams were re-deployed to carry out inspections of potential properties under the Long Term Leasing Scheme and the Repair and Lease Scheme, which has allowed this supply of new housing units for social housing to continue. The leasing team has continued to work with investors and property owners to progress these units through the various stages of the schemes.

BUILD, BUY AND LEASE

The following tables show progress to 31 March and 30 April 2020 in the above Social Housing delivery streams:

As at 31 March 2020	Complete	In Progress	Overall Projected and Delivered
Build	0	115	115
Buy	0	37	37
Lease	11	115	126
TOTAL	11	267	278

As at 30 April 2020	Complete	In Progress	Overall Projected and Delivered
Build	0	120	120
Buy	3	33	36
Lease	23	116	139
TOTAL	26	269	295

2. Regeneration Strategy Implementation

Regeneration Strategy Implementation Plan

- The main focus for March was to support our Regeneration community during these unprecedented times.
- Looking after the most vulnerable in our community was of the utmost importance. Limerick City and County Council facilitated a limited payment through the Social Intervention Fund under the Regeneration Programme to help continue the provision of Meals on Wheels services in Limerick. Some of these community organisations that we helped are –
 - Northside Family Resource Centre.
 - St. Munchin's Community Centre.
 - St. Mary's AID.
 - Moyross Community Enterprise Centre LTD.
 - Our Lady of Lourdes Community Services Group LTD.
- The text alert system operated through Regeneration is playing a vital part in keeping communities updated during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Regeneration staff are liaising with Community Support Groups in order to keep services going.
- Along with Northside Family Resource Centre operating its Meals on Wheels service, it has also transformed its crèche into a food parcel distribution centre to help the most vulnerable in our community.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



- Southill Hub, funded by the Social Intervention Fund through the LRFIP, are currently focused on finding innovative ways to run the service during this time. They are doing things such as supporting people over the phone to fill out Social Welfare forms and printing, working with the local school to support vulnerable families, working with the Seniors' Project to provide transport for vulnerable community members when required, and providing youth work clubs through online platforms, one-to-one support and online content for young people.
- Community Law and Mediation (also funded by the SIF) are being innovative in their approach to the current climate and are doing a few things to help the community at this time:
 - Their team in Limerick will run two free legal advice clinics, per week, by phone. Phone consultations can be booked by contacting 061-536100.
 - They will continue to be on hand to advise their members and community and advocacy organisations, on issues affecting their service users, in the areas of employment, equality, social welfare and housing law and access to health, education and other services.
 - They will continue to provide legal advocacy and representation to current and new clients, subject to capacity; and
 - They will continue to provide mediation information. They are also exploring the potential of offering phone and/or online mediation services, online Know Your Rights talks and other education services.
- During the month of April, the main focus was to provide support to our Regeneration Community just like we did in March.
- Regeneration staff continue to liaise with Community Support Groups in order to keep services going.

Southill Hub

- Supporting people over the phone to fill out Social Welfare forms and printing etc.
- Working with the local school to support vulnerable families by providing meals to 80 people.
- Providing socially distanced transport for vulnerable community members when required.
- Providing youth work clubs through online platforms, one-to-one support and online content for young people.
- Working with UL, Tusla and Mary Immaculate College to develop packs for families.
- Acting as a hub to support CYPSC's drive to provide laptops for students.
- Provision of a "virtual" community centre service through our FB page.

St. Mary's AID

- Meals Delivery Service continues to deliver meals to the vulnerable clients engaged in our service and Limerick City and County Council continue to support The Millennium Centre in Caherconlish by providing meals for them to support vulnerable older people living in their community. This is approximately 500 meals a week.
- Our SICAP personal support service is now available over the phone or via email – new engagements have increased due to COVID-19 unemployment and individuals needing support to engage in the Government supports available to them. The Manager is also engaging with the SICAP Partners' Management Group, facilitated by PAUL Partnership, to identify issues facing the organisations delivering SICAP and the communities that we support.
- Our Foodbank Delivery Programme continues to deliver food parcels twice a month to individuals and families experiencing food poverty. This is a joint partnership with Mid West Simon and St. Mary's AID and has seen an increase in those seeking support of 25% since COVID-19.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

