

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

ATLANTIC EDGE

LIMERICK
EUROPEAN EMBRACE

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JOINT FOREWORD



Councillor Gerald Mitchell
Mayor of the City
and County of Limerick



Dr. Pat Daly
Chief Executive

The Annual Report 2023 delivers a comprehensive overview of Limerick City and County Council's activities and achievements over the course of another very busy year.

It showcases the breadth of council services working for the people of Limerick, elevating Limerick's national and international profile and nurturing development, while prioritising inclusivity, sustainability, and community enhancement.

This work was recognised nationally with Limerick City and County Council being awarded Local Authority of the Year 2023 at the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards. The award underlines our commitment to meeting housing targets, delivering improved infrastructure, supporting green initiatives, revitalising areas affected by dereliction and vacancy, and fostering tourism and economic growth.

Limerick's economy experienced another period of remarkable growth in 2023, with an impressive €1.26 billion in investments and over 2,740 new jobs announced, a testament to Limerick's vibrant economic landscape.

Housing remains a top priority with the Council steadfastly committed to providing diverse, sustainable housing solutions for all residents. The Government's 'Housing for All' plan set a target for Limerick of 2,693 new build homes by 2026 and we have a strong delivery pipeline as we work towards this target. Housing grants totalling €6.6million were approved in the Budget, providing critical assistance to help Limerick people in need remain living in their own homes.

Limerick City and County Council carried out 1,648 derelict site inspections in 2023 and commenced 52 Compulsory Acquisitions under the Derelict Site Act 1990. The council refurbished 73 vacant housing units under the Voids funding scheme and returned them to housing stock for letting. Our determination to address vacancy and dereliction has been met with approval both locally and nationally and underscores our dedication to revitalising our communities, maximising their potential.

Limerick City and County Council's Designated Activity Company (DAC), Limerick Twenty Thirty (LTT) advanced key strategic initiatives in 2023 including progressing to construction on the One Opera Square office building and delivering a Masterplan for Cleaves Riverside Quarter, both transformative developments that will shape the future of our city and region.

In this year we officially opened the Limerick Regional Athletics Hub in Newcastle West, further underscoring our commitment to sporting excellence within our region. This state of the art athletics facility represents a significant investment of €4.2 million in the region's sporting infrastructure.

The Council continued to demonstrate its commitment to creating vibrant, pedestrian-friendly urban spaces and promoting sustainable modes of transportation. The revitalisation of O'Connell Street breathed new life into the city's main thoroughfare, creating a more visually appealing public realm. Our Active Travel team continued to upgrade and expand Limerick's cycling and pedestrian networks in 2023 with an NTA allocation of €21 million in funding. During 2023 works progressed on the delivery of the Safe Routes to School programme at a number of Limerick schools in the city and county.

Major infrastructure projects also advanced. Enabling works commenced on the 35km Foynes to Limerick Road (including Adare Bypass) scheme, which will provide a crucial link from the Port of Foynes to the motorway network near Limerick city. The Transport Solution for the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project was updated in 2023. It will deliver 80km's of new and improved dual carriageway road as well as transformative active travel infrastructure. Planning continued on the N21 Abbeyfeale and N21 Newcastle West Road Schemes.

The Limerick Greenway attracted over 169,000 individual visitors in 2023, showcasing our commitment to sustainable tourism and ecological preservation. King John's Castle had a successful year with around 100,000 visitors. The attraction is operated by Discover Limerick DAC, which added two additional sites, Lough Gur and the Adare Heritage Centre, to its portfolio in 2023.

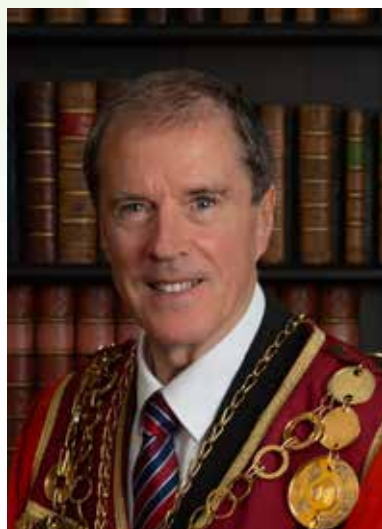
2023 provided the Council with opportunities to create memorable events, including the unforgettable homecoming celebrations for our four-in-row All Ireland Hurling Champions. An estimated 20,000 passionate hurling fans congregated at Pery Square to welcome and honour the triumphant Limerick Senior Hurling team. The annual calendar of Limerick festivals once again attracted tens of thousands of people and provided opportunities to gather as a community. These events not only celebrate our cultural heritage but also serve as catalysts for economic growth. In partnership with the Council, global media giant Forbes brought their world renowned "Under 30 Forum" to Limerick to learn about, elevate and celebrate the next generation of business innovators.

Limerick City and County Council approved a balanced budget of €1.4 Billion for 2024 (including €694 million for HAP Shared Services, which Limerick runs on behalf of the 31 local authorities) ensuring uninterrupted delivery of essential services.

Looking ahead, the impending arrival of the Ryder Cup in 2027 presents a monumental opportunity to showcase Limerick and Ireland on the global stage. With the appointment of a Ryder Cup Coordinator by Limerick City and County Council in 2023 and the creation of a strategic action plan, Limerick is poised to leverage this event not only for its immediate economic impact but also for its lasting legacy in our community.

We are also preparing for a fundamental change in local government with the first ever directly elected Mayor of Limerick in 2024. This will be the single most dramatic change to local government in Limerick since the amalgamation of Limerick City Council and Limerick County Council in 2014 and will require a significant cultural change within the organisation.

As we reflect on the achievements of 2023, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the elected representatives, community partners, dedicated individuals and stakeholders who have contributed to Limerick's continued growth and prosperity. Together, we will continue to chart a path forward that ensures a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable future for all who call Limerick home.



Councillor Gerald Mitchell
Mayor of the City and
County of Limerick



Councillor Dan McSweeney
Deputy Mayor of the City
and County of Limerick

LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

LIMERICK CITY EAST MEMBERS – 7 MEMBERS



Cllr. Seán Hartigan
(GP)



Cllr. Sarah Kiely
(FG)



Cllr. Michael Murphy
(FG)



Cllr. Joe Pond
(FF)



Cllr. Elena Secas
(LAB)



Cllr. Michael Sheahan
(FG)



Cllr. Catherine Slattery
(FF)

LIMERICK CITY NORTH MEMBERS – 7 MEMBERS



Cllr. Sharon Benson
(SF)



Cllr. Tom Collopy
(SF)



Cllr. Frankie Daly
(NP)



**Cllr. Saša Novak
Uí Chonchúir**
(GP)



Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon
(FF)



Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan
(FG)



Cllr. Conor Sheehan
(LAB)

LIMERICK CITY WEST MEMBERS – 7 MEMBERS



Cllr. Daniel Butler
(FG)



Cllr. James Collins
(FF)



Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne
(NP)



Cllr. Joe Leddin
(LAB)



Cllr. Dan McSweeney
(FG)



Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan
(SD)



Cllr. Abul Kalam Azad Talukder
(FF)

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ADARE-RATHKEALE – 6 MEMBERS



Cllr. Bridie Collins
(FF)



Cllr. Stephen Keary
(FG)



Cllr. Emmett O'Brien
(NP)



Cllr. John O'Donoghue
(NP)



Cllr. Kevin Sheahan
(FF)



Cllr. Adam Teskey
(FG)

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CAPPAMORE-KILMALLOCK - 7 MEMBERS



Cllr. P.J. Carey
(SF)



Cllr. Michael Donegan
(FF)



Cllr. John Egan
(FG)



Cllr. Gerald Mitchell
(FG)



Cllr. Eddie Ryan
(NP)



Cllr. Martin Ryan
(FF)



Cllr. Brigid Teefy
(NP)

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST - 6 MEMBERS



Cllr. Michael Collins
(FF)



Cllr. Francis Foley
(FF)



Cllr. Liam Galvin
(FG)



Cllr. Tom Ruddle
(FG)



Cllr. Jerome Scanlan
(NP)



Cllr. John Sheahan
(FG)



COUNCIL MEMBERS AND MEETINGS

COUNCIL MEMBERS AND MEETINGS

There are 40 Members on the Council – 21 Members in the Metropolitan District of Limerick (consisting of the Local Electoral Areas of Limerick City East, Limerick City North and Limerick City West) six Members in the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale, seven Members in the Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock and six Members in the Municipal District of Newcastle West. Meetings of the Full Council are normally held on the fourth Monday of every second month, in the Council Chamber at Dooradoyle and virtually. The Full Council met on 18 occasions in 2023.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETINGS

Title	No. of Members	No. of Meetings
Metropolitan District of Limerick	21	14
Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale	6	11
Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock	7	11
Municipal District of Newcastle West	6	12

LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA BRIEFINGS / WORKSHOPS

Title	No. of Members	No. of Meetings
Limerick City East	7	11
Limerick City North	7	11
Limerick City West	7	11

CORPORATE POLICY GROUP

The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) is a Committee of the Council consisting of the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick and the Chairs of each of the Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) Membership is as follows:

- Councillor Gerald Mitchell, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick
- Councillor Stephen Keary, Chairperson, Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee
- Councillor Saša Novak Uí Chonchúir, Chairperson, Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee
- Councillor Bridie Collins, Chairperson, Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee
- Councillor Michael Donegan, Chairperson, Community, Leisure and Culture Strategic Policy Committee
- Councillor Liam Galvin, Chairperson, Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee

The CPG links the work of the different SPCs, acts as a type of cabinet and provides a forum where policy positions can be agreed for submission to the full Council, which retains the decision-making authority. The CPG also monitors the performance of the Local Authority and plays a key role in preparing the budget. The CPG met on nine occasions in 2023.

*Position as at 31/12/2023

COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

Strategic Policy Committee	No. of Members	No. of Meetings
Home and Social Development	24	5
Travel and Transportation	24	5
Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning	24	5
Community, Leisure and Culture	26	5
Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment	24	5

Other Committees	No. of Members	No. of Meetings
Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee	12	4
Rural Water Committee	17	4
Audit and Risk Committee	7	4
Joint Policing Committee	30	4
Local Community Development Committee	19	10

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES

Each Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) comprises elected Councillors and Sectoral Representatives, working together in a more participative form of democracy, thereby providing a more effective policy focus on the functions and activities carried out by Limerick City and County Council. Each SPC is supported in its work by a Director of Service. While each SPC formulates and develops policy, the final decisions rest ultimately with the Full Council.

*Position as at 31/12/2023

HOME AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Elected Members:

Cllr. Stephen Keary	LCCC Chairperson
Cllr. Sharon Benson	LCCC
Cllr. James Collins	LCCC
Cllr. Tom Collopy	LCCC
Cllr. Michael Donegan	LCCC
Cllr. Seán Hartigan	LCCC
Cllr. Sarah Kiely	LCCC
Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne	LCCC
Cllr. Joe Leddin	LCCC
Cllr. Michael Murphy	LCCC
Cllr. Tom Ruddle	LCCC
Cllr. Eddie Ryan	LCCC
Cllr. Conor Sheehan	LCCC
Cllr. Catherine Slattery	LCCC
Cllr. Brigid Teefy	LCCC
Cllr. Adam Teskey	LCCC

Sectoral Representatives:

Mr. P.J. O'Grady	Development/Construction
Ms. Dee Ryan	Business/Commercial
Mr. Mike McNamara	Trade Union
Ms. Tracy McElligott	Community/Voluntary*
Ms. Anne Cronin	Community/Voluntary*
Mr. Patrick English	Community/Voluntary*
Ms. Siobhán Reidy	Community/Voluntary*
Ms. Una Burns	Social Inclusion

*Are nominated via Public Participation Network (PPN)

The Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) is responsible for the formulation, monitoring and reviewing of policies related to housing and to advise the Council accordingly. There were five meetings of the Home and Social Development SPC held in 2023. Presentations and policy were progressed on the following:

- Scheme of Priority for Affordable Purchase
- Report from Working Group on Vacancy
- Sales Schemes as recommended by the Working Group on Vacancy and agreed by Council:
 - Consideration be given to the introduction of pilot scheme for the sale of Council houses in need of refurbishment at low cost to people on housing list.
- Presentation by Culturally Appropriate Homes Limited (CENA) the Traveller led Approved Housing Body
- Presentation by the Irish Council for Social Housing on the current landscape for Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs)
- Presentation by the Homeless Action Team on Mid-West Youth Services

- Presentation on the extension of Rent Pressure Zones to all of Limerick
- Presentation by the Regional Programme Manager for the Mid-West on the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme
- Presentation on the Affordable Housing Launch
- Presentation by Limerick Chamber on the Business Community requirement for Housing in Limerick

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Elected Members:

Cllr. Saša Novak Uí Chonchúir	LCCC Chairperson
Cllr. Daniel Butler	LCCC
Cllr. Tom Collopy	LCCC
Cllr. Frankie Daly	LCCC
Cllr. Francis Foley	LCCC
Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne	LCCC
Cllr. Joe Leddin	LCCC
Cllr. Dan McSweeney	LCCC
Cllr. Gerald Mitchell	LCCC
Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan	LCCC
Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon	LCCC
Cllr. Martin Ryan	LCCC
Cllr. John Sheahan	LCCC
Cllr. Michael Sheahan	LCCC
Cllr. Elena Secas	LCCC
Cllr. Brigid Teefy	LCCC

Sectoral Representatives:

Mr. Tim O'Brien	Agriculture/Farming
Mr. Frank Heffernan	Environment/Conservation*
Mr. Pat McCarthy	Development/Construction
Mr. Seán Golden	Business/Commercial
Mr. Frank McDonnell	Trade Union
Mr. Dean Lillis	Community/Voluntary*
Mr. Bruce Harper	Community/Voluntary*
Ms. Maureen Browne	Social Inclusion*

*Are nominated via Public Participation Network (PPN)

The Travel and Transportation SPC held five meetings in 2023. Presentations and policy were progressed on the following:

- Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) Supporting Measures Update on the following:-
 - Park and Ride
 - Dockless and TFI Bike Schemes
 - Safe Routes to School Programme
 - EV Strategy
 - Bike Week
 - Wayfinding Project

- Review of Budget Allocations for 2023
- Presentation on Universal Access Awareness Project
- Presentation on World Class Waterfront URDF scheme – Strand 3 – Pedestrian Bridges and Waterfront Infrastructure Works
- BusConnects Programme Update by the National Transport Authority (NTA)
- Presentation on Upcoming Campaign on Illegal Parking
- Update on BusConnects
- Update from Mid-West National Road Design Office (MWNRDO) on Greenway Projects
- Presentation on Traffic Calming Policy
- Presentation on Road Safety Plan
- Presentation on Control of Car Club/ Car Share Bye Laws

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Elected Members:

Cllr. Bridie Collins	LCCC Chairperson
Cllr. Daniel Butler	LCCC
Cllr. James Collins	LCCC
Cllr. John Egan	LCCC
Cllr. Liam Galvin	LCCC
Cllr. Stephen Keary	LCCC
Cllr. Michael Murphy	LCCC
Cllr. Saša Novak Uí Chonchúir	LCCC
Cllr. Emmett O'Brien	LCCC
Cllr. John O'Donoghue	LCCC
Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan	LCCC
Cllr. Joe Pond	LCCC
Cllr. Eddie Ryan	LCCC
Cllr. Martin Ryan	LCCC
Cllr. Jerome Scanlan	LCCC
Cllr. Catherine Slattery	LCCC

Sectoral Representatives:

Mr. Aidan Gleeson	Agriculture/Farming
Ms. Madeleine Lyes	Environment/Conservation*
Mr. Michael Joyce	Development/Construction
Mr. Seán Golden	Business/Commercial
Mr. Eoghan Carr	Business/Commercial
Mr. Declan Hehir	Community/Voluntary*
Mr. Brian Thompson	Community/Voluntary*
Vacancy	Social Inclusion*

*Are nominated via Public Participation Network (PPN)

The Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee met five times in 2023. The main items discussed were as follows:

- Local Area Plans Programme
- Local Economic Community Plan
- Protocol for taking in charge of private residential estates
- Residential Zoned Land Tax update
- Masterplan for Cleeves Strategic Site
- Arthur's Quay Area Framework Plan
- Climate action plan
- Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme
- Shannon Estuary Economic Task Force Report
- Shannon Foynes Port
- Limerick Development Plan Monitoring Report

COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND CULTURE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Elected Members:

Cllr. Michael Donegan	LCCC Chairperson
Cllr. P.J. Carey	LCCC
Cllr. Michael Collins	LCCC
Cllr. Frankie Daly	LCCC
Cllr. Francis Foley	LCCC
Cllr. Sarah Kiely	LCCC
Cllr. Dan McSweeney	LCCC
Cllr. Gerald Mitchell	LCCC
Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan	LCCC
Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon	LCCC
Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan	LCCC
Cllr. Joe Pond	LCCC
Cllr. Tom Ruddle	LCCC
Cllr. Kevin Sheahan	LCCC
Cllr. Conor Sheehan	LCCC
Cllr. Abul Kalam Azad Talukder	LCCC

Sectoral Representatives:

Ms. Louise Crowley	Agricultural/Farming
Ms. Josephine Butler	Environment/Conservation*
Mr. Mike Ryan	Development/Construction
Ms. Louise Donlon	Business/Commercial
Mr. Pdraig Lohan	Community/Voluntary*
Mr. Pete Moles	Community/Voluntary*
Mr. Keith Pigott	Community/Voluntary*
Mr. Colm Breen	Community/Voluntary*
Ms. Maura Meaney	Social Inclusion*
Vacancy	Social Inclusion*

*Are nominated via Public Participation Network (PPN)

The Community, Leisure and Culture SPC met five times in 2023. The main items discussed were as follows:

- Limerick City and County Council vacancy and dereliction initiative
- Ukrainian Supports Update
- Library Presentation “Story Seeds – Making headlines in Limerick”
- Museum Services Update
- Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making
- Festival and Events Strategy
- Autism Friendly Update
- Update on Migrant Integration Steering Group
- Limerick City Gallery of Art Update
- Draft Public Art Policy 2024-2028
- Abbeyfeale Town Centre First Plan and Town Centre First policy

CLIMATE ACTION, BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Elected Members:

Cllr. Liam Galvin	LCCC Chairperson
Cllr. Sharon Benson	LCCC
Cllr. P.J. Carey	LCCC
Cllr. Bridie Collins	LCCC
Cllr. Michael Collins	LCCC
Cllr. John Egan	LCCC
Cllr. Seán Hartigan	LCCC
Cllr. Emmett O’Brien	LCCC
Cllr. John O’Donoghue	LCCC
Cllr. Jerome Scanlan	LCCC
Cllr. Elena Secas	LCCC
Cllr. John Sheahan	LCCC
Cllr. Kevin Sheahan	LCCC
Cllr. Michael Sheahan	LCCC
Cllr. Abul Kalam Azad Talukder	LCCC
Cllr. Adam Teskey	LCCC

Sectoral Representatives:

Mr. Martin Stapleton	Agriculture/Farming
Mr. Thomas Blackburn	Agriculture/Farming
Ms. Dee Ryan	Business/Commercial
Mr. Seamus Hoyne	Business/Commercial
Ms. Marian Hurley	Community/Voluntary*
Mr. Caillum Hedderman	Community/Voluntary*
Ms. Michelle Hayes	Environment/Conservation*
Vacancy	Environment/Conservation*

*Are nominated via Public Participation Network (PPN)

The Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee met five times in 2023. The main items discussed were as follows:

- National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy
- Westfield’s Management Plan
- Limerick Climate Action Plan
- Community Climate Action Fund
- Tree Planting and Biodiversity
- Strategic Noise Mapping and Noise Planning
- Parks and open Space Projects
- Litter Management Plan

REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

(*position at 31/12/2023)

LOCAL TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Cllr. Frankie Daly
Cllr. Michael Donegan
Cllr. Michael Murphy
Cllr. Michael Sheahan

ASSOCIATION OF IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AILG)

Cllr. Joe Leddin
Cllr. Dan McSweeney
Cllr. Kieran O’Hanlon

SOUTHERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Cllr. Frankie Daly
Cllr. Michael Collins
Cllr. John Sheahan

LIMERICK MARKET TRUSTEES

Cllr. Gerald Mitchell (Mayor of the City and County of Limerick)
Cllr. Abul Kalam Azad Talukder (Cathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District of Limerick)
Cllr. Daniel Butler
Cllr. James Collins
Cllr. Frankie Daly
Cllr. Sarah Kiely
Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne
Cllr. Dan McSweeney
Cllr. Michael Murphy
Cllr. Saša Novak Uí Chonchúir
Cllr. Elisa O’Donovan
Cllr. Olivia O’Sullivan
Cllr. Joe Pond
Cllr. Martin Ryan
Cllr. Catherine Slattery
Cllr. Kevin Sheahan
Cllr. Michael Sheahan
Cllr. Conor Sheehan

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

Cllr. Jerome Scanlan

IRISH PUBLIC BODIES INSURANCE CLG

Cllr. Martin Ryan

LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS' ASSOCIATION

Cllr. John Sheahan

**GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK -
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, CORK**

Vacant

**GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK**

Cllr. Gerald Mitchell (Mayor of the City and County of Limerick)

Cllr. Abul Kalam Azad Talukder (Cathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District of Limerick)

ADARE HERITAGE TRUST LIMITED

Cllr. Gerald Mitchell (Mayor of the City and County of Limerick)

WEST LIMERICK RESOURCES LIMITED

Cllr. Bridie Collins

Cllr. Michael Collins

Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan

Cllr. Tom Ruddle

BALLYHOURA DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

Cllr. Gerald Mitchell

Cllr. Joe Pond

PAUL PARTNERSHIP

Cllr. Tom Collopy

Cllr. Michael Sheahan

Cllr. Abul Kalam Azad Talukder

RURAL COMMUNITY CARE NETWORK (RCCN)

Cllr. Tom Ruddle

Cllr. Francis Foley

HUNT MUSEUMS' TRUST

Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon

Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan

REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM WEST

Cllr. Frankie Daly

Cllr. John Egan

Cllr. Francis Foley

Cllr. Seán Hartigan

Cllr. Dan McSweeney

Cllr. John Sheahan

Cllr. Kevin Sheahan

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

Cllr. Bridie Collins

Cllr. James Collins

Cllr. Tom Collopy

Cllr. Seán Hartigan

Cllr. Stephen Kearney

Cllr. Sarah Kiely

Cllr. Michael Murphy

Cllr. Emmett O'Brien

Cllr. John O'Donoghue

Cllr. Martin Ryan

Cllr. John Sheahan

Cllr. Kevin Sheahan

Cllr. Conor Sheehan

Cllr. Abul Kalam Azad Talukder

Cllr. Adam Teskey

BOARD OF ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL

Cllr. Gerald Mitchell (Mayor of the City and County of Limerick)

Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon

LIMERICK SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

Cllr. Tom Ruddle

LIMERICK CIVIC TRUST

Cllr. Bridie Collins

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF MOYROSS COMMUNITY
ENTERPRISE CENTRE LIMITED**

Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon

**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF ST. MUNCHIN'S
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**

Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan

BOARD OF INNOVATE LIMERICK

Cllr. James Collins

Cllr. Joe Leddin

Cllr. Dan McSweeney

Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan

LOCAL SME COMMITTEE (SUB-COMMITTEE OF INNOVATE LIMERICK)

Cllr. Bridie Collins
Cllr. Sarah Kiely
Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne

LIMERICK 2030 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT DAC

Cllr. Daniel Butler
Cllr. James Collins
Cllr. John O'Donoghue
Cllr. John Sheahan

LIMERICK AND CLARE EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

Cllr. Michael Donegan
Cllr. Liam Galvin
Cllr. Sarah Kiely
Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon
Cllr. Elena Secas
Cllr. John Sheahan
Cllr. Brigid Teefy

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Cllr. John Egan
Cllr. John Sheahan
Cllr. Brigid Teefy

RURAL WATER MONITORING COMMITTEE

Cllr. P.J. Carey
Cllr. Stephen Keary
Cllr. Eddie Ryan

BELLTABLE – SPECIAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF BOARD

Cllr. Gerald Mitchell (Mayor of the City and County of Limerick)

DECADE OF CENTENARIES ELECTED MEMBERS' COMMITTEE

Cllr. Gerald Mitchell (Mayor of the City and County of Limerick)
Cllr. Sharon Benson
Cllr. Michael Collins
Cllr. Seán Hartigan
Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan
Cllr. John Sheahan
Cllr. Conor Sheehan
Cllr. Brigid Teefy

RESERVED FUNCTIONS

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK

Approval of the Draft Castleconnell Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029 in accordance with the Proposed Plan published on 1 October 2022 and the proposed amendments outlined in the Chief Executive's Report dated 14 December 2022, under Section 20(3) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

Approval to the reassignment of funding allocations under the GMA Special Projects 2019 – 2024.

Part 8 Approval for the Active Travel South Circular Road Cycle Scheme.

Part 8 Approval for the construction of Residential Scheme at Nos. 33 and 34 Thomas Street, Limerick.

Part 8 Approval for the construction of Residential Scheme at No. 58 O'Connell Street, Limerick.

Adoption of Schedule of Municipal District Works 2023 for the Metropolitan District of Limerick.

Approval of allocations under the Community Initiative Scheme 2023.

Approval of the Draft Castleconnell Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029 in accordance with the Draft Plan published on 1 October 2022, the Proposed Material Alterations published on 28 January 2023 and the alterations outlined in the Chief Executive's Report dated 23rd March, 2023, under Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

Approval to hold the Annual Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick on 19 June 2023, following the Monthly Metropolitan Meeting.

Approval to the taking in charge of the housing estate at Bloomfield, Castletroy, Limerick in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Section 11 of the Roads Act, 1993.

Part 8 Approval for proposed development of a temporary access / haul road on lands adjacent to the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road Scheme.

Approval to hold the July Monthly Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick on 10 July 2023.

Part 8 Approval for the Clarina Roundabout to Brick Lodge Walkway Scheme.

Election of Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District of Limerick.

Part 8 Approval for the proposed N69 Mungret and Bolands Cross Road Safety Improvement Scheme.

Part 8 Approval for the proposed construction of a new play area at Castle Oaks View, Southill, Limerick.

Adoption of the Budgetary Plan 2024 for the Metropolitan District of Limerick in the amount of €628,000 and including the amendment to move the amount of €65,000 from Special Projects – LPT to F04, Community Initiatives and the amount of €150,000 from Special Projects – LA Infrastructure and €60,000 Special GMA Projects-Metro Area to D05 Tourism Development Recreation and Amenity in accordance with Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

Part 8 Approval in relation to the Corbally Road Safe Routes to School.

Approval to the taking in charge of an area at Steamboat Quay, Limerick in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Section 11 of the Roads Act, 1993.

Part 8 Approval in relation to the removal of 45 existing pedestrian wayfinding and information signs and the installation of 70 new pedestrian wayfinding and orientation signs comprising 18 Map Totems, 19 Route Markers and 33 Finger Posts and all associated site works.

Approval to hold the December Monthly Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick on 11 December 2023.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CAPPAMORE-KILMALLOCK

Adoption of the Budgetary Plan 2024 for the Municipal District of Cappamore Kilmallock in the amount of €295,000 and including the amount of €130,000 to B04 Local Roads, €10,000 to D04 Tourism, Development, Recreation and Amenity, €10,000 to F04 Community Initiatives, €100,000 to Special Projects LA infrastructure and €45,000 to Special Projects – LPT in accordance with Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

Approval of Allocations under the General Municipal Allocation, Development Fund, Community Initiatives Scheme and Community Facilities Grants Scheme 2023. 39 projects were nominated for the GMA Community Grants scheme totalling €36,000.

Election of Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock.

Adoption of the 2023 Schedule of Works for the Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock.

Decision to receive Deputations from the following:

- Oola Graveyard
- Garrienderk Community
- Caherguillamore Memorial Committee

Approval of Meetings of the Joint Policing Sub-Committee of the Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ADARE-RATHKEALE

Approval of allocations under the General Municipal Allocation 2023.

Approval of Development Fund 2023.

Adoption of the Schedule of Municipal District Works 2023 for the Adare-Rathkeale Municipal District.

Approval to hold the Annual Meeting on the 19 June 2023.

Election of the Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale.

Part 8 Approval for the construction of Parklet at West Square, Askeaton, Co. Limerick.

Part 8 Approval for junction improvement works at junction of the N69 and L6005 at Ballyengland Lower, Askeaton, Co. Limerick.

Approval of the Draft Adare Local Area Plan 2024 – 2030.

Adoption of the Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale for the financial year ending 31 December 2024, in the total sum of €270,000 and include the amendment that the total allocation of €270,000 be allocated to Service D05 – Tourism Development Recreation and Amenity, in accordance with Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.

Approval of Meeting of the Joint Policing Sub-Committee of the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale on 28 November 2023.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST

Approval of Schedule of Municipal District Works 2022 for the Municipal District of Newcastle West.

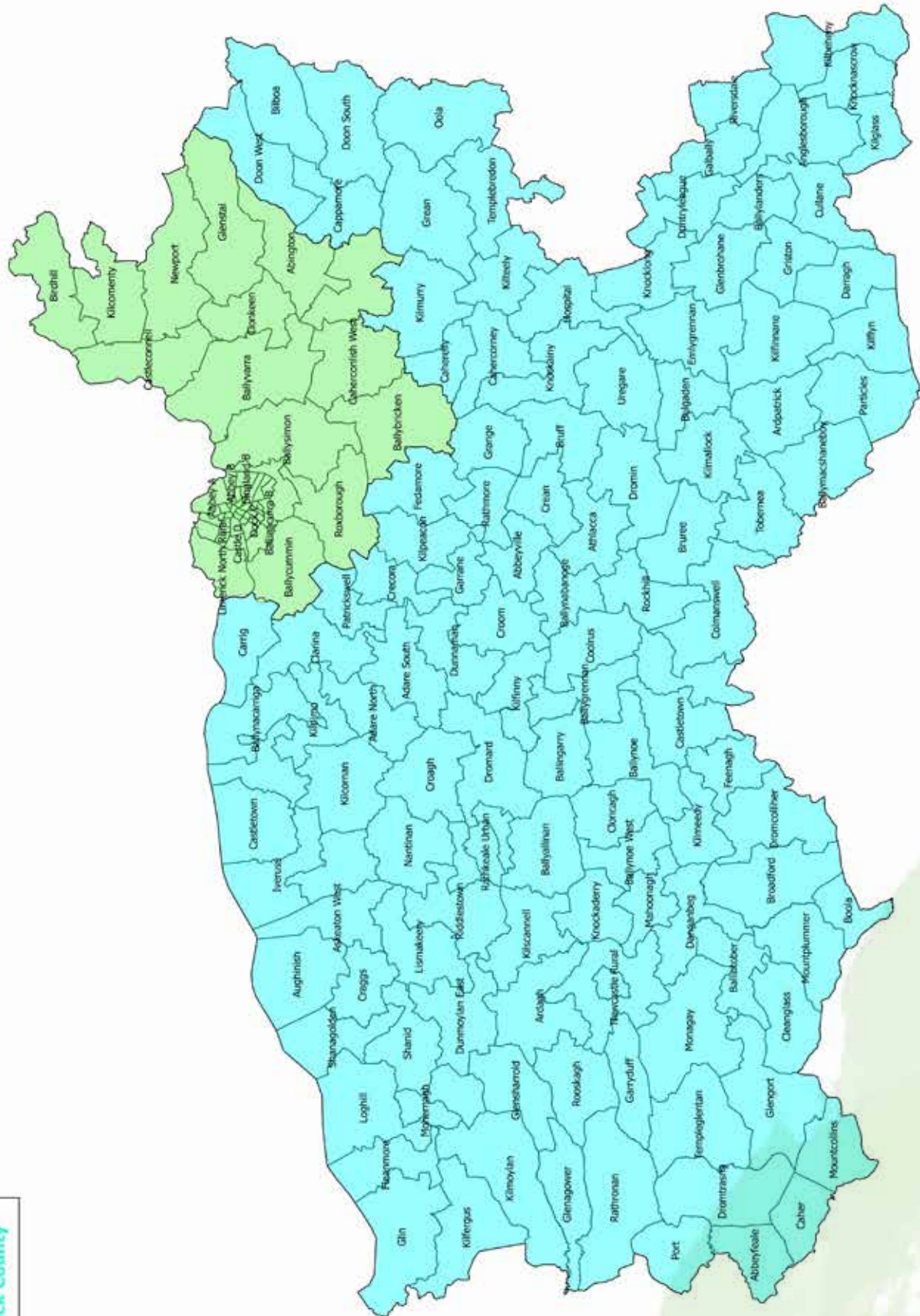
Election of Cathaoirleach and Leas-Chathaoirleach.

Approval of Allocations under the General Municipal Allocation and Community Initiative Scheme 2022.

Approval of Allocations under the General Municipal Allocation Special Projects for projects within the District.

Adoption of the Budgetary Plan for Municipal District of Newcastle West for the financial year ended 31st December, 2024, in the total sum of €270,000 and including the amendment to move the amount of €100,000 from Special Projects – LA Infrastructure and the amount of €45,000 – Special Projects – LPT to D05 Tourism Development, Recreation and Amenity, be adopted in accordance with Section 102 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.

DAIL CONSTITUENCIES



Limerick City
Limerick County



MAYORAL RECEPTIONS







27/01/2023 - Limerick Suicide Watch

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 27th January, 2023 for Limerick Suicide Watch, in recognition of their achievement in saving lives through riverside patrols, suicide interventions and mental health awareness.



3/02/2023 - Limerick Jazz Society

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 3rd February, 2023 for Limerick Jazz Society, in recognition of the 40th Anniversary of the Society and its tireless work over the years promoting jazz performance and education. Their work and that of all the artists they have presented has made a significant contribution to enriching Limerick's diverse cultural and artistic life.

Photograph includes L-R: Rose Daly, John Daly, Director Limerick Jazz, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Mick and Valerie Dolan.

17/02/2023 - Monaleen GAA

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 17th February, 2023 for Monaleen GAA, in recognition of their achievement in winning the All-Ireland Club Intermediate Hurling Championship 2022-2023 and in being the first Limerick club to do so.

Photograph includes L-R: Councillor Elena Secas, Councillor Joe Pond, Councillor Michael Sheahan, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Lorcan Lyons, Team Captain, Councillor Michael Murphy, Pat Coleman, Honorary President and Kieran O'Donnell, T.D.





27/02/2023 - CBS Pipe Band

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 27th February, 2023 for CBS Pipe Band, in recognition of the service they have provided to the people of Limerick since 1963 on the occasion of their 60th birthday. They have supported civic, cultural, sporting and charity events as a proud representation of the best of Limerick.

Photograph includes L-R: Snare Drummer Dónal McMahon, Drumming Tutor Pat O'Brien, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Pipe Major Jake Moloney, Tenor Drummer Tara Madden and Miriam McGrath.



27/02/2023 – Barry Carey

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 27th February, 2023 for Barry Carey, in recognition of his outstanding commitment to the CBS Pipe Band on the occasion of its 60th birthday, giving the gift of music to Limerick.



23/03/2023 - West End Youth Centre at Our Lady of Lourdes

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 23rd March, 2023 for West End Youth Centre at Our Lady of Lourdes, in recognition of their achievement in winning the National Pride of Place Community Award 2022 in the Community Led Youth Initiative Category.

Photograph includes L-R: Evan O'Grady, Katie Clifford, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Melissa Keane and Shauna O'Mahony.



31/03/2023 - Limerick Celtics Basketball Club U18 Mens Team

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 31st March, 2023 for Limerick Celtics Basketball Club U18 Mens Team, in recognition of their achievement in winning the Billy Coffey National Cup Final 2023.



3/04/2023 - Jack Cotter and Nick Cotter

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 3rd April, 2023 for Jack Cotter and Nick Cotter, in recognition of their outstanding serial entrepreneurship in the biomass, agri-food and agri-tech sectors from a young age, and their various national and international achievements representing Abbeyfeale, Limerick and Rural Ireland on the global stage.

Photograph includes L-R: Nick Cotter, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley and Jack Cotter.



14/04/2023 - Limerick Marine Search and Rescue Service

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 14th April, 2023 for Limerick Marine Search and Rescue Service, in recognition of their achievement in the rescue and recovery of persons from the river Shannon and surrounding area.



17/04/2023 - James M. Cahill

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 17th April, 2023 for James M. Cahill, Mayor and Delegation from The City of New Brunswick, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Photograph includes L-R: Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, James M. Cahill, Mayor of The City of New Brunswick and Dr. Pat Daly, Chief Executive, Limerick City and County Council.



24/04/2023 - County Limerick Civil Defence Active Retirement Association

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 24th April, 2023 for County Limerick Civil Defence Active Retirement Association, in celebration of 20 years of the Association.

Photograph includes L-R: Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Phyllis O'Halloran and Councillor Brigid Teefy.



5/05/2023 - Order of Malta Ambulance Corps Limerick Unit

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 5th May, 2023 for the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps Limerick Unit, in recognition of its members, past and present, who have given truly magnificent, selfless and dedicated service as volunteer paramedics to the people of Limerick and to the wider community since 1948.



5/05/2023 – Thomas Hanly

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 5th May, 2023 for Thomas Hanly, in recognition and appreciation of his outstanding dedicated and generous service, as a volunteer with the Limerick Unit of the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, over the past sixty four years.



15/05/2023 – Music Generation Limerick City

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 15th May, 2023 for Music Generation Limerick City, in recognition of ten years running pioneering creativity, self-expression and skills building programmes with over 20,000 young people across Limerick.

Photograph includes L-R: Paul Patton, Director of Further Education and Training, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB), Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Kieran O'Hanlon, Boris Hunka, Music Development Officer, Music Generation Limerick City, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Rosaleen Molloy, CEO Music Generation, Maurice Quinlivan, T.D., Senator Paul Gavan and Councillor Sharon Benson.



24/05/2023 - Bruff RFC Under 16 Girls Team

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 24th May, 2023 for Bruff RFC Under 16 Girls Team, in recognition of their achievements throughout the season and winning the Munster Development Cup 2022/2023.



26/05/2023 - Ennis Road Community First Responders

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 26th May, 2023 for Ennis Road Community First Responders, in recognition of their contribution, commitment and hard work in their community, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photograph includes L-R: Councillor Conor Sheehan, Cathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District of Limerick, Councillor Olivia O'Sullivan, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Robert Simring, Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Kieran O'Hanlon and Senator Maria Byrne.



29/05/2023 – Miriam Dawson and David O'Connell

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 29th May, 2023 for Miriam Dawson, in recognition of her outstanding commitment as Musical Director and founder of City Rhythm Band, formerly Southside Marching Band, giving the gift of music and sharing a life lasting skill with so many people. David O'Connell, in recognition of his dedicated service to music education in Limerick. Firstly, through his role as violin teacher, then as Principal with Limerick School of Music from 1999 – 2022, and as a leader of the Music Generation Programmes with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. David has worked tirelessly to promote a love of learning music among young people of all backgrounds in Limerick and its surrounds.

Photograph includes L-R: Miriam Dawson, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley and David O'Connell.