- We have moved our Gardening for Wildlife Workshop Series online and have delivered four of our six weeks short video tutorials. This online series is seeking to engage those families and individuals in our community that are self-isolating and staying at home to enjoy the nature in their local community and garden. Encouraging families to try out some simple planting techniques and also to become more informed in the importance of our natural flora and fauna in supporting our biodiversity. This project was funded by Community Action Fund, Limerick City and County Council, and once the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, we hope to return to practical workshops.
- Since the COVID-19 restrictions have been put in place, we are offering a friendly call service to older people on our Meals Delivery Service as a way of supporting them and linking in with them for the friendly chat so that they continue to feel engaged with the company throughout the social distancing and cocooning practices.
- The company board has updated the company constitution in line with Good Governance, Charity and Company law and agreed the new company name – this is now being worked on with the CRO and once officially accepted by them, the company will embark on its rebranding and marketing/sales strategy so that the revenue losses incurred by the company due to COVID-19 can be addressed in a positive and proactive manner. This now finalises the outstanding detail needed as part of the proposal being put to the Department for the new community centre for the Parish of St. Mary's as part of the Limerick City and County Council Regeneration Project.
- The St. Mary's Parish Community Newsletter is being finalised and will be made available through BakeHouse 22 and delivered to all our Meals Delivery Service and Foodbank service clients at the end of the week. We also will post the articles on our facebook page. Our door-to-door deliveries cannot take place due to Government social distancing requirements.

Moyross Residents' Forum

Moyross Residents' Forum continues to support the residents of Moyross through these very challenging times.

- Ensuring communication of all contact details of services providers and support services including the community response team, mental health supports and fun interactive activities for the family to do at home.
- Daily phone calls to residents for check-in and social media.
- Support with applications including Age Action and Irish Red Cross Grant for assistance.
- Identifying residents who do not normally access services and now find themselves in need of assistance.
- Delivery of Food Parcels to families supported by the Mid West Simon.
- Delivery of groceries and prescriptions.
- Ensuring essential maintenance is reported and followed up.
- Liaising with the engineers to ensure the Coonagh-Knockalisheen road project is completed without further delay.

Southill

- Two winners were announced for the 'Keep Your Distance' TikTok competition by Southill Hub, supported by the Regeneration Programme.
- The Regeneration team supported the distribution of exam papers for secondary students in family school packs coordinated by TUSLA and local community groups.
- Environmental works were undertaken in consultation with residents at Galvone View and Churchfield Phase 2 to change the planting scheme and reopen a pathway through the estate.
- The team from Our Lady of Lourdes continued litter picks funded by the Environment Section and Social Inclusion Fund.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Service Operations Directorate

1. Housing Support Services

Update for end of **March 2020**

• Allocations

	No. of Units MARCH 2020	Year to Date
Metropolitan District	20	77
Newcastle West	1	12
Adare – Rathkeale	0	0
Cappamore – Kilmallock	0	5
Total	21	94

• Allocation Refusals

	No. of Units MARCH 2020	Year to Date
Metropolitan District	3	10
Newcastle West	1	4
Adare – Rathkeale	0	0
Cappamore – Kilmallock	0	0
Total	4	14

• Traveller Housing Welfare

No. of Units offered March 2020	Year to Date
3	5

**these figures are included in Allocations figures*

• Housing Assistance Payments Limerick (HAP)

2,341 of active HAP Tenancies monitored, reviewed and maintained.

No. of HAP tenancies set up this month	52
No. of Amendments	348
No. of Cessations	26



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

HOME IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

March 2020	MAGS (Mobility Adaptation Grant Scheme)	No.	HAG (Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme)	No.	HOPS (Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Scheme)	No.	DPG	No.
Rathkeale	€0.00	0	€20,966.56	3	€12,232.50	3	€0.00	0
Newcastle West	€5,400.00	1	€0.00	0	€35,086.41	11	€5,448.00	1
Metropolitan	€14,545.00	3	€20,002.25	3	€23,300.00	7	€58,314.04	5
Kilmallock	€1,850.00	1	€36,191.80	3	€11,610.00	3	€7,753.31	1
Total	€21,795.00	5	€77,160.61	9	€82,228.91	24	€71,515.35	7
Total Monies issued in March 2020 = €252,699.87								
Total Grants issued in March 2020 = 45								

January to March 2020	MAGS (Mobility Adaptation Grant Scheme)	No.	HAG (Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme)	No.	HOPS (Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Scheme)	No.	DPG	No.
Rathkeale	€26,798.24	5	€68,588.60	7	€44,805.45	11	€0.00	2
Newcastle West	€31,285.29	8	€7,290.00	2	€80,899.79	24	€5,448.00	1
Metropolitan	€60,552.54	12	€55,163.02	8	€35,511.50	15	€90,830.51	8
Kilmallock	€18,050.00	4	€51,191.80	4	€33,471.63	9	€16,553.32	2
Total	€136,686.07	29	€182,233.42	21	€194,688.37	59	€112,831.83	13
Total Monies issued January to March 2020 = €626,439.69								
Total Grants issued January to March 2020 = 122								

RENT COLLECTION

Rent Collection Limerick City & County Council					
Opening Balance @ 01/01/2020	Accrued Income	Total for collection	Receipts	Closing balance 31/03/2020	% Collection
€4,599,470	€4,104,130	€8,703,600	€4,042,117	€4,661,483	46%



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

LIMERICK HOMELESS ACTION TEAM – PATHWAY ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEM (PASS) DATA

Individuals – 22nd March 2020		
Location	Description	No.
McGarry House	Mixed Low threshold accommodation for singles	31
St. Patrick's Hostel	Higher threshold accommodation for single males	44
Thomond House	Higher threshold accommodation for single females	23
B&B (no children)	Adults without children accommodated in B&B	6
Temporary Emergency Provision TEP 1 (Edenvilla)	Low threshold, night by night (9pm-9am) emergency accommodation. Mixed	14
TEP 2 (Phoenix Lodge)	Low threshold, night by night (9pm-9am) emergency accommodation. Mixed	15
Total		133

Families			
Location	Description	No. Adults	No. Children
Suaimhneas	Family Emergency accommodation	5	9
		Families - 5	
B&B/Hotel Accommodation	Families	52	71
		Families - 43	
Twin Oaks Family Hub	Family Hub	13	16
		Families - 10	
Totals		Adults	Children
		70	96
		Families - 58	



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Update for end of **April 2020**

• Waiting List

Housing Waiting List	2,712
----------------------	-------

• Allocations

	No. of Units APRIL 2020	Year to Date
Metropolitan District	25	102
Newcastle West	7	19
Adare – Rathkeale	6	6
Cappamore – Kilmallock	4	9
Total	42	136

• Traveller Housing Welfare

No. of Units offered APRIL 2020	Year to Date
9	14

**these figures are included in Allocations figures*

• Housing Assistance Payments Limerick (HAP)

2,361 of active HAP Tenancies monitored, reviewed and maintained.

No. of HAP tenancies set up this month	33
No. of Amendments	182
No. of Cessations	7

• Allocation Refusals

	No. of Units APRIL 2020	Year to Date
Metropolitan District	2	12
Newcastle West	4	8
Adare – Rathkeale	0	0
Cappamore – Kilmallock	0	0
Total	6	20

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT****HOME IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

April 2020	MAGS (Mobility Adaptation Grant Scheme)	No.	HAG (Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme)	No.	HOPS (Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Scheme)	No.	DPG	No.
Rathkeale	€0.00	0	€39,405.36	3	€950.00	1	€0.00	0
Newcastle West	€11,400.00	2	€4,395.00	1	€2,185.00	1	€0.00	0
Metropolitan	€33,975.00	6	€11,351.50	2	€24,306.72	5	€71,709.96	5
Kilmallock	€16,200.00	3	€19,760.00	3	€20,245.00	5	€7,753.31	1
Total	€61,575.00	11	€74,911.86	9	€47,686.72	12	€79,463.27	6
Total Monies issued in April 2020 = €263,636.85								
Total Grants issued in April 2020 = 38								

January to April 2020	MAGS (Mobility Adaptation Grant Scheme)	No.	HAG (Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme)	No.	HOPS (Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Scheme)	No.	DPG	No.
Rathkeale	€26,798.24	5	€108,243.96	10	€45,755.45	12	€0.00	2
Newcastle West	€42,685.29	10	€11,685.00	3	€83,084.79	25	€5,448.00	1
Metropolitan	€94,527.54	18	€66,514.52	10	€59,818.22	20	€162,540.47	13
Kilmallock	€34,250.00	7	€70,951.80	7	€53,716.63	14	€24,306.63	2
Total	€198,261.07	40	€257,395.28	30	€242,375.09	71	€192,295.10	16
Total Monies issued January to April 2020 = €890,326.54								
Total Grants issued January to April 2020 = 157								