ONE (Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel) and IUNVA

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 12th June, 2023 for Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel – ONE and Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA), in recognition of their contribution and commitment throughout their military service for the Irish Defence Forces



9/06/2023 – Louise, Michael and Michelle Mulcahy

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 9th June, 2023 for Louise, Michael and Michelle Mulcahy, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Irish traditional music.



14/06/2023 - Pike Rovers A.F.C. U12's Soccer Team

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 14th June, 2023 for Pike Rovers A.F.C. U12's Soccer Team, in recognition of their achievement in winning the Schoolboys/Girls Football Association of Ireland (SFAI) National Cup Championship 2021-2022 and in being the first Limerick club to do so at this age grade.



28/06/2023 - Abbeyfeale Community Council

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 28th June, 2023 for Abbeyfeale Community Council, in recognition and appreciation of their outstanding achievements and successful collaboration with local, regional, and national organisations, for the ongoing betterment of the town and wider community of Abbeyfeale. Photograph includes L-R: Councillor Liam Galvin, James Harnett, Joint Treasurer, Aoife Keogh, Secretary, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Frank Dennison, Joint Treasurer, Councillor John Sheahan and Maurice O'Connell, Chairperson.



28/06/2023 - Athea Community Council

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 28th June, 2023 for Athea Community Council, in recognition and appreciation of the work carried out by the Community Council for the betterment of the local community.

Photograph includes L-R: Eileen O'Sullivan, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley and Damien Ahern.



28/06/2023 - Glin Development Association

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 28th June, 2023 for Glin Development Association, in recognition and appreciation of the work carried out by the Development Association for the betterment of the local community. Photograph includes L-R: Marie Fitzgerald, Teresa Culhane, Councillor John Sheahan, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Catherine Murphy and Edward Conway.



28/06/2023 - Glin Development Association

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 28th June, 2023 for Glin Development Association, in recognition and appreciation of the work carried out by the Development Association for the betterment of the local community. Photograph includes L-R: Marie Fitzgerald, Teresa Culhane, Councillor John Sheahan, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Catherine Murphy and Edward Conway.



Templeglantine Community Council and Templeglantine Development Association

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 28th June, 2023 for Templeglantine Community Council and Templeglantine Development Association, in recognition and appreciation of the magnificent work carried out by past and present members for the betterment of the parish and its community.

Photograph includes L-R: Tadhg Ó Maolcatha, Christy Walsh, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Joe McAuliffe, Mairéad Roche and William Larkin.



28/06/2023 - Tournafulla Community Council

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 28th June, 2023 for Tournafulla Community Council, in recognition and appreciation of the work of local volunteers, who continuously strive to enhance the lives of those living in, working in and visiting Tournafulla, guided by the leadership and vision of Tournafulla Community Council.

Photograph includes L-R: TJ Collins, Chairperson, Orla Sheahan, Jessie Collins, Joint Secretary, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Laura Horgan, Joint Secretary and Donna Mulcahy, Communications Officer.



29/06/2023 - Castleconnell Boat Club

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley on 29th June, 2023 for Castleconnell Boat Club, in recognition of their achievements in rowing nationally this year and their continued contribution to sport and their local community.

Photograph includes L-R: Roisin Hartigan, Pat Galvin, Hope Davidson, Joe Gleeson, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Marion Comber, Gerry O' Neill and Angelica Risquez.



23/08/2023 Limerick Junior Ladies Football All-Ireland Finalist 2023

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 23rd August, 2023 for Limerick Junior Ladies Football All-Ireland Finalist 2023, in recognition of their outstanding achievements this season on reaching an All-Ireland Junior Final in Croke Park 2023.



9/10/2023 - Limerick Celtics Basketball Club Under 14 Girls Team

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 9th October, 2023 for Limerick Celtics Basketball Club Under 14 Girls Team, in recognition of their achievement in winning the All Ireland Club Championship premier division 2023.



18/10/2023 - CareBright

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 18th October, 2023 for CareBright, in recognition of their achievement representing Limerick at the IPB Pride of Place Competition 2023, and in appreciation of the development of Ireland's first purpose built community for people living with dementia, and contributions made by them for the betterment of their local community.

Photograph includes L-R: Councillor Sarah Kiely, Seamus O'Connor, Senior Social Worker, Limerick City and County Council, Michael O'Kelly, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, Colette Ryan, General Manager, CareBright CLG, Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Dan McSweeney, Stephane Duclot, Director of Service, Limerick City and County Council, Mike O'Connell and Iona Hennessy, Limerick City and County Council.



18/10/2023 - Killeedy Community Projects

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 18th October, 2023 for Killeedy Community Projects, in recognition of their achievement representing Limerick at the IPB Pride of Place Competition 2023 and in acknowledgement of the wholehearted commitment and dedicated work of over twenty voluntary groups within their small, vibrant, rural community.

Photograph includes L-R: Iona Hennessy, Limerick City and County Council, Fr David O'Connor, Councillor Sarah Kiely, Liam O'Connor, Margaret Hennessy, Breda White, Cushla Moran, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, Stephane Duclot, Director of Service, Limerick City and County Council, Jack O'Connor, Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Dan McSweeney, Catherine Inchmore, John Cunningham, sitting Joe Dore, Richard O'Connor and Seamus O'Connor, Senior Social Worker, Limerick City and County Council.



18/10/2023 - Southill HUB

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 18th October, 2023 for Southill HUB, in recognition of their achievement representing Limerick at the IPB Pride of Place Competition 2023, and in appreciation of their community work in preparation for this competition, and contributions made by them for the betterment of the Southill community.

Photograph includes L-R: Iona Hennessy, Limerick City and County Council, Councillor Sarah Kiely, Seamus O'Connor, Senior Social Worker, Limerick City and County Council, Suzi Cronin (Youth Work Team Lead), Frances Minihan (Board Member), Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, Tom Cunningham (Co-ordinator of Finance and Social Enterprise), Caroline McNamara (Board Member), Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Dan McSweeney, Aisling Lohan (Assistant Manager), Ciara Power (Reception), Racheal Cummins (Cafe Supervisor), Stephane Duclot, Director of Service, Limerick City and County Council and Aubrey Kinsella (Youth Worker).



1/11/2023 - Limerick Choral Union

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 1st November, 2023 for Limerick Choral Union, in recognition of their 60th anniversary and their contribution to the cultural life of Limerick since 1964.

Photograph includes L-R: Lorraine MacMahon, Co Chair, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell and Denise King, Co Chair.



9/11/2023 - Limerick Gaelic Masters Association

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 9th November, 2023 for Limerick Gaelic Masters Association, in recognition of their achievement in winning the All Ireland Spirit Cup 2023.

Photograph includes L-R: Mike Moloney, Councillor Brigid Teefy, Liam Mulcahy, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, Maurice O'Connor, Joe Mulcahy, Damien Mullaney and Marty Stokes.



20/11/2023 - Castleconnell Ahane Herbertstown CCÉ

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 20th November, 2023 for Castleconnell Ahane Herbertstown CCÉ, in recognition of their outstanding success at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2023, representing Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Castleconnell Ahane Herbertstown, Limerick and Munster.

Photograph includes L-R: Mary O'Brien, Eoghan O'Sullivan, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell and Margaret Sheehan.



13/12/2023 - Limerick Ladies Football Club, 50th Anniversary

A Mayoral Reception was hosted by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell on 13th December, 2023 for Limerick Ladies Football Club, in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of winning the inaugural Ladies Football Association of Ireland Ladies League of Ireland in 1973.

SUPPORT SERVICES





SUPPORT SERVICES

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Annual Financial Statement for Financial Year ended 31st December 2023

Balance Sheet Review

The Balance Sheet presented shows that Limerick City & County Council had Fixed Assets of €3,425M and Work In Progress of €187M as at 31 December 2023.

Capital income amounted to €230.8m in 2023, compared to the 2022 figure of €212.9m. Grants accounted for 82% of total capital income in 2023.

Collection percentages for Commercial Rates was 94% (compared to 92% in 2022) with collection percentages for Housing Loans and Housing Rents under constant pressure.

Revenue Expenditure Review

Revenue expenditure for the year amounted to €898,623,529 before transfers. Transfer to reserves amounted to €16,689,790 giving a total expenditure figure for 2023 of €915,313,319. The details of the additional expenditure over adopted budget at Service level are set out in the report to Council under Section 104 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended), which will be circulated to Council. Actual income for the year was €915,337,035 leading to a revenue surplus for 2023 of €23,716. This when added to the opening surplus of €932,321 gives an accumulated surplus at 31 December 2023 of €956,037.

Payroll continues to be the most significant cost with a total payroll cost in 2023 of €90,827,495. The change between 2023 and 2022 is mainly due to national pay agreement increases. The pay costs and staff numbers will continue to be examined during 2024 in order to identify further savings where possible.

Expenditure is summarised by main area of expenditure as follows:

	2023	% of Expenditure	2022	% of Expenditure
	€	%	€	%
Payroll	90,827,495	9.9%	84,546,165	9.3%
Operational expenses	768,723,678	84.0%	771,204,419	85.2%
Administration expenses	18,188,958	2.0%	18,445,131	2.0%
Establishment expenses	5,150,132	0.6%	3,830,621	0.4%
Financial expenses	7,663,184	0.8%	5,939,731	0.7%
Miscellaneous	8,070,082	0.9%	6,118,120	0.7%
Transfers to reserves	16,689,790	1.8%	14,942,313	1.7%
Total Expenditure	915,313,319	100%	905,026,500	100%

Income Review

Revenue income for the year amounted to €915,337,035. This represented an increase of €10,286,091 on the total income in 2022 (€905,050,944). The following table summarises the main income sources:

	2023		2022	
	€	%	€	%
Grants & Subsidies	616,645,310	67%	610,647,095	67%
Contributions from other local authorities	3,630,679	0%	3,753,944	0%
Goods & Services	210,521,608	23%	209,245,034	23%
	830,797,598	91%	823,646,072	91%
Local Property Tax	19,691,079	2%	19,952,508	2%
Rates	64,107,619	7%	58,989,310	7%
Transfer from Reserves	740,739	0.1%	2,463,054	0.3%
Total Income	915,337,035	100%	905,050,944	100%

Summary

The revenue surplus for 2023 is €23,716. As a result the accumulated revenue surplus at the end of 2023 is increased to €956,037 compared to €932,321 at the end of 2022. The retention of cumulative surplus is a very positive reflection of the efforts of the elected members and staff to manage the financial situation of Limerick City & County Council, and is also reflective of the continuous efforts of the staff of Limerick City & County Council in achieving better value for money and increasing overall efficiencies, which is an important foundation for the year ahead in 2024.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT)**FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2023**

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

It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year. Transfers to/from reserves are shown separately and not allocated by service division.

Expenditure by Division				
	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	2023	2023	2023	2022
	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building	744,020,832	743,337,177	683,655	(260,993)
Roads Transportation & Safety	51,313,603	31,518,960	19,794,643	19,209,493
Water Services	14,266,942	14,603,863	(336,921)	72,824
Development Management	25,437,870	10,289,196	15,148,674	12,771,181
Environmental Services	35,474,255	10,115,294	25,358,962	24,780,299
Recreation & Amenity	15,807,334	1,282,811	14,524,522	13,147,008
Agriculture, Food and the Marine	1,154,733	460,857	693,876	654,061
Miscellaneous Services	11,147,960	19,189,439	(8,041,479)	(3,935,758)
Total Expenditure/Income	898,623,529	830,797,598		
Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Property Tax			67,825,932	66,438,115
Rates			64,107,619	58,989,310
Local Property Tax			19,691,079	19,952,508
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers			15,972,767	12,503,703
Transfers from/(to) Reserves			(15,949,051)	(12,479,260)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year			23,716	24,443
General Reserve @ 1st January 2023			932,321	907,878
General Reserve @ 31st December 2023			956,037	932,321

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (BALANCE SHEET) AT 31st DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
		€	€
FIXED ASSETS			
Operational		861,106,312	824,805,516
Infrastructural		2,520,873,582	2,523,079,122
Community		12,363,821	12,498,993
Non-Operational		30,716,274	30,739,374
		3,425,059,988	3,391,123,006
WORK IN PROGRESS AND PRELIMINARY EXPENSES		186,975,279	125,635,878
LONG TERM DEBTORS		159,451,892	113,893,773
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stocks		335,474	418,078
Trade Debtors & Prepayments		53,331,355	29,694,312
Bank Investments		139,888,418	171,084,130
Cash at Bank		1,929,378	3,363,250
Cash in Transit		2,912	2,912
		195,487,536	204,562,682
CURRENT LIABILITIES (AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR)			
Bank Overdraft		-	-
Creditors & Accruals		111,920,376	77,028,522
Finance Leases		-	-
		111,920,376	77,028,522
NET CURRENT ASSETS / (LIABILITIES)		83,567,160	127,534,160
CREDITORS (AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR)			
Loans Payable		160,943,418	158,517,804
Finance Leases		0	0
Refundable deposits		6,041,057	5,228,846
Other		48,409,254	36,396,684
		215,393,730	200,143,334
NET ASSETS		3,639,660,589	3,558,043,482
Represented by			
Capitalisation Account		3,425,059,989	3,391,123,006
Income WIP		167,482,105	124,366,170
General Revenue Reserve		956,037	932,321
Other Specific Reserves		-	-
Other Balances		46,162,458	41,621,984
Total Reserves		3,639,660,589	3,558,043,482



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

The ICT Section of Limerick City and County Council continued to support sections in achieving their objectives throughout 2023. In addition to the operational activities such as, monitoring security, maintaining infrastructure and systems, and providing user and desktop support throughout 2023, several major projects were undertaken.

Some of these projects undertaken during 2023 were:-

Cyber Security

Cyber security describes the discipline dedicated to protecting that information and the systems used to process or store that information. The security refers to the body of technologies, processes, and practices designed to protect networks, devices, programs, and data from attack, damage, or unauthorized access.

In addition to initiatives introduced during previous years, ICT continued to improve the Councils Cyber Security Posture through the following:

- **Privileged Access Management (PAM)**
 - Least Privilege on Administration roles
 - Full visibility to all privileged accounts and identities | regulate access in one location
 - Potential for a security breach minimised – by reduction of attack surface
 - Improved compliance
- **Managed Extended Detection and response (XDR)**
The Councils' Cyber Security Managed Extended Detection and Response (XDR) service has been in place since April 2022, and provides the following:
 - Faster Detection of and Response to Cyber threats
 - Council Data and Systems better protected from Cyber-attacks
 - Superior threat expertise, intelligence, and analytics
 - Dedicated SOC support 24/7 with a 15-minute response time
- **Cyber Security Maturity Assessment**
Cybersecurity is the approach or series of steps to detect, prevent and/or manage the risk of damage to, unauthorised use of, exploitation of, and if required, to restore electronic information and communications systems, and the information they contain, in order to strengthen the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of these systems.

Deloitte conducted interviews with key stakeholders in Limerick City and County Council to perform a high-level maturity assessment across multiple

areas to provide an indication of the measure the consistency, repeatability and optimisation of controls that have been developed and implemented by LCCC within the targeted cyber domains. Deloitte also performed a high-level review of documentation, such as security policies and procedures and committee documentation, related to the Council.

The Cyber Security Maturity Assessment concluded that the cyber security posture for LCCC is generally acceptable across all domains reviewed.

- **Awareness Training/Phishing Campaigns**

A security awareness-training program has many benefits and can fortify the Councils' protection against phishing and other hacking attacks.

ICT and Human Resources held sixteen In-Person Cyber Security training sessions in Dooradoyle and Merchant's Quay during 2023 with 871 (Four dates with four sessions per day).

ICT continued to undertake "Monthly Phishing Campaigns" during 2023. The number of staff falling victim to these campaigns is constantly reducing, which would indicate that staff awareness is increasing. Staff members falling victim to these monthly campaigns must undertake interactive online training and complete an online assessment. Repeat offenders are targeted for further training.

In addition to measures mentioned above, ICT continues to ensure all devices are updated with security updates in a timely manner and are continuously monitoring activity on the Councils' infrastructure.

Wide Area Network Connectivity (MPLS)

Procurement of a new service provider for connectivity of remote offices was completed during Quarter 4 2022. Migration of Merchant's Quay, Dooradoyle and thirty-three remote offices to a new MPLS network was completed during 2023.

Leveraging MPLS technology marks a strategic advancement in our network infrastructure. MPLS, with its inherent advantages, promises a robust and efficient networking solution.

By embracing MPLS, we are poised to experience enhanced reliability, security, and scalability in our WAN operations. The inherent security features of MPLS, including built-in encryption and segmentation, fortify our network against potential vulnerabilities. Furthermore, MPLS's scalability empowers us to effortlessly adapt to evolving business needs, facilitating efficient expansion and flexibility in managing our network resources.

Wi-Fi Access Points

In the fourth quarter of 2023, we initiated the process of upgrading the Wi-Fi Controller and associated Access Points (APs) across Merchant's Quay and Dooradoyle offices, signifying a strategic leap in our network infrastructure. With the successful procurement of 47 Access Points, a crucial milestone has been achieved, setting the stage for the forthcoming installation phase scheduled to commence in January 2024.

Video Conferencing

Throughout 2023, we expanded our technological capabilities by integrating video conferencing facilities into eight more meeting rooms, resulting in a total of 18 rooms now equipped with this cutting-edge feature. This advancement has paved the way for seamless hybrid meetings, bridging physical and virtual interactions effortlessly. The integration of video conferencing not only amplifies our connectivity but also enhances collaboration, fostering inclusivity by accommodating remote attendees. With this expansion, we enable greater flexibility, allowing participants to join discussions regardless of their location, thereby promoting efficiency, reducing travel costs, and maximizing productivity. Hybrid meetings empower our teams to thrive in a dynamic work environment, emphasising adaptability and fostering stronger connections across distances.

ICT Service Desk

The ICT Service Desk dealt with 15,124 tickets during 2023, this is a decrease of 548 (3.5%) over 2022.

The Service Desk endeavours to respond to and resolve service requests in a timely and courteous manner. In addition to providing support to users the ICT Helpdesk team also carry out other tasks as set out :-

- Create knowledge base articles for user empowerment
- Liaise with ICT/Digital Strategy teams to resolve issues and prevent future issues
- Keep users fully informed of changes/issues
- Develop and enforce Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) around the provision of services and hardware
- Office and equipment procurement, management, and maintenance
- ICT Project support

HUMAN RESOURCES AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT

Introduction

A motivated and committed workforce equipped to support managers in the delivery of high quality services and strategic projects is fundamental to the attainment of the strategic and operational goals of Limerick City and County Council. In 2023, the Human Resources and Business Improvement Department continued to also provide a wide range of supports to our most valuable resource – our staff.



Business Improvement

The Business Improvement Unit are a team who drive and support the Business Improvement approach in Limerick City and County Council. The Unit provides several services including providing support to staff who have recognized an opportunity for improvement. We guide them through the approach, help them to gather data sets to make informed decisions, look for opportunities and outcomes and use tools like process mapping to tell the story of their improvement. As the Business Improvement Unit evolves, more emphasis is placed on design thinking and a human centric approach supported by evidence and measurement to ensure decisions are well informed.

2023 saw the progression of a Business Improvement project to digitise forms and fifteen internal staff forms are now processed through a digitised workflow. The Business Improvement team also worked to extend payments online with the addition of Traffic Fines to Fire payments and RAS and Rent tenants. <http://www.payments.limerick.ie> In 2023, the Business Improvement team procured an employee app called 'Council Connect'. With over 600 staff members without access to email, the app provided us with the opportunity to give real time notifications to all staff on all health and safety information, HR policy information and employee wellbeing notifications.