RENT COLLECTION

Rent Collection Limerick City & County Council					
Opening Balance @ 01/01/2020	Accrued Income	Total for collection	Receipts	Closing balance 30/04/2020	% Collection
€4,599,470	€5,360,449	€9,959,919	€5,336,194	€4,623,725	54%



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

LIMERICK HOMELESS ACTION TEAM – PATHWAY ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEM (PASS) DATA

Individuals – 30th April 2020		
Location	Description	No.
McGarry House	Mixed Low threshold accommodation for singles	30
St. Patrick's Hostel	Higher threshold accommodation for single males	47
Thomond House	Higher threshold accommodation for single females	25
B&B (no children)	Adults without children accommodated in B&B	6
Temporary Emergency Provision TEP 1 (Edenvilla)	Low threshold, night by night (9pm-9am) emergency accommodation. Mixed	15
TEP 2 (Phoenix Lodge)	Low threshold, night by night (9pm-9am) emergency accommodation. Mixed	15
Total		138

Families			
Location	Description	No. Adults	No. Children
Suaimhneas	Family Emergency accommodation	3	4
		Families - 3	
B&B/Hotel Accommodation	Families	45	57
		Families - 0	
Totals		Adults	Children
		48	61
		Families - 3	



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

2. Planning & Environmental Services

Environmental Services (Litter, Waste Enforcement, Air, Noise, Water/Waste Water and Public Health).

- 505 complaints were received during the period March and April 2020.
- 740 Inspections were undertaken during the period March and April 2020.
- The Department issued 20 Statutory Notices.
- 12 Directions were served by the Department.
- 53 Warning Letters were issued during the period.
- 69 Litter fines were issued during the period.
- Legal proceedings were initiated in 7 cases.

Economic Development and Planning

Planning Applications

A total of 81 new planning applications were received in March as follows:

Housing Developments - 1
Domestic Developments - 53
Agricultural Developments - 11
Commercial Developments/Change of Use - 6
Sporting/Community and Educational Developments - 1
Other Developments - 9

The current applications include proposals for:

- Construction of a residential development comprising 67 No. residential units at Newtown, Castletroy.
- Construction of six-storey building comprising office accommodation, 24 apartments, a communal roof terrace and new semi-basement level car-parking at 34-41 Catherine Street.

A total of 69 new planning applications were received in April as follows:

Housing Developments - 3
Domestic Developments - 44
Agricultural Developments - 11
Commercial Developments/Change of Use - 4
Sporting/Community and Educational Developments - 2
Other Developments - 5

The current applications include proposals for:

- Construction of 27 No. dwellings at Rathmale, Mungret.
- Construction of 12 No. dwellings at Ballyhahill.

3. Veterinary Services

- 18 stray or wandering equines were impounded during March 2020 and 11 during April 2020.
- The Dog Control Unit dealt with nine dogs in March 2020 and four during April 2020.
- Seven food samples were submitted during March 2020 for analysis under the National Residues and Microbiological Sampling Programme. No samples were taken during April 2020.

4. Cemeteries

Number of Burials in City Cemeteries.

Mount St. Lawrence	30
Mount St. Oliver	31
Castlemungret	21
Kilmurry	4



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Capital Investment Directorate

1. Design & Delivery

Finance

- Recoupments submitted for Housing schemes in March and April- €2,787,179.
- Recoupments paid in March and April- €3,447,608.

Part 8

- Part 8 approved for Mungret LIHAF Stage 2.

Approvals sought/obtained

- Stage 4 approval received for Gough Place (17 units).
- Stage 4 approval received for Kileely Road (5 units).
- Stage 1 approval received for Broadford (15 units).

Tenders

- Tender advertised for Coonagh-Knockalisheen Distributor Road.
- Contract awarded for King's Island Flood Relief Scheme – archaeological trial excavation.
- Tender advertised for Kings Island Flood Relief Scheme- Ground Investigation tender.
- Tenders received for Consultancy Services, Askeaton Swimming Pool.
- Tenders received for construction of Great Southern Greenway Limerick.
- Tenders received for construction of Newcastle West Athletics Hub.

Construction

- Construction commenced on Croom Distributor Road Phase 2.

Buy and Renew and SHIP Refurbishment programme

Inspections Carried out in March and April	Refurbishment works Commenced in March and April	Refurbishment works Ongoing	Refurbishment works Completed in March and April
0	0	8	2

Home Improvement Schemes

Inspections & Recommendations for Home Improvement Schemes – March and April 2020 - (remotely done by email / phone / post with photos and forms)

Inspection Types	Pre-application	Initial Inspection	Re-Inspection	Final Inspection	Total Inspections by Grant Type
MAGs (Mobility Adaptation Grant Scheme)	0	11	1	7	19
HAGs (Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme)	1	10	1	4	16
HOPS (Housing Aid for Older Persons Grant Scheme)	0	4	0	12	16
Total Inspections by Inspection Type	1	25	2	23	51



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

National and Regional Shared Services Directorate

1. Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Shared Services Centre

March 2020

- There were 54,054 active HAP tenancies nationally, managed by the HAPSSC at the end of March 2020.
- A weekly average of 294 HAP tenancies have been set up during 2020.
- The March landlord payment run was over €45 million.
- The weekly tenant debit at the end of March 2020 was over €2.6 million.
- The HAPSSC Debt Management Unit collected a total of €33.6 million in differential rent to end of March 2020.
- The HAP Tenant rent collection rate at the end of March 2020 was 98%.

April 2020

- There were 55,122 active HAP tenancies nationally, managed by the HAPSSC at the end of April 2020.
- A weekly average of 296 HAP tenancies have been set up during 2020.
- The April landlord payment run was over €45.8 million.
- The weekly tenant debit at the end of April 2020 was over €2.6 million.
- The HAPSSC Debt Management Unit collected a total of €45.3 million in differential rent to end of April 2020.
- The HAP Tenant rent collection rate at the end of April 2020 was 95%.

2. Fire and Emergency Services

List of Activities carried out in Fire Service during COVID-19 Restrictions

- A temporary Whole-Time Fire Station has been erected in Markets Field for the safety and wellbeing of whole-time fire fighter staff in order to maintain physical distancing of Fire fighters while on duty.
- A spreadsheet detailing the wellbeing of all fire personnel is updated on a daily basis.
- Procedures and policies put in place and distributed to all Fire Personnel regarding COVID-19.
- Continuously updating current information regarding staffing, PPE, welfare and liaising with suppliers.
- Health and Safety inspections ongoing at all Fire Stations.
- Regular internal circular updates sent to all Fire personnel regarding changes to work processes and current situation.
- Senior meetings held three days a week and currently being conducted via WebEx.
- Staff representatives are informed on any updates or changes to work procedures and HSE guidelines.
- Notified Communications on new Control Burning restrictions. The Communications Office informed the media, Councillors and IFA on changes.
- COVID-19 related purchases are being documented for recoupment, post COVID-19 crisis.

Communication

- Continue monitoring and reviewing issues regarding COVID-19.

Civil Defence

- March 23 - March 27 – volunteer preparation and online training for COVID-19.
- March 30 - Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) – administration and first-aid.
- March 31 - Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) – administration and first-aid.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Statistics

	No. of Fire Related Calls	No. of Non Fire Related Calls	Total
No. of call-outs 01/04/20 – 30/04/20	101	23	124
% of calls where on scene in < 10 mins from time of call	55%	78%	
% of calls where on scene between 11 and 20 mins from time of call	25%	11%	
% of calls where on scene in > 20 mins from time of call	20%	11%	

	No. Received / Assigned	No. Validated	No. Invalidated / Refused	No. Granted	No. Completed
Fire Certificate Applications April 2020	19	18	1	11	
Disability Access Cert Applications April 2020	14	13	1	11	
Licensing Applications April 2020	1	1			
Commencement Notice April 2020	21	18	3	18	21
Completion Certificate April 2020	4	4	0	4	
Planning Referrals April 2020	9				3
Sugar CRM Cases April 2020	2	2			
Building Control Management System (BCMS) On-Line Queries April 2020	12				

Types of "Valid" Commencement Notices Received	Commencement Notice with documentation	Commencement Notice without documentation	Opt-Out Commencement Notice
April 2020	3	6	6



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Water Safety

Number of lifebuoy replacements	Total Jan – Mar 2020	April 2020	Total 2020
Metropolitan District	1	2	3
Municipal Area	6	4 (new)	10

Munster Regional Control Centre (MRCC)

No. Calls mobilised to an emergency incident by MRCC	Other Calls	Average Call Processing Time	Total No. calls in April
876	1,017	1 minute 31 seconds	1,893



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

3. Digital Services and EU Programmes

Digital Services: (March)