In line with our commitment to citizen engagement, 2023 saw the continued council wide use of My Point, our online engagement portal <https://mypoint.limerick.ie/>. The portal allows our citizens to have their say on projects that are being developed by Limerick City and County

Council and 2023 saw over 84 public consultations and 11 surveys supported by Business Improvement through this portal. 2023 saw the use of the portal for a range of services including applications for Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability, Affordable Housing Schemes, Expressions of Interest for Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure, the Community Recognition Fund and Town and Village Renewal Scheme, and Grants for the provision or necessary improvement of an individual water supply to a house.

Business Improvement facilitates monthly meetings of Senior Forum and Senior Capital Project Group as part of the team communication approach ensuring all policies are filtered through these forums before they can proceed for approval. The Unit also continues to lead and support the 'Staff Liaison Network' a two-way communication platform for staff to discuss potential business improvements within their area. The networks provide opportunities for staff to have their say on potential improvements, talk with colleagues about opportunities for change in their Units and provide feedback on draft projects.

The Unit co-ordinates the submission of applications for various awards and in 2023 co-ordinated the winning presentation for Local Authority of the Year in Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards.

Having a dedicated Business Improvement team shows Limerick City and County Council's absolute commitment to the provision of responsive, efficient and innovative services and we will continue to strive to deliver the highest possible quality of service to our citizens.

Learning and Wellbeing

The Learning and Wellbeing Unit delivered a wide ranging and expansive programme of training and workshops to meet the needs of management and staff alike arising from a combination of requests received through the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS), and identified Corporate requirements of the organisation. The programme was delivered through a combination of online and face to face events, with almost 1,500 training events attended by staff during the year (see breakdown below).

Course Name	No. of Attendees
Climate Action Training - Raising Awareness	345
Climate Action Training - Outdoor	128
Climate Action Training - Delivering Action	102
Staff Induction Day	97
E-Tenders	95
A-Z of Irish Local Government 2023	66
Public Works Contract Training	46
Microsoft Excel (Intermediate Level)	35
Minute Taking	32
Conflict Management	29
Courtroom Skills	29
Supervisory Management Training	28
Retirement Planning Event	26
MyPoint Survey/Application Form Training	22
Green Public Procurement Strand 1 Webinar	21
Negotiation Skills	20
Communication Skills	19
Microsoft Excel (Introductory Level)	19
MyPoint Consultation Training	19
Scenarios and Role-play Training for Housing Practitioners	19
Time Management	17
Chairing Meetings	16

Presentation Skills	14
As Gaeilge - Phone Skills and Customer Service	12
Basic PowerPoint	11
Report Writing	10
Standards in Rented Accommodation	10
Advanced PowerPoint	9
C Licence Lessons and Test	9
Local Authority Roads Conference	9
Procurement OGB - Tier 0	9
Train the Trainer	9
Conveyancing Training	8
MAPA Training	8
Playground Inspection and Maintenance	8
CPI - MAPA Training	7
Road Opening and Reinstatement - Basic	7
The Disciplinary Process	7
Heat Pump Training	5
Inspection of Domestic Water Treatment Systems	5
Road Opening and Reinstatement - Advanced	5
Temporary Traffic Management Design Level 1 and 2	5
The Dignity at Work Process	5
Designing for Safety in Construction	4
Hazardous Waste Regulations	4
QGIS Training	4
Understanding Contracts for Non-Law Professionals	4
Water and Waste Water Treatment Plant Operations	4
Advanced Road Opening	3
Employer Representative on Construction Projects	3
EPA Licensing	3
Radon Gas Remediation	3
Solid Fuels Regulations	3
Water Framework Directive – Updates	3
AutoCAD	2
Basic Computer Course	2
BER Assessor Course	2
Bridge Engineering Inspection	2
Courtroom Skills (Environment)	2
Environmental Inspection Skills	2

Freedom of Information Course	2
Green Public Procurement - Webinar for Local Authorities	2
IAT Quality Control and Site Testing for Road Pavement	2
Implementing Green Public Procurement	2
Leadership in Local Government	2
POBAL Facilitating Inclusive Community Engagement	2
Professional Services Withholding Tax	2
Public Sector Innovation Conference	2
Revit Additional Topics	2
Revit Architecture Essentials	2
Revit Families	2
Supervisory Skills for General Service Supervisors	2
VAT Treatment of Goods	2
Age Friendly Housing and Public Realm Training	1
Building Defects Analysis (BD01)	1
Building Regulations Explained Course (BR01)	1
Cert. in Environmental and Planning Legislation	1
Certificate in Road Management	1
Empowering Change Training for Community Climate Action Officers	1
Environmental Impact and Appropriate Assessment	1
Environmental Skills	1
Environmental Sustainability Skills for the Workplace	1
IAT Road Engineering Course Ballycoolin Dublin	1
IAT Site Quality Control Training	1
Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) Training - Online	1
Provision of Freedom of Information Training	1
PSCI Rural and Urban	1
Relevant Contracts Tax	1
Road Engineering Course	1
Static Guard Training	1
Surface Dressing for Engineers	1
Temporary Traffic Management Inspection and Audit	1
Tree Inspection	1
Total	1,498

The National Climate Action training programme dominated the programme with 575 staff completing one or more of the six strands during 2023. This included a comprehensive programme that was delivered over a number of dates to our outdoor staff.

Other Corporate training delivered during the year included a Corporate Governance programme, a suite of in-house talks on Cyber Security, a number of Public Procurement awareness trainings and a management training programme. The team continued its participation in the Junior Achievement Ireland school education programme which has huge benefits for participants and students alike, which also building awareness of the Council as an employer of choice for future recruitment processes.

The IPA introductory courses in Local Government continue to be very popular with 66 staff (mainly new entrants) undertaking the A-Z of Local Government, and 19 completing the IPA Certificate in Local Government course. There are 10 further staff undertaking the Diploma in Local Government. Interest was strong in the continuous education option also, with 15 staff receiving financial support to pursue further studies.

A strong Induction programme was delivered this year with high attendance rates at our two onsite Induction days (97 attendees) and a further 172 completing the online programme.

Wellbeing and Equality

The Wellbeing Team delivered a busy and varied programme of supports and events throughout the year which included;

Programme Name	No. of Attendees
Food Choice at Work	102
SafeTALK(suicide awareness)	32
Menopause at Work Talk	70
Supporting Individuals during a Mental Health Crisis at Work	1
Intercultural Awareness	26
Mindfulness Workshop	31
Sign Language Classes	23
Talks on Loss and Bereavement	52
Autism Awareness	111
Financial Wellbeing talks	37
Total	485

Other supports

Cycle to Work Scheme	39 applications
Specsavers vouchers	93 issued
Monthly Wellbeing Newsletter	12 issues

A Flu vaccination programme was also delivered this year to those staff working in front line services. Six clinics were held in three different locations, with 392 vaccines administered in total.

A number of key strategies were delivered in this area during the year also. A Wellbeing Working Group was formed in September and was tasked with producing a Wellbeing Strategy for Limerick City and County Council, an initiative prompted by the LGMA who issued a national template earlier in the year. The final document was launched in December. A number of follow on measures will take place in 2024.

Mindful of the increasing diversity of the current workforce, the Council took the opportunity to update the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to restate the Council's commitment to the provision of an equitable, inclusive and responsive work environment for all staff. The Dignity at Work Policy supports this commitment and was updated during the year also.

An Equality committee was established and tasked with the initial brief of reviewing the Council's application of the Public Sector Duty. This cross directorate committee with remain in place to consider further equality issues in 2024.

Recruitment

The Recruitment Section continues to contribute to the development of Limerick City and County Council's workforce planning process, ensuring that the Council is well placed to provide for the business needs of the organisation and the service needs of our citizens.

Recruitment of new staff into the Council continued in 2023 with a total of 78 competitions held through a combination of both online and face-to-face methods. There were 1,496 individual interviews carried out for positions within the Council in 2023, often further to shortlisting exercises being carried out, both desktop and interview, remotely and on site.

Large recruitment processes included those for Clerical Officer, Assistant Staff Officer, General Operative and General Operative/Driver C1 Licence. 2023 also saw the filling of key leadership positions such as that of Climate Action Co-Ordinator, Ryder Cup Co-Ordinator, Town Centre First Officer, Night Time Economy Advisor and Social Regeneration Officer.

We held a number of specific niche competitions throughout the year such as Community Climate Action Officer, Biodiversity Officer, Archivist, Creative Communities Engagement Officer and Research Officer, to bring expertise into key service delivery areas such as Climate Action, Arts and Regeneration.

There were also ongoing recruitment campaigns in 2023 for technical, engineering, architectural, planning and ICT staff in particular owing to the challenges faced recruiting these positions not only in the local government sector but also in the wider employment sphere.

Limerick City and County Council also attended numerous Jobs Fairs throughout the year of 2023, and will continue to do so in 2024, in order to further the Council's reputation as an employer of choice.

In addition to these new competitions, interviews were also held across various clerical and administrative grades throughout 2023 from competitions which were shortlisted into second, third and fourth tranches from the year previous.

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council provided opportunities for a record number of college students from various third level institution, offering them the opportunity to develop their skills while doing work of real value for the city and county of Limerick. The Council are investing time in the relationship we have with the third level institutions, and ensuring the students have meaningful and successful placements in order to enable Limerick City and County Council to build strong connections with the future work force.

In a joint exercise with FIT (Fast Access to Information Technology), the Council also initiated our first ever apprenticeship in the area of ICT. In 2023, we hired our first apprentice in this area. This initiative aims to provide valuable learning opportunities and practical work experience to individuals within Limerick City and County Council.

Our Recruitment Schedule continues to be updated and revised to ensure continued support to the organisation in meeting the service demands required.

For further information in relation to recruitment in Limerick City and County Council, please visit www.limerick.ie/council/services/your-council/jobs/recruitment.



The Chief Executive meeting with the Co-Op students at our Co-Op Development Programme



A member of staff from the Recruitment Team engaging with a member of the public at one of the many Jobs Fairs throughout the year.



Administrative Officer, Recruitment Section being interviewed at the Jobs Expo in Thomond Park last June 2023.

Time, Attendance, Payroll, Superannuation, Industrial Relations

Work/Life Balance Measures

A range of work/life balance measures were available to Council employees during 2023. These included Parental Leave, Carer's Leave, Work-Sharing, Shorter Working Year, and the option to avail of a Career Break. 292 Applications were received in Human Resources in 2023.

Blended Working

Blended working in the local government sector reflects the implementation of government policy that public sector employees move to 20% remote working. Following issue of a Local Government Blended Working Framework, Policy, and FAQ, Limerick City and County Council approved a Policy for Blended Working based on the national framework. Blended Working was introduced in Limerick City and County Council in 2022. A total of 567 staff are currently approved for remote working.

Gender Pay Gap

Arising from the enactment of the Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 and the subsequent publication of the Employment Equality Act 1998 (Section 20A) (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations – May 2022, all organisations, (relevant employers), with greater than 250 employees were required to report on their Gender Pay Gap for the first time in 2022. Local authorities use a 30 June snapshot date which is 12 months retrospective. Relevant employers are additionally required to set out the reasons for Gender Pay Gap differences and the measures (if any) being taken, or proposed to be taken, by the employer to eliminate or reduce such differences.

The regulations provided for reports to be published within six months of the snapshot date. In common with other Local Authorities, Limerick City and County Council published its Report in December 2023.

MyPay Shared Services Centre – Superannuation and Payroll

Since the Council's superannuation function was transferred to MyPay in August 2018, MyPay are now dealing with the majority of queries for superannuation with support from Superannuation Staff in the Council. The Payroll function also continues to be administered by MyPay with support from the Payroll Staff in the Council.

Superannuation

Apart from the provision of Pre-Retirement Seminars and assisting staff with various queries the following are the transactional details for the Superannuation Team for 2023.

New Starts	189
Leavers	110
Refunds	68
Retirements	44
Preserved Benefits	3
Members Gratuity	0
Retained Fire-Fighter Gratuity	0
Death in Service	2
Deceased Pensioners/Dependent Pensioners	35
New Dependent Pensions	11
Annuity Certs	927

Payroll

The Payroll department oversees the payment of salaries and wages to existing members of staff and the payment of pensions to retired staff. During 2023, the payroll unit implemented the pay increases applicable on the 1/3/23 and 1/10/23. At the end of 2023 there were 1,538 employees paid through payroll along with 996 pensioners. The Payroll bill for 2023 amounted to €100.3 million.

Industrial Relations

The Human Resources Department, and Limerick City and County Council as a whole, continued to foster a productive relationship with our colleagues in the unions throughout 2023. This engagement occurred through quarterly meetings of the Partnership forum and also through regular formal meetings and ongoing dialogue with individual unions.

Archivist/LITe

In line with Section 80 of the Local Government Act 2001, Limerick City and County Council Archives Service provides for the preservation of and access to the archival records of Limerick City and County Council. The archives collections relate to the functions of Limerick City and County Council and its predecessor bodies. The collection includes Minute Books, financial records and Manager's Orders reflecting local administration. The collection includes donations of important collections relating to Limerick from private sources.

The Archives Service continued to promote online access to original material through a digitisation programme and new collections were added to this resource in 2023. The Owen Bresnan papers and newly discovered archive from Limerick Clothing factory. The online collection was accompanied by an exhibition showcasing the newly discovered material.

The Archives and Records Management Team supported and extended the LITe programme, a cloud-based Records Management System on a MS365 SharePoint Online platform to include project sites and external sites. The system supports mobile and collaborative working with governance of digital records.

CORPORATE SERVICES, GOVERNANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

The Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services Department provides a wide range of support services to the Mayor, Councillors, staff and management of Limerick City and County Council. In this regard, a primary role of the Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services Department is Meetings Administration for Meetings of Limerick City and County Council, the Metropolitan District, the Joint Policing Committee and Local Electoral Area Briefings. The Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services Department also deals with Data Protection, Health and Safety, Procurement, Customer Services, the Register of Electors and Corporate Governance. It also provides support to the Mayor's Office and manages Twinning/Sister City Relationships, Civic and Mayoral Receptions, the Corporate Plan, the Annual Service Delivery Plan, the Irish Language Scheme, Child Safeguarding Policy and a wide variety of ancillary services relating to Council business.

Corporate/Mayor Support

Civic Receptions

There were no civic receptions held in 2023.

Freedom of Limerick

There were no Freedoms accorded in 2023.

Mayoral Receptions

- Limerick Suicide Watch, in recognition of their achievement in saving lives through riverside patrols, suicide interventions and mental health awareness.
- Limerick Jazz Society, in recognition of the 40th Anniversary of the Society and its tireless work over the years promoting jazz performance and education. Their work and that of all the artists they have presented has made a significant contribution to enriching Limerick's diverse cultural and artistic life.
- Monaleen GAA, in recognition of their achievement in winning the All-Ireland Club Intermediate Hurling Championship 2022-2023 and in being the first Limerick club to do so.
- CBS Pipe Band, in recognition of the service they have provided to the people of Limerick since 1963 on the occasion of their 60th birthday. They have supported civic, cultural, sporting and charity events as a proud representation of the best of Limerick.
- Barry Carey, in recognition of his outstanding commitment to the CBS Pipe Band on the occasion of its 60th birthday, giving the gift of music to Limerick.
- West End Youth Centre at Our Lady of Lourdes, in recognition of their achievement in winning the National Pride of Place Community Award 2022 in the Community Led Youth Initiative Category.
- Limerick Celtics Basketball Club U18 Men's Team, in recognition of their achievement in winning the Billy Coffey National Cup Final 2023.
- Jack Cotter and Nick Cotter, in recognition of their outstanding serial entrepreneurship in the biomass, agri-food and agri-tech sectors from a young age, and their various national and international achievements representing Abbeyfeale, Limerick and Rural Ireland on the global stage.
- Limerick Marine Search and Rescue Service, in recognition of their achievement in the rescue and recovery of persons from the river Shannon and surrounding area.
- James M. Cahill, Mayor and Delegation from the City of New Brunswick, New Jersey, U.S.A.
- County Limerick Civil Defence Active Retirement Association, in celebration of 20 years of the Association.
- Order of Malta Ambulance Corps Limerick Unit, in recognition of its members, past and present, who have given truly magnificent, selfless and dedicated service as volunteer paramedics to the people of Limerick and to the wider community since 1948.
- Thomas Hanly, in recognition and appreciation of his outstanding dedicated and generous service, as a volunteer with the Limerick Unit of the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, over the past sixty four years.
- Music Generation Limerick City, in recognition of ten years running pioneering creativity, self-expression and skills building programmes with over 20,000 young people across Limerick.
- Bruff RFC Under 16 Girls Team, in recognition of their achievements throughout the season and winning the Munster Development Cup 2022/2023.
- Ennis Road Community First Responders, in recognition of their contribution, commitment and hard work in their community, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Miriam Dawson, in recognition of her outstanding commitment as Musical Director and founder of City Rhythm Band, formerly Southside Marching Band, giving the gift of music and sharing a life lasting skill with so many people.
- David O' Connell, in recognition of his dedicated service to music education in Limerick. Firstly, through his role as violin teacher, then as Principal with Limerick School of Music from 1999 – 2022, and as a leader of the Music Generation Programmes with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. David has worked tirelessly to promote a love of learning music among young people of all backgrounds in Limerick and its surrounds.
- Louise, Michael and Michelle Mulcahy, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Irish traditional music.
- Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel – ONE and Irish United Nations Veterans Association (IUNVA), in recognition of their contribution and commitment throughout their military service for the Irish Defence Forces.

- Pike Rovers A.F.C. U12's Soccer Team, in recognition of their achievement in winning the Schoolboys/ Girls Football Association of Ireland (SFAI) National Cup Championship 2021-2022 and in being the first Limerick club to do so at this age grade.
- Abbeyfeale Community Council, in recognition and appreciation of their outstanding achievements and successful collaboration with local, regional, and national organisations, for the ongoing betterment of the town and wider community of Abbeyfeale.
- Athea Community Council, in recognition and appreciation of the work carried out by the Community Council for the betterment of the local community.
- Glin Development Association, in recognition and appreciation of the work carried out by the Development Association for the betterment of the local community.
- Mountcollins Community Council, in recognition and appreciation of the work carried out by the Community Council for the betterment of the local community.
- Templeglantine Community Council and Templeglantine Development Association, in recognition and appreciation of the magnificent work carried out by past and present members for the betterment of the parish and its community.
- Tournafulla Community Council, in recognition and appreciation of the work of local volunteers, who continuously strive to enhance the lives of those living in, working in and visiting Tournafulla, guided by the leadership and vision of Tournafulla Community Council.
- Castleconnell Boat Club, in recognition of their achievements in rowing nationally this year and their continued contribution to sport and their local community.
- Limerick Junior Ladies Football All-Ireland Finalist 2023, in recognition of their outstanding achievements this season on reaching an All-Ireland Junior Final in Croke Park 2023.
- Limerick Celtics Basketball Club Under 14 Girls Team, in recognition of their achievement in winning the All Ireland Club Championship premier division 2023.
- CareBright, in recognition of their achievement representing Limerick at the IPB Pride of Place Competition 2023, and in appreciation of the development of Ireland's first purpose built community for people living with dementia, and contributions made by them for the betterment of their local community.
- Killeedy Community Projects, in recognition of their achievement representing Limerick at the IPB Pride of Place Competition 2023 and in acknowledgement of the wholehearted commitment and dedicated work of over twenty voluntary groups within their small, vibrant, rural community.
- Southill HUB, in recognition of their achievement representing Limerick at the IPB Pride of Place Competition 2023, and in appreciation of their community work in preparation for this competition, and contributions made by them for the betterment of the Southill community.
- Limerick Choral Union, in recognition of their 60th anniversary and their contribution to the cultural life of Limerick since 1964.
- Limerick Gaelic Masters Association, in recognition of their achievement in winning the All Ireland Spirit Cup 2023.
- Castleconnell Ahane Herbertstown CCÉ, in recognition of their outstanding success at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2023, representing Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Castleconnell Ahane Herbertstown, Limerick and Munster.
- Limerick Ladies Football Club, in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of winning the inaugural Ladies Football Association of Ireland Ladies League of Ireland in 1973.

Metropolitan District Receptions

A Metropolitan District Reception was held for Na Píarsaigh GAA Club on 8 May in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle, in recognition of their teams sporting achievements in 2022.

A Metropolitan District Reception was held for the following on 12 June in the Council Chamber, Merchant's Quay, in recognition and appreciation of their contribution to stage and drama performance in Limerick:

- Frontline Stage School
- Spotlight Stage School
- Expressive Arts

Delegations That Travelled Abroad

Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, accompanied by the Senior Planner, travelled to Tallinn, Estonia from 18 to 21 January to attend the European Green Capital 2023 Conference.

Mayoral visit by the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley and the Director of Services, at the invitation of the Limerick Association Birmingham, to Birmingham, England from 23 to 25 February. Limerick City and County Council has a long standing relationship with the Limerick Association Birmingham. The visit involved an opportunity to tour Birmingham City Centre to look at the various transformational projects across their city centre and to see first-hand how the city centre is reinventing itself as a sustainable and cosmopolitan city. The Mayor and Director of Service also attended a meeting and presentations with officials from the Limerick Association Birmingham, a meeting with Chairperson of the West Midlands Irish Business Group (WMIBG), meeting with the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, courtesy visit to the Deputy Leader of Birmingham City Council and visit to Lord Mayor of Birmingham at Birmingham City Hall.

The Cathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District of Limerick, Councillor Olivia O'Sullivan and Councillors James Collins, Liam Galvin, Conor Sheehan, accompanied by the Director of Service and Administrative Officer, Corporate Services and Governance Department, attended the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Rockaway Beach, Queens, New York from 3 to 6 March. The delegation also attended the Mass for Peace and Justice at St. Francis de Sales Church, Rockaway. After the mass the delegation attended a St. Patrick's Day Breakfast Brunch event at the Knights of Columbus Hall, Rockaway where the delegation met with members of the Irish American Community, along with local elected and business representatives and officials where discussions were held on the developments and progress in Limerick in terms of investment and tourism and the importance of further developing linkages between Limerick, the Mid West and Ireland with the United States. Discussions also took place regarding plans and preparations for the New York St. Patrick's Day Parade. The Delegation also met with representatives of Limerick GAA where a presentation was made to them in recognition of their efforts in fostering and retaining the connection with the Limerick diaspora and for developing possible economic opportunities and contacts.

Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Kieran O'Hanlon and Councillors Sarah Kiely, Adam Teskey, Elena Secas, Fergus Kilcoyne, Emmett O'Brien, Joe Leddin, accompanied by the Chief Executive, the Director of Service and Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services attended the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah, Georgia, U.S. from 14 to 18 March. This Parade is one of the largest St. Patrick's Day Parades in the world. The visit represented a great opportunity to continue the economic, social and cultural links between

Savannah and Limerick. The delegation visited City Hall to meet with Mayor Van Johnson. Mayor Van Johnson shared his experience and outlined the city's focus on poverty and economic inequality as well as improving public safety and infrastructure. Elected Members were delighted to confirm the announcement that Limerick would host the Association of Film Commissioners International Cineposium Conference in September and extended an invitation to Mayor Van Johnson and the Savannah Economic Development Authority to visit Limerick. The delegation toured Savannah Technical College, attended a fundraising concert, toured the Creative Coast Innovation Hub, met with the Executive Director of the Community Housing Services Agency and Director, Housing and Neighbourhood Services to gain an insight into how the Task Force operates. The delegation took part in the ceremonial Jasper Parade and attended mass celebrated by the Bishop of the Diocese of Savannah.

On 8 March, the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, and the Head of Marketing and Communications travelled to Los Angeles, U.S. for the announcement that Limerick had been chosen to host Cineposium, AFICI's 2023 Global Film Industry Summit in September, 2023. A meeting also took place with Screen Ireland ahead of the launch and the delegation also represented Limerick at the Consul General's St. Patrick's Day celebration event and at the Consul General's Oscar Nominee's celebration event. On 13 March, the Mayor and the Head of Marketing and Communications then travelled to New York for attendance at the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, along with Councillors Catherine Slattery, Azad Talukder, Dan McSweeney, John Egan, Brigid Teefy and accompanied by Director of Service, travelled to New York for the St. Patrick's Day Parade from the 14 – 18 March. Members of the delegation took part in a number of activities and events during their visit with the objective of promoting Limerick, developing deeper business relationships and engaging with the Limerick diaspora community.

The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, Councillor Kieran O'Hanlon accompanied by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services, attended the Opening Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of Hohenlohekreis, Germany from 20 to 23 April. The Councils of Limerick County and Hohenlohekreis have had a twinning partnership in place since 1990 and respective delegations from each of the Authorities alternate visits between Hohenlohe and Limerick. The visit represented a great opportunity to continue the economic, social and cultural links between Hohenlohekreis and Limerick. The delegation attended a number of meetings and events during their visit.

The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley accompanied by the Chief Executive and the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services, travelled to Huy, Belgium, from 30 May to 1 June, following invitation from the Consul Honoraire de France to accompany him to access the site that has been identified as the likely place of Patrick Sarsfield's burial in the quest to repatriate his remains back to Limerick. The delegation also visited the Fort of Huy which is a significant memorial to the Second World War and also met with the Mayor of Huy at City Hall to discuss the Sarsfield Homecoming Project.

The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley and Councillor Kieran O'Hanlon, accompanied by the Chief Executive, travelled to Spokane, Washington State from 20 to 24 June, to mark the 33rd Anniversary of the Sister City Relationship between Limerick and Spokane and to develop new opportunities regarding twinning. During the visit meetings took place with the Mayor of Spokane, Council President and their officials, with former Mayor and County Commissioner Jack Geraghty and former City Council Presidents Ben Stuckart and Rob Higgins. Official city receptions were attended at Spokane City Council and Spokane Chamber of Commerce along with site visits to the newly remodelled Riverfront Park, the Duncan Botanical Park, the Nishinomiya Japanese Gardens, the historic Flight Centre at Felt's Field and the University District. Formal Sister City Meetings also took place with the Spokane Limerick Sister City Society.

The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley and Councillors John Egan, John Sheahan, Kieran O'Hanlon, Eddie Ryan, Adam Teskey, Catherine Slattery, Bridie Collins, Kevin Sheahan and Michael Collins, accompanied by the Chief Executive and Senior Executive Officer and Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services travelled to Hohenlohe, Germany from 5 to 9 August to attend the International Days Festival. There has been a very successful school exchange programme between Schlossgymnasium in Kuenzelsau and schools in Limerick. Limerick City and County Council worked with Hohenlohekreis to submit an application for funding to the Walter-Hallstein Programme for Ukrainian refugees. The proposal was successful and funding was received to set up a project. As part of the 50 year jubilee of the County of Hohenlohe, Limerick was invited to the International Partnership Celebrations from 5 to 9 August. The delegation participated in a workshop on sustainability and received presentations on projects to promote the use of sustainable energy and on the importance of biodiversity, particularly genetic diversity. The Chief Executive presented on the Cityxchange Projects in Limerick to develop a Positive Energy Block.

Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Dan McSweeney, accompanied by Director of Service and relevant staff who worked on the project travelled to Trondheim, Norway from 2 - 6 November following an

invitation to attend the final conference of the Horizon 2020 EU +CityxChange Project. Limerick City and County Council are one of the two "Lighthouse" cities in the project and have played a lead role over the past five years of the project. The delegation took part in a number of events over the course of the conference with the objective of:

- (a) Demonstrating the work carried out in Limerick over the course of the project
- (b) Deepening the relationship with partner cities and other EU cities who attended the conference
- (c) Exploring possible future collaboration and funding opportunities
- (d) Sharing best practice in the development of community grid electrical systems.

Over the course of the week there was substantial engagement between the cities as well as with a number of other industry partners on the project. The delegation also took part in a number of workshops in respect of strategy and policy development, a networking day with the scalable cities network and a site visit of the second PEB in the Sluppen district which is an industrial area currently undergoing redevelopment to provide housing as well as new employment opportunities.

Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Dan McSweeney, accompanied by the Head of Marketing and Communications and the Administrative Officer, Trade and Investment, attended the Forbes Under 30 Summit in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S. from 8 to 11 October. The Forbes Under 30 Summit attracts up to 6,000 attendees from all over the world for three days of networking and learning. During this year's event, Forbes highlighted Limerick as a European location of choice for start-ups and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The Summit also featured, on multiple days, a video presentation from the Forbes summer event held in Limerick City in 2023. During the course of their visit the delegation attended business talks, briefings, discussions and VIP networking events in the promotion of Limerick as a future location for job creation and investment.

Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Dan McSweeney, accompanied by the Head of Marketing and Communications, attended the Austin Sister Cities International Annual Event 'Passport to the World' at the invitation of the Vice Chair, Austin Sister Cities International. This event celebrates cultural diversity and fosters global understanding. Meetings took place with the Consulate General, Austin City Council, Chairperson and Vice Chair of Austin Sister Cities International and the Chief Executive Officer of Visit Austin. The formal relationship between Limerick and Austin is now progressing to 'Friendship City' stage, a Friendship City Agreement being the penultimate stage of the over Sister Cities Process for the City of Austin.

Joint Policing Committee

Four Joint Policing Committee Meetings were held in 2023. The meetings provide an opportunity for co-operation between An Garda Síochána, public representatives and members of the public. Some of the matters discussed include:

- Updates from the Chief Superintendent
- Overview on Crime Statistics from Senior Crime and Policing Analyst
- Presentation from Garda Roads Policing Unit
- Presentation on SARA model by Divisional Crime Prevention Officer
- Presentation from Head of Information Systems on CCTV

Christmas Prayer Service

A Christmas Prayer Service was held in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle, on 20 December at which Councillors and staff participated.

Directly Elected Mayor for Limerick

The Local Government (Mayor of Limerick) and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2023 was published in August 2023 and is currently before the Seanad. Cabinet decided in July 2023 that the election will be held on the same date as Local and European elections in 2024.

Local Electoral Area Briefings for Metropolitan District

Local Electoral Area Briefings to discuss operational issues relating to Limerick City East, North and West are usually held on the first Tuesday and Wednesday of every month except for the month of August. A total of 33 Briefings were held in 2023.

National Day of Commemoration

The Council hosted a Day of Commemoration Ceremony on Sunday, 9 July to honour all Irish men and women who died in past wars or on service with the United Nations. This was the eleventh year in which the ceremony was held at Merchant's Quay. The 12th Infantry Battalion, Sarsfield Barracks performed the Guard of Honour and rendered honours when the National Flag was hoisted to full mast. Representatives of the Catholic Church, Church of Ireland, the Jewish Community and Quakers conducted the multi faith commemoration, at which, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell presided.

The music for the event was provided by Limerick based Choir 'The Curraghgower Singers' under the direction of Choir Master, Mr. Timothy Schinnick, along with Bulger, Don Phelan, Uilleann Piper, Colleen Shanks and Drummer, Sadhbh Ryan.



National Day of Commemoration



National Day of Commemoration

Limerick Women's Caucus

Limerick Women's Caucus is a cross-party forum comprising the nine elected female councillors of Limerick City and County Council.

Membership for 2023 is:

- Cllr. Sarah Kiely Cathaoirleach
- Cllr. Sasa Novak Uí Chonchúir Leas Chathaoirleach
- Cllr. Bridie Collins
- Cllr. Brigid Teefy
- Cllr. Catherine Slattery
- Cllr. Elena Secas
- Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan
- Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan
- Cllr. Sharon Benson

Limerick Women's Caucus came together to inspire women to participate in local politics by exploring barriers and challenges affecting women's participation. The objective of the Caucus is to promote wider inclusivity and diversity in local government and give women a stronger voice in local decision-making.

This initiative is supported by Limerick City and County Council and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, who fund initiatives to increase greater participation by women in politics. The Caucus held four meetings in 2023 and organised their first public conference 'Embrace Empower Elect' in April. This conference was organised to celebrate women in leadership roles and encourage more women to consider running as candidates in future local elections. Three panel discussions took place:

1. Women in Politics Panel

Caitriona Gleeson, CEO, Women for Election;
Louise Purcell, Assistant Principal, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
Cllr. Sarah Kiely, Cathaoirleach Limerick Women's Caucus, Fine Gael Party;
Cllr. Elena Secas, Leader of Labour Party in Limerick City and County Council;

2. Women in Health and Education Panel

Dr. Beatrice M. Neufeldt, Medical Director at Personal Medical Clinic;
Dr. Aisling Leavy, Head of STEM, Education Department, Mary Immaculate College;
Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan, Cathaoirleach Metropolitan District of Limerick, Fine Gael Party;
Cllr. Brigid Teefy, Leader of Independents in Limerick City and County Council.

3. Women in Sport and Community Panel

Jackie McCarthy, Former Republic of Ireland Soccer Player;
Linda Ledger, CEO, St. Munchin's Community Centre;
Cllr. Bridie Collins, Chair of Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC, Fianna Fáil Party;
Cllr. Sharon Benson, Leader Sinn Féin Party in Limerick City and County Council.

Limerick Women's Caucus in partnership with Women for Election organised Women Belong Training in June 2023, a programme delivered by Yemi Adenuga, Elected Member of Meath County Council. In May 2023, Limerick Women's Caucus visited Dáil Éireann where they met with Minister of State for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Deputy Kieran O'Donnell and Members of the Parliamentary Women's Caucus. In August, the Caucus took a stall at the Limerick Show, promoting their objectives and meeting the people of Limerick.



Limerick Women's Caucus-group with Meghann - Limerick Women's Caucus pictured with Meghann Scully at 'Embrace Empower Elect' conference held on 19th April in Istabraq Hall, Merchant's Quay.



Embrace Empower Elect Limerick Women's Caucus - Infographic Design created at the 'Embrace Empower Elect' conference organised by Limerick Women's Caucus to celebrate women's achievements in leadership roles and to encourage more women to get involved in politics.

Governance

Procurement

Limerick City and County Council recognise its responsibility in adhering to Procurement Rules as set out in the European Unions' Public Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU. Limerick City and County Council Procurement Policy 2021-2023 was adopted in April 2021. This policy will ensure all procurement undertaken is done so in a manner that is consistent with and in adherence to European Directives, National Legislation, Policy and Guidelines.

The Procurement Unit staff provides support and guidance in respect of procurement activities. They monitor procurement compliance and measures compliance against total spend. In 2023, the Council shows a 98.50% compliance rate against the annual spend.

The staff are also responsible for the setting up and extending existing procurement references on request from all departments within the Council.

The following shows the number of Procurement References dealt with from January – December 2023.

New Procurement References set up	469
Procurement References extended as per signed contract/arrangement	185

The Requisitions Oversight Unit, which falls within the remit of Procurement, provides a separation of duties in the procurement cycle and the function of the team is to validate each requisition raised across the entire Council to ensure procurement compliance which brings consistency and a standard to requisitions being raised.

18,688 requisitions were handled between January and December 2023.

- Approved requisitions account for 88% of the total requisitions actioned
- Rejected requisitions account for 12% of the total requisitions actioned

Period	Approved	Rejected	Total Requisitions Actioned
Jan-Dec 2023	16,379	2,309	18,688

The Unit continues to work with staff of all departments to ensure procurement to pay cycle is adhered to within the Council through the validation of all requisitions for approval or rejection via the Requisitions Oversight Unit.

Freedom of Information Requests

It is the policy of Limerick City and County Council to give members of the public access to information held by the Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. Further information and application forms are available on the Council's website <https://www.limerick.ie/council/services/your-council/freedom-of-information>

In 2023 Limerick City and County Council received 263 requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2014. The following is the breakdown of decisions made on these requests:

Open cases at 01/01/2023	6
Requests received in 2023	263
Granted	40
Part Granted	112
Refused	51
Withdrawn (of which 24 were invalid)	54
Transferred	2
Open cases at 31/12/2023	10

Ombudsman Requests

The Office of the Ombudsman was established under the Ombudsman Act 1980. The role of the Office is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inactions adversely affecting persons or bodies in their dealings with state bodies including Local Authorities.

In 2023 Limerick City and County Council dealt with 60 complaints that were made to the Ombudsman in relation to decisions/actions taken by the Council. Of these 60 complaints the following is the breakdown of the results of the investigations carried out by Office of the Ombudsman:

Cases closed	33
Decisions not yet determined	27

Access to Information on the Environment

Limerick City and County Council comply with Access to Information on the Environment Regulations 2007 to 2014 whereby, subject to certain exceptions, information relating to the Environment must be made available on request. In 2023 Limerick City and County Council received 35 requests. The following is the breakdown of decisions made:

Open cases at 01/01/2023	1
Requests received in 2023	35
Granted	20
Part Granted	12
Refused	4
Open cases at 31/12/2023	0

Re-Use of Public Sector Information

European Communities (Re-use of Public Sector Information) Regulations 2005 allows an individual or a legal entity to make a request to Public Bodies to release documents for re-use.

Limerick City and County Council received no requests in 2023.

Annual Service Delivery Plan

Section 134 (a) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, requires the Chief Executive to prepare a Service Delivery Plan annually which identifies the principal services to be provided by the Council to the public following the adoption of its Annual Budget. The Service Delivery Plan sets out the work programme for each Directorate based on the adopted budget.

The Elected Members at their March Council Meeting adopted Limerick City and County Council's Annual Service Delivery Plan 2023. The review of the 2022 Annual Service Delivery Plan was circulated to Members as part of the 2023 Annual Service Delivery Plan.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014 is a statutory obligation on all public bodies to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect human rights of their employees, customers, service users, and everyone affected by policies. In 2023 Limerick City and County Council established a cross-departmental working group with representatives from every Directorate to coordinate and begin the assessment of defined policies with the guidance of experts in the area.

Irish Language Scheme 2019-2022

The Official Languages Act 2003 provides for the preparation by public bodies of a language scheme detailing the services, which they will provide through the medium of Irish, through the medium of English, and through the medium of Irish and English and the measures to be adopted to ensure that any service not currently provided by the body through the medium of the Irish language will be so provided within an agreed timeframe.

Limerick City and County Council adopted its second Irish Language Scheme for 2019 – 2022 on 1 February 2019 and is committed to delivering on all aspects of its Irish Language Scheme. Limerick City and County Council is guided by the principle that the provision of Irish Language services should be based on a range of factors, including the following:

- The importance of a proactive approach to the provision of services in the Irish language, the level of demand for such services:
- The resources, including human and financial resources, and the capacity of the Council to develop or access the necessary language capability to provide these services.

Limerick City and County Council established a cross departmental Irish Language Working Group, who convened on several occasions in 2023 and delivered on a commitment in the Irish Language Scheme to provide information about Council Services, on the Council's website, through Irish.

The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 was enacted in December 2021 to build on the progress made under the Official Languages Act 2003 and to increase and improve the provision of public services through the medium of Irish. Limerick City and County Council is committed to meet the requirements of the legislation. In 2023, Limerick City and County Council continued to monitor Irish Language Advertising ensuring all requirements set out in Section 10 (a) of The Official Languages Act 2003, as amended, were met.

Entertainment and Associated Expenses

Expenditure on entertainment and associated expenses included costs associated with Receptions, scrolls for recipients at receptions, catering costs associated with same and corporate gifts.

Customer Services

During the course of 2023, the Customer Services Team engaged positively with our Elected Members, Public Representatives, Limerick's citizens and visitors. As the front-line team engaging with the public on multiple channels, including the Council's telephone contact centre, dedicated emails, MyLimerick.ie, Twitter etc. huge efforts were made to respond to the public's enquiries and service requests as efficiently as possible.