- Under the National Broadband Plan, site surveys have been completed for the connection of eight Broadband Connection Points (BCP) in the most rural parts of the county to high-speed broadband. These eight BCPs will facilitate access to the Internet via Public WiFi for the local communities.
- The LITe Programme was rolled out into the Environmental Strategy, Procurement and Physical Development Departments. Next on the list to start using LITe are Marketing & Communications and Housing Support Services.
- On 25 March, Digital Services attended an online meeting of the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum, to discuss plans for the Forum's annual conference, as well as points for inclusion in the Forum's work programme for 2020.
- A March 2020 audit by Gas Networks Ireland found Limerick City and County Council is 100% compliant in terms of security, integrity, accuracy, and adequacy in its use of GNI GIS data. This is a further reflection of the integrity of Limerick City and County Council and Digital Services in its treatment of sensitive data, made possible by using Open Source GIS systems PostGIS and QGIS.

Digital Services: (April)

- An update was provided to the Limerick Public Participation Network (PPN) on 16 April 2020 on the Smart CCTV Project and the National Broadband Plan Limerick.
- Public information in relation to 5G mobile networks and health has been published on www.limerick.ie/council
- The Digital Retail Support project has been initiated to bring twenty local businesses online by July 2020 as a support to the "Keep Limerick Open for Business" campaign. A register of eCommerce Platform Suppliers has been created and 31 companies registered so far.
- The LITe Programme was rolled out to the Urban Innovation and Marketing & Communications Departments in April, with Housing Support Services, Regeneration, Strategic Housing Development and Property and Community Facilities to follow in May.





CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

EU Programmes (March)

- On 6 March GKinetic Limited, supported by Limerick City and County Council, and Officinae Verdi SpA, submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the Climate Action Fund. Together we are seeking €3m to establish a hybrid solar/hydro renewable energy generation facility, in an urban environment, with community ownership as an offshoot of the +CityxChange project.
- From 9 to 11 March, the Solidar Network of European Civil Society Organisations was hosted by Limerick City and County Council as part of an Erasmus+ Study Visit. Representatives attended from BFI OÖ (AT), Johannes Mikhelson Centre (EE), Initiative for Development and Cooperation (RS), Movimiento por la Paz (ES), Multicultural Center Prague (CZ) and Volunteering Matters (UK). They met with the Paul Partnership, CWELL (UL), Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, The Place-EE NPA Interreg Project, Moyross Library Service, St. Munchin's Community Centre, Doras Luimní, and Tait House, as well as site visits to Limerick City Build and St. Mary's Men's Shed to see how they function on the ground. Solidar will produce a report on the work that is being done in Limerick around lifelong education in the community to share with their 60-member organisations based in 29 countries. The organisations involved in the study visit will seek out potential EU projects to apply for together.
- On 19 March, the TRANSCULTOUR H2020 proposal was submitted. If successful, this €3.8m project will investigate and demonstrate transforming less visible cultural resources of peripheral European regions by identifying marginalised, diverse aspects of contemporary culture, and translating these into new, co-created sustainable tourism services. This project will be coordinated by the University of Oulu (FI). The pilot projects will take place in Limerick (IE), Odessa (UA), Bodo (NO) and Oulu (FI). If successful, Limerick City and County Council will work the Kemmy Business School on the implementation of this project here.

EU Programmes (April)

- Two submissions were made to hold workshops at the European Week of Regions and Cities 2020: one in cooperation with the Cities of Trondheim, Smoylan, and Pisek to present the Bold City Vision Framework, while the other is led by the Irish Regions European Office in Brussels, in cooperation with the cities of Versailles and Mechelen, relating to Green Cities by Co-Design.
- On Tuesday 28 April, the CASP-CADE H2020 proposal, coordinated by IT Sligo, was submitted. If this project proposal is successful, there will be a six-month pilot project in Limerick to test state-of-the-art electric Pods developed by the Swedish company, Clean Motion.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Support Services Directorate

1. Finance Services

Commercial Rates and Loans

Draft Collection Figures

Commercial Rates 2020	Opening Balance 1 Jan €	Accruals €	Vacant Property Adjustment €	Writes offs / Waivers €	Total for Collection €	Amount Collected €	Arrears €	Specific Doubtful Arrears €	% Collected
As at 30th April 2020	9,759,506	59,733,740**	51,535	126,249	69,315,462	17,179,310	52,136,152	3,908,412	26%

** The Date for Making the 2020 Rate was 3rd February 2020

* subject to finalisation of year end accounts for 2019

Debtors Loans	Opening Balance 1 Jan €	Accruals €	Writes offs / Waivers €	To Collect €	Receipts €	Arrears €	% Collected
As at 30th April 2020	447,129	448,978	13,676	882,431	639,647	242,784	72%

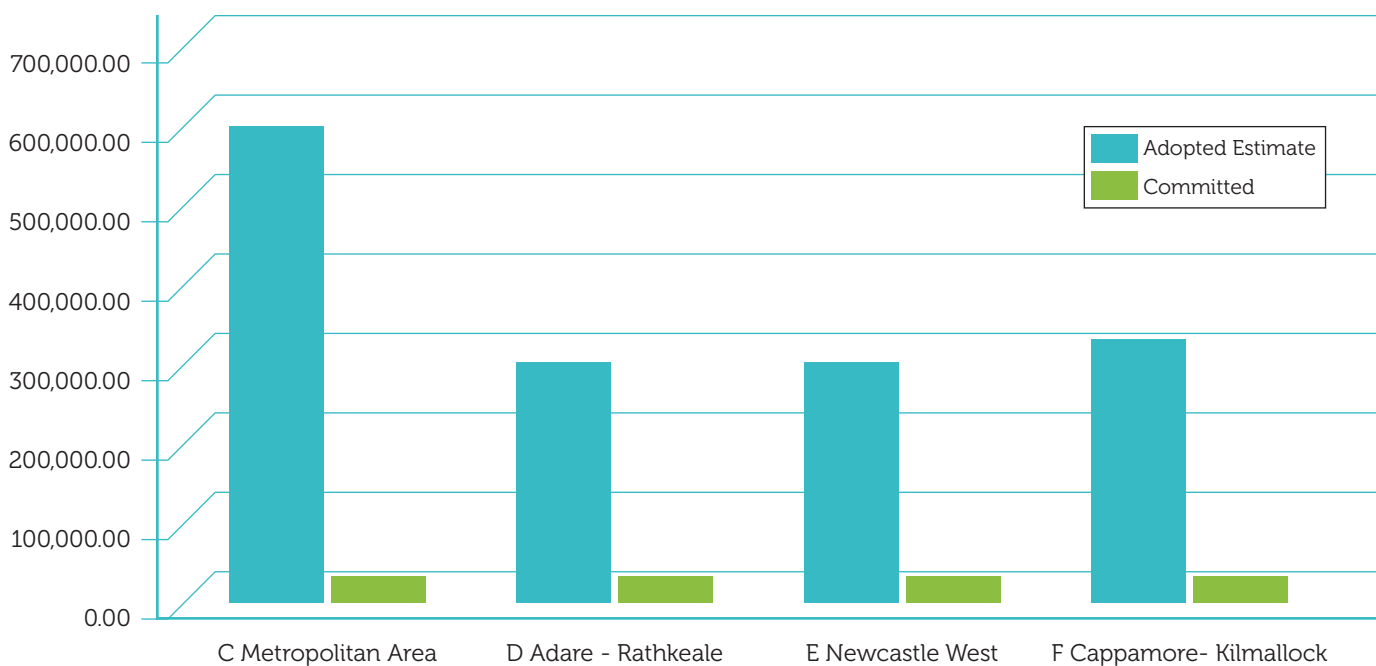
Recourse to Overdraft Facility

No of days in overdraft 0



**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT****General Municipal Allocation 2020 Adopted Estimate €1.403 Million**

Graph outlining adopted budget and draft committed expenditure up to 30th April 2020



Municip (Code) + (Text)	Value Adopted Estimate (€)	Value Committed (€)
C Metropolitan Area	568,000.00	0
D Adare - Rathkeale	270,000.00	0
E Newcastle West	270,000.00	0
F Cappamore - Kilmallock	295,000.00	0



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

2. Corporate Services, Governance & Customer Services

Corporate Services

Mayoral Reception was held for the following:

- The Creative Show in recognition of creating an environment, through the performing arts, of acceptance and inclusion for artists with mixed abilities.