With the Council's Office infrastructure open throughout 2023, there was a shift in the service delivery channels. Visits to the public counter naturally increased with clients returning to engage with the Council on a face-to-face basis. Total visits to the public counter were recorded as 25,042, with November being the highest month with 2,502 visits, accounting for visits and the lowest being February, with 1,796 visits. Counter Services included the review and validation of Housing Support Services applications, completion of cash desk receipting transactions, validation of Household Waste Subsidy applications, signposting individuals to the appropriate offices/colleagues and general enquiries in relation to the hundreds of services provided by the Authority.

The cash office and back office continued to provide cash receipting services in person and over the phone to the public, which resulted in the value exceeding €12.2m throughout the year. Other tasks included postal dispatch of information and application forms, responding to and disseminating incoming emails and all other social media contacts, and managing the call centre. 134,585 incoming calls were received with 70.73% being concluded at first point of contact. Email activity has increased by 15% from 2022 to 40,170 in 2023. Applications in relation to Burning of Agricultural Vegetation remained consistent with the previous year's activity. 127 applications were received in 2023 and this service is no longer available to the agricultural sector to apply for due to change in regulations in early 2023.

The overall total volume of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) cases created throughout 2023 was 35,769 with 6,103 being received from public representatives. 83%, of the overall total volume of cases created were closed throughout the year. The MyLimerick self-help case creation portal continued to provide an avenue for customers to engage directly with the Council. The total volume of cases for 2023 were 2,658 with 91% being received from public representatives, i.e. 2,427. The role of Councillor Liaison Officer, has ensured that the Councillors cases have been managed to an optimum level, with Councillors feedback very positive on this initiative. The total volume of cases received amounted to 8,372, with 85% being closed within the year.

Customer Services, in its role as the first point of contact for the Council, continues to provide a supportive role for the Operational Services for the Council, including Roads, Housing Operations and Maintenance, Parks and Open Spaces, Environmental services etc. The ICT/Training Officer co-ordinated and delivered a number of training workshops in order to optimise the proficiency in which the CRM platform is used throughout the organisation.

Throughout 2023, whilst Limerick did not witness severe weather events as those recorded in previous years, the team continued to respond to service requests relating to flooding risks, fallen trees, the need to clear roads after road traffic accidents, requirement to undertake pothole repairs, illegal dumping etc.

Register of Electors

The Register of Electors comprises a list of all persons over the age of 18 years resident in Limerick City and County who are entitled to vote in elections to the Dáil, the European Parliament, Presidential elections, Local Elections, and Referendums. Individuals can register on-line or download paper forms for completion.

In 2023 there were two Dáil Constituencies in Limerick. The constituencies and number of Dáil seats in each were as follows:

- Limerick City – four seats
- Limerick County – three seats

As at 31st December 2023 there were 139,644 Presidential Electors and 147,433 Local Government electors on the 2023 Rolling Register of Electors. The Local Government Electorate is broken down as follows between the six Local Electoral areas:

• Adare-Rathkeale	23,210
• Cappamore-Kilmallock	27,844
• Limerick City East	25,598
• Limerick City North	25,495
• Limerick City West	23,056
• Newcastle West	22,230

Health and Safety

Limerick City and County Council recognises its obligation to protect as far as reasonably practicable the safety health and welfare of all employees and anyone who may be affected by our work activities. The Council's safety management system is continuously improved and updated to achieve this obligation. The Council's Health and Safety Department provides guidance and support, in addition to monitoring and coordinating all health and safety activities.

In 2023, the following directorates: Support Services, Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism, Housing, and Transportation and Mobility successfully achieved registration to I.S ISO 45001:2018, (the first internationally recognised standard on Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace).

Continuous improvement of the safety management system is achieved through the identification and implementation of annual objectives and targets. Flexibility is built into the system to take account of additional tasks that arise from activities such as audit, inspection, and change to legislation.

Health and Safety Training Unit

Corporate Services has a team who administer Health and Safety training. Training requirements are requested by line managers via an on-line form. Health and Safety training requirements are identified through risk assessments conducted by managers. Training is procured through the

use of competitive quotes, this includes suppliers who won tenders through the Regional Training Centre in Roscrea.

See below a list of training arranged by the Health and Safety Training Unit during 2023:

Courses 2023	No. of Attendees
Abrasive Wheels	55
Asbestos Handling	26
Banksman	10
Basic Tractor	1
Confined Spaces Medium Risk	31
CSCS Locating Underground Services	7
CSCS Signing, Lighting, Guarding	12
CSCS Signing, Lighting, Guarding Update	12
CSCS Telescopic Handler	10
CSCS Mobile Tower Scaffold	6
CPC Driving 1	6
CPC Driving 2	5
CPC Driving 3	69
CPC Driving 4	88
CPC Driving 5	3
Dealing with Aggressive Customers	81
ESB Electricity Awareness	25
Evacuation Chair	7
First Aid Response	66
First Aid Response Refresher	32
Fire Warden	67
Managing Safely in Construction	26
Manual Handling	387
MEWP	8
Pole Saw	5
Safe Pass	178
Safe Use of Pesticides	6
Safety Rep	3
Sharps and BioHazards	105
Stop/Go	16
Winter Service Operatives	7
Working at Heights	11
Total	1354

Data Protection

Limerick City and County Council as a data controller must ensure that it processes the personal data of its staff, customers, providers and any other individuals (referred to as data subjects) in compliance with data protection legislation.

The role of the Council's Data Protection Officer is set out in Article 39 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For all data protection related matters, Limerick City and County Council's Data Protection Officer (DPO) can be contacted at dataprotectionofficer@limerick.ie.

The Data Protection Unit received 36 Data Subject Access Requests in 2023. Of these requests, 21 were granted or part granted, 14 were refused and one request remains live at year end. In respect of the 14 refusals mentioned above, the Council had no personal data in 13 of these requests. In these instances, there were no cameras at the relevant locations, or there was no relevant CCTV footage available. One case was refused as the records sought were given in confidence.

The Data Protection Unit received 55 Third Party Data Access Requests in 2023. Of these, 52 requests were from An Garda Síochána, of which 38 were granted, nine were refused as the Council did not have the personal data requested and one further request was refused and referred to MCEC for partial reply. Four requests remain live at year end.

Two requests were received from other third parties. Both were granted as relevant records were retrieved and a legal basis to share personal data had been identified. A further request was deemed withdrawn.

The Data Protection Unit received six Internal CCTV Requests in 2023. Four requests were granted as a legal basis to share personal data had been identified, one was refused as no footage was available and one case remains live at year end.

At the beginning of the year an invitation was extended to all Council staff to attend a Data Protection training/ briefing. These training/ briefings were provided throughout the year to the following departments and areas; Senior Forum, Active Travel, Senior Housing Team, Housing, Kilmallock Office, Fire Control Room Mulgrave Street, Environment and Climate Action and Customer Services.

The DPO held quarterly meetings with the Council's Information and Data Champions. The Data Monitoring Committee met five times throughout the year and appointed two subcommittees i.e. the CCTV Oversight board and Incident Management Response Plan.

The DPO conducted two audits this year, the first on Moyross Community Enterprise Centre (MCEC) CCTV Monitoring Centre and the second on LCCC Kilmallock Area Office and Library.

Under Article 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation, the Council as a data controller is required where personal data is obtained from a data subject, to provide the data subject with specific information. Privacy statements were updated and published throughout the year as required on the Council's website at the following link: [Privacy Statements](#)

Limerick City and County Council implemented a clean desk policy in 2023. The Data Protection Unit assisted in creating and reviewing twelve Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA).

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

2023 once again saw the Marketing and Communications team focus on the promotion of Limerick as a location of choice to live in, work in, study in and of course, to visit as tourists.

In January, the team launched a four-week Limerick Student City social and digital marketing campaign, in collaboration with our Tertiary Education partners, to promote Limerick as a student city ahead of the CAO application deadline on February 1st. MarComms ran a further, two week, cross-channel social media campaign promoting Limerick's cutting edge institutions to Ireland's most vibrant social scene in the lead up to the CAO Change of Mind deadline on July 1st. The team managed a social media 'Welcome to Limerick' campaign from September to October to engage new and existing students with Limerick, showcasing all that the city has to offer beyond the lecture hall.

On-campus visits were undertaken across all four Higher Education Institutions (HEI) campuses, student specific merch, tailored digital content and a Limerick Student City map and guide as well as a Limerick Student City Prospectus in print and digital formats were created and widely distributed. All this activity was complemented by student social media influencer collaborations, student guide inserts, collaborations with our Tertiary partners on a Limerick Student City Rent a Room campaign, Summer of International Sport city banner campaign and a Spring Global Festival.

The team managed an 'Excellence in Local Government' award-winning, multi-platform campaign in Limerick on Foot, which encouraged visitors and locals alike to get out into nature and explore Limerick's many city routes and county trails. A Three Bridges Walk map and guide and a digital Walking and Running guide for Limerick were produced, along with dedicated digital content and social influencer content creation. The campaign grew Limerick's profile as a leisure tourism destination and supported rural regeneration and development.

MarComms, alongside our Tourism colleagues, created and launched a new brand for Adare, in February, which is not only reflective of Brand Limerick but also stands for the already recognised and distinct personality of Adare Village. Marketing produced and managed this process from concept stage to completion, while the investment in the brand creation was made by the Tourism department. In a similar collaborative arrangement, MarComms, created a tourism promotional video and suite of still photography to engage local, national and international audiences in a B2B and a B2C capacity to attract increased investment, visitors and students to Limerick. The video asset was launched successfully as an ad and promoted as Gaeilge on TG4 and in English extensively across the Sky portfolio of channels. In the summer of 2023, MarComms supported and facilitated the promotion of the Discover Limerick Pass via the provision of content creation and management and through the use of Limerick.ie social channels.

MarComms managed the marketing campaigns of our civic festivals in the Limerick St. Patrick's Festival, incorporating the International Band Championship, Riverfest Limerick and Christmas in Limerick.

MarComms worked closely with Limerick GAA to coordinate a communications campaign around the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship Final, which took place on 23 July in Croke Park, Dublin. This included a live Big Screen viewing event on Pery Square in Limerick city centre which was also the location for the homecoming celebration as Limerick's four-in-a-row heroes returned to Shannonside. In addition to leading the media element of the campaign, the MarComms team also managed the digital and social promotion of the events, commissioned photography and videography for distribution to local and national media with the events securing widespread coverage generating hugely positive PR for Limerick.

MarComms has embarked upon the next phase of Brand Limerick's development, which has involved extensive stakeholder consultation to develop its new platform and to position Limerick on an international stage. A new positioning has now been realised with 'A Different Kind of Energy'. The next steps in this process are delivery of a brand campaign and tactical executions to bring to life this new positioning across our core pillars of invest, visit, study and live. The campaign is expected to launch in Quarter 1 2024. The Department's activity also included:

Corporate Communications

- PR and media management of Council projects including the issuing of over 200 news releases, drafting over 100 Mayoral speeches, answering hundreds of queries from local and national media and managing the Council's numerous social media accounts

- Providing PR and marketing support to internal Council departments for their public communications campaigns throughout the year
- Coordinating the Council's participation in #YourCouncilDay, the national social media initiative promoting services provided by local authorities
- Posting 1,331 times to Limerick City and County Council Twitter account with more than 18,347 followers

Marketing

Limerick.ie and social media platforms:

- There was a 2% increase in visitor's numbers on Limerick.ie from 2022 figures with over 2,074,668 people visiting the website in 2023. 3,600 new pieces of content were created on the site including events, articles, amenities and information on Council services
- The Council Services section on Limerick.ie was extensively redesigned with the aim of simplifying access to key elements of each service, transforming the services interface and user experience
- Key visual elements on Limerick.ie were restyled to improve accessibility and to incorporate contemporary design features, improving the overall website aesthetic
- Issued Limerick.ie 51 weekly 'What's On' newsletters and four Council Connect staff e-zines
- Posted 377 times to Limerick.ie Facebook with total followers of 34,653 – 3% increase on last year
- Posted 341 times to Limerick.ie Twitter with total followers of 21,547 – 1% increase on last year
- Posted 206 times and created 376 Stories on Limerick.ie Instagram with total followers of 29,325 – 7% increase on last year
- Posted 58 times to Limerick.ie TikTok with total followers of 941 (new channel).
- Posted 355 times to Limerick City and County Council LinkedIn with total followers of 11,563 – 16% increase on last year

Festivals and Events

- Limerick St. Patrick's Festival: managed a three week multi-media marketing campaign across social, digital, radio and print media targeting local, regional and national audiences
- Riverfest Limerick: managed a three week multi-media campaign across social, digital, print and radio, which secured national coverage and drew crowds of over 140,000 to the city
- MarComms worked closely with Limerick GAA to provide a coordinated communications campaign around the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final, which took place on 23 July and the subsequent homecoming at Pery Square in the city the following day

- Halloween in Limerick: Ran a three-week social and digital campaign to drive awareness of Limerick's Halloween offering, including the creation of new Halloween in Limerick branding in line with Brand Limerick and the production of a Halloween 'What's on' guide, social ads and campaign specific e-newsletters
- Christmas in Limerick: Managed a six-week multi-media marketing campaign including social media management, videography, digital marketing, print and radio advertising as well as social media influencer engagement. The campaign showcased Limerick as a destination of choice for shopping, overnight stays and family fun, driving increased footfall to Limerick

Brand/Invest

- Secured a number of comms features to increase brand awareness and attract increased investment to Limerick, namely:
 - fDi Magazine
 - Newsweek
 - Council Review
- Creation of Brand Limerick hoarding at the high profile and highly visible Opera site. The hoarding shines a spotlight on some of our key visitor attractions – King John's Castle (KJC), Limerick Greenway, Hunt Museum, Ballyhoura, Limerick Museum, Lough Gur etc. The concept celebrates the powerful contradictions in Limerick's character – just like 'Edge/Embrace' by bringing to life elements of our Limerick offering through pairs of words, which together mean something more
- Created a range of new co-branded display items (pull-ups, nomadic banners, bowflags etc.) for use at events and meetings by LCCC staff members
- Provided ongoing support to our colleagues in the provision of branded merchandise and collateral for trade visits, delegations etc.
- In May, Limerick was used as a case study for branding excellence at the Race for Place international place branding conference in Dublin

Tourism

- Continued interdepartmental collaboration in preparation for the Ryder Cup
- Secured a number of national tourism related features, including:
 - Irish Times
 - Irish Examiner
 - Your Daily Adventure Guide
 - Best of Ireland Series – Limerick Guide
- Design and production of Brand Limerick Activity Pack created with original story and graphics
- Creation of QR Code plaques for local hospitality stakeholder businesses directing to Limerick.ie and Brand Limerick flag production and distribution to hospitality businesses

- Created new match book advertising and hoarding as part of Limerick City and County Council's sponsorship of Treaty United
- New photography asset creation to increase our promotional asset base – featuring Limerick's evening economy specifically
- Attended Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland industry updates and continued collaboration with the Wild Atlantic Way Gateway Steering Group

NATIONAL MOBILISATION AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (NMACS) AND THE MUNSTER REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE (MRCC)

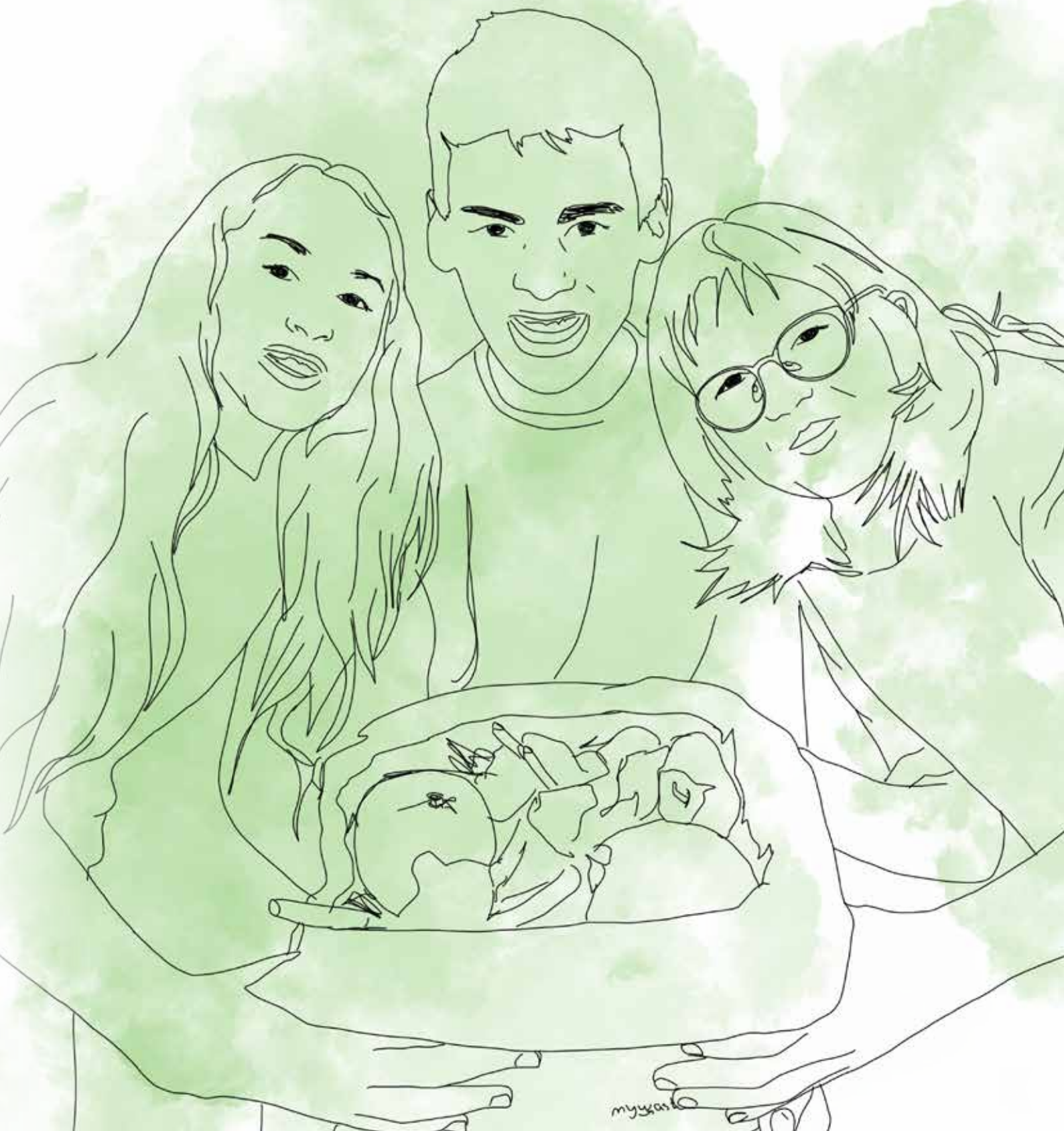
In 2023 the National Mobilisations and Communications System (NMACS) was established in Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) in partnership with the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management. The NMACS team has a national responsibility for Command-and-Control Systems and technology in the Irish Fire Service with LCCC acting as the national contracting Authority. The NMACS team currently manages the Munster Regional Communications System providing receipt, dispatch, mobilisation and communications services to the Fire services in the Munster Region and are currently managing projects to replace current legacy regional command and control platforms with a new national platform.

The Munster Regional Communications Centre (MRCC) is located adjacent to Mulgrave Street Fire Station. The MRCC is a centralised 24-hour service providing rapid response and mobilisation to 999/112 emergency fire calls. Limerick City and County Council is the contracting Authority for this Centre and provides the service on behalf of the seven-member Fire Authorities in Munster (Clare County Council, Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Kerry County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council and Waterford City and County Council).

There were a total of 28,583 calls handled during the period 2023 of which 11,486 were mobilisations to incidents.



NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SHARED SERVICES CENTRE





HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SHARED SERVICES CENTRE

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a form of social housing support provided by local authorities and has been identified as a key part of the national strategy to provide a more integrated system of housing supports. Under the Housing for All – A new Housing Plan for Ireland the State will continue to support all HAP households and provide funding to support households on social housing waiting lists to secure a HAP supported tenancy.

The Housing Assistance Payment Shared Services Centre (HAPSSC) is operated by Limerick City and County Council on behalf of 31 Local Authorities and the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive (DRHE). The HAPSSC is responsible for all financial transactions for both the landlord and the tenant. Total annual expenditure on HAP was in excess of €675m in 2023.

The aim of the HAPSSC is to provide greater financial and operational efficiencies to its local authority clients through centralised service delivery; to provide best practice customer service through an ongoing commitment to investment in new SSC management technologies; and, to be a best practice data management and analytics hub for HAP, contributing to better policy, strategy and operations for HAP SSC and its stakeholders.

During the year, HAPSSC delivered the following projects:

- Digitalisation of the National HAP Application Form: enabling greater real-time completion by the HAP recipient and landlord. Once approved the data automatically uploads into the HAP systems thereby increasing efficiency and accuracy of data. Application Portal piloted in Limerick City and County Council in December 2023.
- HAP APP: this app (available on all mobile phones) enables HAP recipients to make payments, view balances and statements on their mobile phones. The HAP APP was shortlisted for the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2023.
- Roll-out of Digital Postbox: this enables HAP recipient's access to their quarterly statements via MyGovID thereby removing the need to print and post circa 240,000 letters annually.

The principal financial transactions carried out by HAPSSC are:

- As the national customer contact centre for HAP, daily liaison with HAP landlords and tenants, and with local authority clients.

- Set-up of HAP tenancies, in 2023 a total of 8,292 tenancies were completed.
- Payment of monthly landlord rent which in December 2023 was in excess of €55.1 million per month.
- Charge of tenant differential rent for all tenancies which is in excess of €3.1 million per week.
- Management of the debt collection process (95-99% collection rate monthly).
- Over 65,000 customer calls handled by the debt collection department.
- Monthly recoupment of costs from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH).
- Monitoring, reviewing and maintenance of HAP tenancies with over 63,300 amendments completed in 2023.
- Tax clearance checking of landlords.
- Data analytics for stakeholders including local authorities and government departments.
- At the end of 2023 over 117,003 tenancies have been set up since the inception of the scheme.
- 56,848 active HAP tenancies were managed by the HAPSSC as of 31 December 2023.

SOUTHERN REGION WASTE MANAGEMENT

Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021

The Southern Waste Region comprises 10 local authorities: Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Cork County, Limerick City and County, Kerry, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford City and County and Wexford. The Southern Waste Region is one of three waste regions in the country. The other Waste Regions are the Eastern Midlands (EMR) and the Connaught Ulster (CUR) Waste Regions.

Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) and Tipperary County Council are the lead authorities for the Southern Waste Region. They are responsible for the co-ordination, implementation and monitoring of the "Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015 – 2021" through the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices (RWMPOs)

A new "National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030" was published in draft for public consultation in May 2023 for a 2-month period following approval by the CCMA National Oversight Group. The submissions are being considered prior to publication of the Final Plan.

This Plan is the first National Waste Plan and sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland as well as initiating the transition to a circular Economy.



My Waste.ie

2023 was another busy year for national initiatives on resource efficiency and effective waste management. Campaigns on enhanced commercial waste regulations, a brown bin campaign and awareness raising of single use and how to avoid it were progressed throughout the year. Businesses across the city and county continued to avail of resources produced free of charge by www.mywaste.ie/ business to implement good waste management practices in their workplaces.

The National Food Waste Recycling Project entered its final year and over 8,000 kitchen caddy packs have been distributed over the past two years to households across Limerick City and County. Over 55 national events were held as part of National Food Waste Recycling Week and local awareness raising initiatives included the Limerick Show and the Cappamore Show. The success of this project is borne out in the results of the EPA's "National Waste Characterisation Report" which shows 93% of all the material in organic bins is garden and food waste – so households have developed good habits and developed a good understanding about how to manage this waste stream.

Circular Living initiatives aimed at encouraging more reuse and less waste were also prominent throughout 2023 especially at peak consumer times such as Christmas. Increasingly more householders are participating in reuse initiatives such as purchasing reused paint, always carrying a reusable cup and water bottle.



National Food Waste Recycling Week Awareness Campaign

Single Use Plastics at Events

In August 2022 the RWMPOs engaged Native Events to implement the immediate term recommendations of "A report on the reduction or elimination of Single Use Plastics (SUP) at public events in a post pandemic society". In 2023 the remaining three pilot events were undertaken and reports prepared. The resulting "Guide to Plastic Free Events and Festival" has been developed and is due for publication in early 2024.



Reusable Cup Pilot Event

Historic landfill

Progress on the road map for historic landfills has been achieved, investigations and remediation were funded by Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) and approximately €1.42M was spent in the Southern Region in 2023.

Annual Return (AR) Validation Project

The Southern Waste RWMPO validated 30 waste facility permit and waste collection permit ARs as part of the National AR Validation Project, five of which were located within LCCC. The main focus of the AR Project is to ensure AR waste data accuracy and thereby improve the quality of the national waste data and waste capacity forecasting.

Waste Capacity Monitoring

The RWMPOs published quarterly waste capacity reports during 2023 and these indicated that capacity to manage residual municipal waste is limited despite authorisation of additional landfill capacity and additional waste to energy capacity in 2023. Ireland is still reliant on export to manage the day-to-day residual municipal waste generated. Contingency protocol arrangements were invoked to deal with construction and demolition waste fines in 2023 at landfill.

Construction and Demolition Waste

The RWMPO continued worked with Limerick 2030 and the Place-making and Public Realm Department of LCCC on the EPA funded construction projects to prepare Resource and Waste Management Plans and help LCCC to transition to a circular economy.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY

Limerick City and County Council as Fire Authority operates and manages the Fire and Emergency Services in Limerick. Limerick Fire and Rescue Service has responsibility to protect the life and property of circa 200,000 people living in circa 70,000 houses and circa 18,000 commercial premises. Civil Defence is also part of the Fire and Emergency Services Department. This is a volunteer based organisation which supports the frontline emergency services as well as assisting at community events.

The Fire and Emergency Services Department has five broad areas of activity that are mutually supportive in the delivery of an integrated service to the public.

- Fire and Rescue Service
- Fire Prevention and Building Control
- Major Emergency Management
- Civil Defence
- Water Safety



Ship and Port training

Fire Prevention and Building Control

The function of the Fire Prevention and Building Control Department is to ensure the safety, health and welfare of people who occupy or use buildings, through ensuring the reduction of fire risk, proper means of escape, the access for people with disabilities and the conservation of fuel and energy.

To deliver these functions, the work of this department includes assessing Fire Safety Certificate applications and Disability Access Certificates, inspection of commercial buildings and apartment complexes, investigating complaints and giving Community Fire Safety talks.



Pump Operator Training in Kilmallock



Swift Water Rescue training

Fire Safety Certificates

Statistics	
Total number of fire safety certificate applications received	196
Total number of fire safety certificate applications Granted	137
Total number of applications deemed invalid	16
Buildings inspected as a % of new buildings notified to the local authority	14.2%
Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority	706
Number of new buildings notified to the local authority that were inspected	100

Disability Access Certificates

Statistics	
Total No. of valid Disability Access Certificates received	133
Total No. of Disability Access Certificates Granted	101
Total No. of Disability Access Certificates invalidated	2

Planning Referrals

Total number of Planning Referrals processed	238
Total number of Valid Commencement Notices received (includes CNs, Short CNs, Opt-out CNs and 7-day Notices)	496

Civil Defence

Total Expenditure costs for Civil Defence	€285,314
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Major Emergency Management

The functions of the Major Emergency Management section is to implement the provisions of the 2006 Framework for Major Emergency Management in Limerick City and County Council, to review and oversee Limerick City and County Council's Major Emergency Plan and to continually enhance Limerick City and County Council's capacity to respond to a major emergency.

Limerick City and County Council held internal Major Emergency Management Committee meetings and attended the Regional Working Group and Regional Steering Group meetings in 2023.

The work completed during 2023 consisted of:

- Review of the Regional Risk Assessments.
- Weekly review of weather forecast and tides by the Severe Weather Assessment Team.
- Review of Major Emergency Plan and Sub Plan for Limerick City and County Council.
- Participation in the Mid-West Training Courses such as Information Management Officer, On-Site Co-ordination and Media Liaison Officer.
- Review and testing of the Goulding Soil Nutrition External Emergency Plan in accordance with the Control of Major Accidents involving Hazardous Materials Regulations 2015.

Water Safety

Lifeguards were employed by Limerick City and County Council for the June bank holiday weekend and from July to the start of September at Glin Pier and Killeary Pier. The lifeguards were busy again this year with the arrival of many visitors to the Piers for their daily swim and a water safety week run by the local area committee.

With a mixed variety of weather during the summer months of 2023, bathing still took place. The annual cross-river swim from Clare to Glin Pier took place this year along with the Glin Triathlon which were a great success.

The new slip way is getting continuous use for boating activity, with many water users taking to the estuary on windsurfers and small boats.

The new shed acquired by Limerick City and County Council at Glin Pier proved invaluable for the storage of lifeguard equipment in a dry and secure environment during the summer season.

Replacement of lifebuoys continued as required in Limerick with the assistance of the Public Participation Network and local voluntary groups and staff of the Council.



Head Lifeguard John Daniel raising the flag before commencing duty at Killeary Pier



Annual Certificate Presentation and Deceased Members Memorial Ceremony

Civil Defence

Limerick Civil Defence is a statutory volunteer based organisation that supports the front line emergency services while assisting our local community. Limerick Civil Defence supports the frontline emergency services in dealing with severe weather, flooding, major accidents and searching for missing people. Limerick Civil Defence also supports community events throughout the year.

Due to the onset of COVID-19, Limerick Civil Defence became a front line service and supported the Local Authority, HSE and the community. Throughout 2023, Patient Transfer's which began during COVID-19 have continued and will go into 2024.

Examples of the types of tasks undertaken by Limerick Civil Defence include:

- Assisting the HSE with the transporting of patients to hospitals for appointments and clinics.
- Setting up of Emergency Rest Centres for Ukrainian Displaced Persons.
- Transporting of Ukrainian Displaced Persons for GP clinics and hospital appointments.
- Deployed to assist with evacuation of Wexford Hospital for Major Emergency Call-out.
- Providing medical cover with many and varied community and sporting events throughout Limerick City and County (St. Patrick's Day Festival in O'Connell Street and Adare, Riverfest Festival, Great Limerick Run, Milford 10K, Darkness into Light, Little Blue Heroes to name but a few)
- Assisting other Civil Defence Units with medical cover.

Total number of tasking's in 2023 was 153.

WATER SERVICES

Established in 2013 as Ireland's national water utility, Irish Water is responsible for providing and developing water services throughout Ireland. The statutory responsibility for operation of water and wastewater infrastructure and delivering water and wastewater services transferred to Irish Water on enactment of the Water Services Act 2013.

During 2023 significant progress was made nationally in terms of moving towards a single water utility, in line with the Government's vision for the Transformation of Water Services. This culminated with local authorities, including Limerick City and County Council, signing a Master Co-operation Agreement with Uisce Éireann (formerly Irish Water). This new arrangement came into effect in Limerick in July 2023.

The Master Co-operation Agreement replaces the Service Level Agreement, under which Limerick City and County Council delivered water services on behalf of Uisce Éireann. As a result, all operational services on public water and wastewater networks and plants are now under direct control of Uisce Éireann.

In accordance with the Transformation Framework, staff in all local authorities, including Limerick City and County Council, may transfer to Uisce Éireann. However, they also have an option to remain working in the local authority until the end of 2026, and seek a transfer to another section with Limerick City and County Council.

As a result of this oversight of some matters will remain with local authorities, for example Health and Safety of staff.

The provision of Rural Water Services is outside of the scope of the Master Co-operation Agreement, and currently this service remains within the Water Services Section of Limerick City and County Council.

Rural Water Programme 2021

The three year funding programme, the 'Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2019 -2021' was introduced by the Department of Housing, Planning and Environment in 2019. The funding for this programme was broken down into six sections or 'Measures';

- Measure 1 - Source Protection
- Measure 2 - Public Health Compliance
- Measure 3 - Enhancement of Schemes under Water Conservation
- Measure 4 - New Group Water Schemes
- Measure 5 - Transition of Schemes to the Public Sector
- Measure 6 - Community Connections

The total funding allocation to Limerick County for this programme is €1,655,062 spread over 19 Group Water Schemes (GWS). The allocations for the Multi Annual Programme were released in November 2019, therefore work on the various projects within the programme commenced in 2020.

Due to delays experienced over the lifetime of the 2019-2021 programme, the timeframe was extended to enable additional group water schemes who were unsuccessful in their original application to complete the works under the allocated funding measures. It is expected that a new round of allocations will be made in 2024.

Some examples of projects are as follows.

Ballinamona GWS

Under Measure 2 - Public Health Compliance - install a telemetry system for operation between the borehole and storage reservoir and the replacement of the chlorine dosing pumps. These works were completed in late November 2023.

Feohanagh Castlemahon GWS

Under Measure 5 - Transition of Schemes to the Public Sector – undertake a condition survey of the entire scheme network and assess scheme rehabilitation requirements. The entire group water scheme measuring approximately 68km was surveyed during 2023, with the taking in charge application for the scheme submitted to Uisce Éireann in December 2023.

Subsidy towards the Operational Costs of Group Water Schemes

The operational subsidy grant provides assistance to group water schemes supplying water for domestic use. Group water schemes are entitled to claim an annual and advance subsidy each year. The Council processed €1,313,146.00 in subsidy payments to 37 Group Water Schemes in respect of their operational costs in 2023.

Private Well Grants

Limerick City and County Council processed 86 individual grants at a total value in grant aid of €365,494.73 in 2023. The purpose of the grant is to help householders provide good quality, potable drinking water for their homes.

Grants payable under the Domestic Lead Remediation (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2016

The scheme is available to assist owners of premises connected to a domestic water supply with the costs of replacing lead piping or related fittings located within the internal distribution system of the premises, as defined in the Water Services Act 2007. 2 applications were received in 2023, 1 paid to date to the value of €4,937.25.

Freedom of Information Requests

Freedom of Information for Water Services is now governed by Uisce Éireann. No Freedom of Information requests were received for Rural Water.

UKRAINE ACCOMMODATION RESPONSE

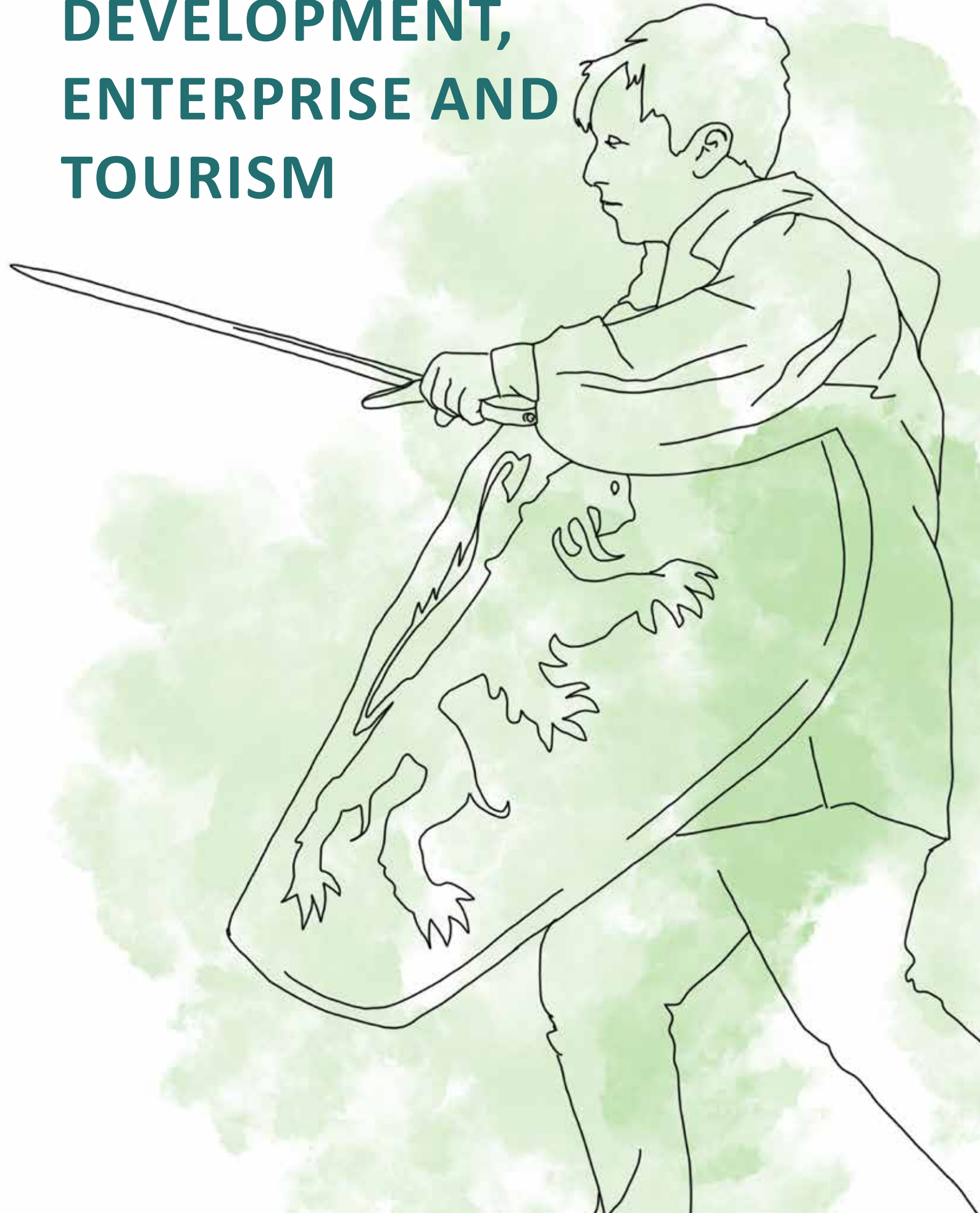
Limerick City and County Council set up a new team in 2022 to respond to the need for emergency accommodation for those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Limerick welcomed over 3,000 Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BoTPs) from Ukraine since early March 2022, with accommodation sourced for multi-occupancy temporary accommodation on behalf of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) throughout the city and county. As part of this accommodation solution, the Council;

- Operated three emergency rest centres (the former convent in Cappamore, former bank building in Askeaton and former bank building in Abbeyfeale)
- Sourced appropriate accommodation solutions for the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Supported the private operators of accommodation centres in navigating and responding to the needs of the new residents in Limerick
- Supported the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in identifying, placing, transferring and supporting accommodation solutions for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection

- Supported the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through examining and proposing refurbishment projects for consideration under the Emergency Refurbishment (Ukraine) Project and appropriate sites for potential Rapid Build Homes
- Worked with the International Organisation for Migration to facilitate use of Irish Red Cross pledged accommodation in Limerick
- Continued the Offer a Home Initiative in Limerick to encourage those with a vacant property to offer a home for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection resulting in over 100 homes being offered for use in 2023
- Worked with the Community Forum to ensure wraparound services are delivered to the new residents in Limerick
- Welcomed the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Ireland, Larysa Gerasko to the official presentation and handover of Ukrainian books to Limerick City Library. Limerick City and County were delighted to receive the Ukrainian book donation. The books are catalogued and other information materials in Ukrainian .The Ukrainian Bookshelf is a lovely collection of books and makes a wonderful addition to our Library



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND TOURISM





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND TOURISM

2023 marked another remarkable period of growth and development for Limerick. A record-breaking €1.26b in total investments and over 2,740 new jobs announced was a testament to Limerick's robust and dynamic economy. The FDI landscape showcased a strong local economy fuelled by strategic investments such as Analog Devices €630 million commitment to a new R&D facility at its Raheen plant. This project has the potential to create an additional 600 new jobs with the American multinational semiconductor company. The commencement of construction works at Eli Lilly's new manufacturing plant in Raheen not only marked the beginning of a new chapter in Limerick's Life Sciences sector, but also created 1,200 construction jobs, contributing to already booming construction sector in the region. Meanwhile, indigenous company H&MV Engineering, a specialist in high voltage electrical engineering, pledged to create 700 jobs over the next five years as it opened its new global headquarters in Castletroy.