The Office of the Mayor co-ordinated and arranged for the Mayor to attend the following functions/events during month of March:

- Local Enterprise Office – Limerick, Local Enterprise Awards Final.
- Celebration of Fairtrade Fortnight, presentation of medals to winners of the Fairtrade Poster Competition.
- Young Social Innovators Speak Out Tour for 2020 in the Lime Tree Theatre, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.
- University of Limerick, presentation of the President's Access Scholars Awards.
- Launch of Art Exhibition 'Gathering Threads' by Limerick Artist, Gerry O'Mahony, at Limerick Museum.
- The Academy of Urbanism and RIAI Conference 'Resilience, Revival and Regeneration.'
- Photoshoot for the handing over of keys of new truck to Limerick Civic Trust.
- Launch of new Creative Ireland project with Limerick-based youth groups from dance circus and music at Irish Aerial Creation Centre, Old Burlington Business Park, Gillogue.
- Welcome Address to European Study Group 'Community Education and Lifelong Learning.'
- Press Launch for Limerick Musical Society 'Titanic the Musical.'
- Visit to Raheen Active Retired in the Millennium Centre, Raheen.
- Visit to Down Syndrome Limerick Services, Unit 2 Castletroy Park Business Centre, Castletroy, Limerick.

Customer Services

March and April saw unprecedented events unfold in Ireland with the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Customer Services Department of Limerick City and County Council is at the forefront of service delivery for the Council. These times have meant changes and adaptations in how we deliver these frontline services but we continued during March and April to serve our customers at their first point of contact with us and to answer their queries, process payments and facilitate applications for services in this ever-changing environment. This was done through a combination of having staff working remotely as well as a limited number of staff in the office daily. The following figures highlight the activity within the contact centre throughout March and April:

- In **March**, Customer Services call centre dealt with 11,877 calls, 566 per day, handling 52% of same at first point of contact. **April** saw the call centre take 9,497 calls, 432 per day, handling 58% at first point of contact.
- To further support our customers and public representatives' requests, Customer Services has set up a dedicated team to work with the organisation and our colleagues around case management.
- The case management team saw 1,876 cases created in **April**, with 672 of these logged on behalf of public representatives, as well as the closure of 3,498 cases, 1,132 of these being cases logged by public representatives.
- **March** saw a total of 1,191 emails processed through our Customer Services mailbox, while **April** saw a total of 1,666 of emails processed.
- The logging of cases through the MyLimerick



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

portal continued, with a total of 271 cases being logged in **March**, 225 of which were logged by public representatives, whereas **April** saw a total of 201 cases logged, 182 by public representatives.

- Customer Services also continued in supporting the work of the Housing Maintenance Department in ensuring customers were advised regarding revised protocols at this time and regarding the Council's prioritising of certain works for Council tenants. **March** saw a total of 905 requests being made, while **April** saw a lower level of requests being made, a total of 631.
- Customer Services continued to provide other frontline services to the general public, such as the processing of Residential Parking Permits. There was a total of 78 new Residential Parking Permits being processed throughout March and 21 applications being received in April.

The COVID-19 pandemic also saw a change in issues being dealt with through our call centre. There was a 40% decrease in the number of housing maintenance queries, whereas there was a drastic increase in the number of rental and motor taxation queries due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw a total 48% increase on all rental queries and a 76% increase on motor taxation queries in March from the previous month.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



3. Schedule of Meetings for March and April

Name of Meeting	Date	Location
Operational Briefings		
Limerick City East	03.03.2020	Merchant's Quay
Limerick City West	03.03.2020	Merchant's Quay
Limerick City North	03.03.2020	Merchant's Quay
Municipal District of		
Adare-Rathkeale - Monthly Meeting	03.03.2020	Rathkeale
Newcastle West - Monthly Meeting	04.03.2020	Athea
Metropolitan District of Limerick		
Monthly Meeting	09.03.2020	Merchant's Quay
Meeting of Implementation Advisory Group on the Establishment of a Directly Elected Mayor with Executive Functions for Limerick	11.03.2020	Newcastle West
Corporate Policy Group	12.03.2020	Merchant's Quay
Virtual Party Leaders' Meeting	15.04.2020	
Virtual Corporate Policy Group Meeting	15.04.2020	
Virtual Meeting of Women's Caucus	20.04.2020	

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT****4. Access to Information**

	March	April	2020 January - April
Total Freedom of Information Requests	16	7	55
FOI Internal Appeals	1	0	2
Information Commissioner Appeals	0	0	0
Total Ombudsman Requests	5	3	16
Total AIE Requests	0	0	0

5. Business Improvement

The Business Improvement Department has launched a Staff App 'Council Connect.' The App provides up to-date information on Limerick City and County Council's COVID-19 policies, procedures and more. The App is available to download at myapp.is/councilconnect.