Significant strides were made to reinforce Limerick's position as a prime location for business and tourism. Noteworthy milestones included the completion of revitalisation works on O'Connell Street, a testament to the city's commitment to preserving and enhancing our retail offering, and the grand opening of the International Rugby Experience in the city centre. Limerick also welcomed global sports retailer Decathlon, establishing its roots with a second Irish store, a strategic move that added 63 new jobs to the local workforce.

Through Limerick City and County Councils Tourism department, the Limerick Greenway attracted over 180,000 visitors, showcasing our commitment to sustainable tourism and ecological preservation. Major events such as the Forbes' Under 30 Forum and the commencement of the countdown to Ryder Cup 2027, placed Limerick firmly on the global stage, promising continued growth and international recognition.

In embracing the challenges and opportunities of 2023, Limerick City and County Council has not only advanced its economic, enterprise, and tourism sectors but it also established a robust foundation for a future with limitless potential and prosperity.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

The Trade and Investment Unit is tasked with supporting the efforts of IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, other state agencies and the business community, ensuring that Limerick is positioned, and has the appropriate ecosystem to attract and facilitate investment and job creation for the city and county. The Trade and Investment Team works closely with existing business in Limerick to assist them in maintaining and/or increasing employment. The team also conducts research and compiles reports on industry developments and key trends in local, national and international investment. Additionally, Trade and Investment are involved

with proactive Diaspora Engagement through Limerick City and County Councils strategic framework, "Global Limerick". Among the highlights of 2023 were:

- OMC Technologies announced a €4m investment, which included a new 30,000 sq. ft. fabrication facility and an upgrade of its head office on the Ballysimon Road. The company provides steel manufacturing and surface treatment services and will create 40 new jobs to add to its existing 200 workforce
- Peregrine Technologies announced the creation of 20 new jobs after receiving an investment of €17.7m from the European Innovation Council EIC Accelerator. Founded in 2018, Peregrine is headquartered in Nexus Innovation Centre at the University of Limerick and their mission is to modernise the waste electrical and electronic equipment recycling industry
- In March 2023, Eli Lilly commenced construction of its manufacturing plant in Raheen. Lilly also announced the creation of 1,200 construction jobs (700 more than previously announced in 2022) and a total of €1 billion to be investment in the facility (€600m more than originally planned)
- Also in March, Analog Devices announced a €630m investment in a new R&D facility at their Raheen plant. The investment will create 600 new jobs at its European headquarters in Limerick, bringing the total workforce here to more than 2,000
- The Future of Retail seminar, hosted by Limerick City and County Council and Retail Excellence Ireland, took place at the Strand Hotel in Limerick City on April 27. The keynote speaker for the event was Matthew Brown, the founder of Echochamber, a creative research agency that tracks global retail trends. As a Retail Trend Futurist, Matthew has travelled the world to seek out the latest in retail innovation and consumer trends. The event was well attended by business owners, landlords, developers and estate agents in Limerick city. Attendees heard Matthew's advice on how to future proof retail and help it thrive in Limerick. In addition to Matthew's keynote speech, the seminar included a panel discussion and question and answer session with key stakeholders in the retail sector
- In May, H&MV Engineering opened its new global headquarters in Castletroy. 350 people will be employed at the Limerick site, a 36,000 square foot facility, which will include state of the art engineering VR facilities
- Global media giant Forbes brought their world renowned "Under 30 Forum" to Limerick on June 26. During this day-long business-focused event, Forbes and Limerick City and County Council came together acting as partners to learn about, elevate and celebrate the next generation of business innovators, and to promote the future readiness and investment potential of the region

- BRITVIC Ireland has announced an investment of €6 million in its Ballygowan facility in Newcastle West, Co. Limerick. This investment will grow the site's production capacity by over 20% in order to meet growing consumer demand for Ballygowan mineral water and create 28 new jobs
- Verizon, one of the world's leading communications providers, announced in December that it's opening a global centre of excellence at One Bishop's Quay in the heart of the city. The centre of excellence will bring together key functions in a creative, collaborative environment that leverages global talent and maximises Verizon's shared services model to best deliver for their businesses globally. The new office will lead to the creation of 400 new jobs



Chris Kelly, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, Tracworx, Stephen Kinsella, Professor of Economics and Head of the Department of Economics, University of Limerick and Randall Lane, Chief Content Officer and Under 30 Founder, Forbes.

Diaspora Engagement

Global Limerick, Limerick City and County Councils Diaspora engagement project, continued on its mission to animate and mobilise the connection between Limerick and its Diaspora. Central to the Global Limerick project is the importance of harnessing a mutually beneficial relationship between communities in Limerick and Limerick's global Diaspora network. 2023 saw the second year of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Autumn School in Bruff. This Diaspora themed event was a weekend long celebration of the Fitzgerald family who emigrated from Bruff, County Limerick to forge a new life in the US and eventually attain the highest office in the world. The three-day festival honoured Rose, mother of John Fitzgerald Kennedy and former President of the United States, and her three grandparents who left Bruff in 1850. The events reflected on the home place the Fitzgeralds left in 1850 and told the story of Bruff and its Diaspora, past present and future. This year's event marked the 60th anniversary of the visit by President John Fitzgerald Kennedy to Limerick, and the notable role played by the then Mayor of Limerick, Frances Condell.

Guest of honour at this year's event was Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland, Ms. Larysa Gerasko, who spoke of the enforced emigration experience on her people and its unique echo of the Irish post famine exodus. Some 320 Ukrainian refugees are now living in Bruff, and making a productive contribution to the local community.

DIGITAL SERVICES

Broadband Office

Through 2023, the Broadband Office continued to support National Broadband Ireland for the roll out of high speed broadband in Limerick. To date, €84m has been invested in Limerick. Out of 22,000 premises included in the project:

- 28% of premises have a status of 'Survey Pending'
- 23% of premises have a status of 'Survey Complete'
- 4% of premises have a status of 'Network Build in Progress'
- 45% of premises have a status of 'Available to Pre-Order/Order'

Broadband Connection Points continued to be supported throughout 2023.

Digital and Business Systems

The upgrade of Limerick City and County Council's CRM system started in earnest in February. This would be an 18 month project to migrate the existing CRM to a modern cloud based CRM that would serve Limerick City and County Council for the coming decade. In collaboration with Storm Technologies, the Digital Services team hosted workshops with key stakeholders across the organisation to identify key requirements for the project. By December, an initial build of the CRM was demonstrated to some staff. Iterations of the build will continue in to 2024, including significant testing with an expected roll out in Quarter 2 2024.

Throughout 2023, all major digital applications were upgraded to their latest versions bringing new functionality to the applications, but also addressing known security vulnerabilities and ensuring the applications continued to provide functionality for key Council services.

During the first half of 2023, the Head of Digital Services took part in a working group with the LGMA to help prepare a national Digital and ICT strategy for Local Authorities. The ambitious strategy will set out goals for the digital transformation of local government services. The Limerick.ie platform experienced no unplanned outages in 2023, with 100% uptime delivered for the website.

2023 saw the use of the MyLimerick portal on Limerick.ie continue to grow. Over 18,000 cases have now been logged through the portal since its inception in 2017. MyLimerick now has close to 13,000 users registered for the portal.

Data and GIS systems continued to evolve and receive upgrades and additional data sources. Significant effort continued to ensure that high integrity processes were implemented to deliver trustworthy data to the users of our GIS systems.

During 2023, work started to design and build a Council dashboard solution for internal and external reporting. This work will continue throughout 2024 and will ensure that Limerick City and County Council has adequate data infrastructure to serve council needs for the years to come, with the potential to responsibly leverage AI, when appropriate.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

The Head of Digital Services continued to work with Moyross Community Enterprise Centre, An Garda Síochána, Elected Members and Deputies and key stakeholders in Limerick City and County Council to ensure the continued responsible running of our public realm CCTV infrastructure.

In collaboration with the Council's Data Protection Officer, processes designed for the creation of a CCTV function were continually improved, with governance processes introduced for the first time.

Following the introduction of additional legislation, which will support the introduction of CCTV for other purposes like waste enforcement and traffic management, the Head of Digital Services and the Data Protection Officer worked with the Local Government Management Agency to provide guidance on CCTV governance that could be used nationally. In addition, the Head of Digital Services and a senior member of An Garda Síochána travelled to Cork City Council, Galway City Council and had conversations with other Council's remotely to provide guidance on how to implement good CCTV governance.

European Projects

In 2023, the EU Programmes Team continued to support Departments interested in participating in EU funded projects. The team also collaborated with various stakeholders locally and internationally to pursue opportunities to support the local authority in achieving its objectives. Work and participation in the following EU Projects continued in 2023:

+CityxChange

In 2023, Limerick concluded the five-year Horizon 2020 +CityxChange Project as a leading city and partner. Despite management changes, including the resignation of key personnel, the team effectively addressed challenges and met all project deliverables. Notable achievements included obtaining planning permission for the GKinetic Tidal Turbines, initiating a sustainable investment fund for building retrofit, and establishing an EV Car Sharing station. The Council actively participated in the final project conference in Trondheim, Norway, focusing on showcasing Limerick's contributions, fostering relationships, exploring future collaborations, and sharing expertise in community grid systems. The project's final review is scheduled for January 2024.

INTEgreat

This €1.6m, three-year project aims to build a stronger integration strategy and ecosystem for migrants and asylum seekers in Europe. In 2023 Limerick City and County Council together with our local partner Doras were able to implement pilot activities in Limerick in four main areas: healthcare, employment, social cohesion, capacity building and training of both migrants and local citizens.

Pilot activities in Limerick included among others:

- Creation of Limerick Migrant Integration Forum
- Employment support
- Intercultural awareness training sessions to frontline service providers and employers
- Roundtable discussion with local partners working in health sector
- Online information hub on Limerick.ie

PACTE Plus

The PACTE+ Project, involving Limerick and other European cities, focuses on promoting active living in four areas: schools, workplaces, mobility, and governance. In 2023, Limerick hosted a workshop on 'Active Governance', attracting diverse speakers and highlighting the role of local authorities in integrating physical activity into urban planning. Limerick's participation in the Association for International Sports for All (TAFISA) World Congress further emphasized its commitment to becoming a Global Active City, with plans for more workshops in 2024.

- GoGreen Routes

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council enhanced Castletroy's greenway by creating an eco-friendly 'Greenspace', engaging over 50 volunteers in planting 450 native trees. This initiative, combined with a biodiversity-focused 'Bioblitz' event attracting 35 participants, significantly contributed to local biodiversity enhancement.

Additionally, the Council secured two URBACT IV Projects, each with a €70,000 budget, fostering urban sustainability and development, co-financed by the EU. BiodiverCITY: led by Hungary, the network includes Limerick and partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain, BiodiverCITY will focus on measuring urban biodiversity and related ecosystem services by exploring community-based approaches for valorisation and measurement of nature-based solutions, greening plans and pro-environmental behaviours.

Limerick has been shortlisted for the All Ireland Community and Council Awards under 'best green sustainable'.

GreenPlace

Led by Poland, the network includes Limerick and partners from France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain (2). GreenPlace seeks to help restore forgotten urban spaces, making such places welcoming to residents, and in an environmentally-friendly way using existing resources. The Council were successful in 2023 in applying for an URBACT IV project led by Poland.

This URBACT IV EU Project also includes other associate partners from France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain. GreenPlace seeks to help restore forgotten urban spaces, making such places welcoming to residents, and in an environmentally-friendly way using existing resources.

Intelligent Cities Challenge

In June, the EU Project Office submitted a successful application to join the EU Commission's Intelligent Cities Challenge. The Intelligent Cities Challenge (ICC) is a European Union (EU) initiative aimed at supporting cities in their transformation towards becoming more intelligent and sustainable. The Council's goal through participation in the ICC will be to create a local green deal to support building retrofitting. We have an obligation under the Climate Action Plan to look at our buildings and reduce our carbon footprint and in doing so lead by example.

BiodiverCity

The Council were again successful in 2023 in applying for another URBACT IV EU project. BiodiverCity will be focusing on community-based approaches to valorise, measure and account biodiversity and related ecosystem services.

The Council is now the lead local authority in Ireland with two ongoing URBACT IV EU Projects which is testimony to our ongoing success in URBACT EU Project applications over the last number of years.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

The 2023 Annual Employment Survey of Local Enterprise Office (LEO) clients show positive job creation in each of the 31 Local Enterprise Offices. Employment in 7,167 businesses grant aided by the LEOs increased by 6% on the 2022 employment return. A total of 6,640 new jobs were created nationally in 2023. When job losses are accounted for this results in a net employment gain of 2,131 in 2023. Total employment in LEO supported businesses nationally in 2023 is 38,726.

LEO Limerick surveyed 313 businesses that had previously received financial supports and these businesses created 238 net new jobs in 2023. That puts Limerick as the top performing county for job creation by LEO clients in the country. While recognising this incredible performance by our client base, we continued to support businesses with a wide range of soft measures as follows:

- General Training Programmes: 99 programmes with 1,608 participants.
- Start Your Own Business Programmes: 17 programmes with 225 participants.
- Management Development Programmes: five programmes with 90 participants.
- Mentoring: 402 assignments.
- Microfinance Ireland: 12 applications.

2023 Performance Outturn for the Local Enterprise Office

	Target 2022	Outturn 2022	Target 2023	Output 2023	% of Target achieved 2023
Financial Support Packages	-	44	50	44	88
Lean	18	25	18	19	106
Green	20	8	20	14	70
ToV	45	85	45	65	144
Total Training	1800	1837	1440	1608	112
SYOB	180	262	144	225	156
MDP	90	86	72	90	125
General	1530	1489	1224	1293	106
Mentoring	360	259	468	402	86
RD&I Supports (Agile, Standard, IP)	1	1	1	5	500
Export	2		4	TBC	
Digital	-	-	7	1	14
MFI	15	9	13	12	92
Client Transfers	-	2	5	10	200
Energy Efficiency Grant				1	

RYDER CUP 2027

The Ryder Cup 2027, the third most viewed sports event in the world is coming to Adare Manor, Adare, Limerick. The centenary Ryder Cup event which sees 24 of the world's best golfers compete in a Europe versus USA context, will be the largest sporting event to be held in Ireland in a decade.

The most recent European venue in Marco Simone Golf Club in Rome, Italy, saw 271,000 attend from 101 countries, the largest attendance on record, accompanied by the highest ever social media impressions and interactions. The event offers an immense opportunity for Limerick and Ireland to show what we are capable of, having hosted the Ryder Cup successfully in 2006 in the K Club, Co. Kildare.

Planning has been undertaken in 2023 with government and local stakeholders. Limerick City and County Council appointed a Ryder Cup Coordinator to act as the point of contact on all local services for the event. A strategic plan of action is being finalised which not only includes Limerick and the region putting its best foot forward for the event but also what is expected in terms of legacy.

REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLAN

The Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan has been developed by regional stakeholders in order to focus on undertaking collaborative initiatives that can help deliver enterprise growth across the region, as part of the Programme for Government commitment to achieving more balanced regional enterprise development. The Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 contains a number of unique and targeted actions to encourage enterprise growth across five focus areas: technology, sustainability, regional towns and rural areas, SME growth and social enterprise.

The steering group of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan continues to meet biannually with officials from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Representatives from the local authorities of Limerick, Clare and Tipperary along with key stakeholders including Industrial Development Agency (IDA), Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the region's education and training providers are progressing a wide range of enterprise growth actions across the region covering sectors such as manufacturing, film, engineering, bio economy, regeneration and renewables.

In May the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney, T.D., attended the Building Better Business event held in The Kemmy Business School at the University of Limerick (UL). This event was a joint initiative of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee, with over 200 stakeholders from across industry, education and state agencies in attendance. While at the University, the Minister met with University President, Professor Kirsten Mey, and visited students of UL's industry-focused Immersive Software Engineering programme, as well as meeting staff and academics at the Bernal Institute to discuss some of their ongoing industry collaborations.

In October a new funding scheme for projects aligned with the Regional Enterprise Plan was launched by the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney, T.D. The Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme is being delivered by Enterprise Ireland and has a total value of €145.3 million with the overall objective to drive job creation/retention and enterprise development in each region throughout Ireland.

The following four streams are catered for in the scheme are: Local enterprise infrastructure projects, Innovation clusters and consortia, Services to SMEs to drive innovation solutions, Feasibility and Priming Grants. These projects shall be Collaborative in nature, Innovative, Financially viable, Sustainable, and focused on delivering metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) which provide additionally to the existing regional infrastructure.

The interim report for the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 has been submitted to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in Quarter 4 2023 and is expected to be published in early 2024.

Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce

In July, the Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce Final Report was launched at Ardnacrusha by the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, T.D. alongside Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney, T.D., Minister for Education, Norma Foley, T.D., and Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamonn Ryan, T.D. The Report's proposals for renewable energy, industry, tourism, and logistics could result in significant job growth and new business opportunities.

The Taskforce, which was a Programme for Government commitment, was established in April 2022 and chaired by Barry O'Sullivan, consulted extensively with regional, national, and international stakeholders across industry, government, local authorities, elected representatives, and members of the public. It sets out:

- how the installation of Offshore Wind in the Atlantic can be expedited within the next decade
- the important role a thriving R&D ecosystem can play in driving our offshore wind opportunity
- how the existing employment and industrial base can be sustained through onshore renewable energy solutions
- how the tourism offering in the region can be strengthened ahead of the Ryder Cup 2027
- how critical infrastructure can be identified to avail of these opportunities

On 21 December the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment published its first update on the actions contained in the Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce Report. This first implementation update details progress made on implementing the Taskforce's recommendations since the report's launch.

TOURISM

Festival and Events

Festivals and Events Strategy 2022-2027

Limerick City and County Council's commitment to the strategic development of Festivals and Events in Limerick reached a significant milestone in August 2023 with the adoption of 'Embrace the Experience' Limerick City and County Council's Festivals and Events Strategy 2022-2027. This comprehensive strategy identifies Limerick's diverse festival and events offering, which encompasses a broad range of local community festivals to major international events across arts, culture, sport and heritage including business events and conferences. The strategy recognizes the potential of festivals and events as a platform to reflect and celebrate the energy, excitement, grit and unique character of Limerick. The vision of the Strategy seeks to inspire and engage local residents and visitors through an authentic, distinct and diverse year round programme of festivals and events that celebrate Limerick's culture on a world stage. With plans at an advanced stage to bring global events like the Ryder Cup to Limerick in the near future, the strategy sets out Limerick's ambition to create an offering that contributes to Limerick's Economic, Cultural and Social Development and establishes Limerick as a Festivals and Events destination that is world class with limitless potential.

Festivals and Events Grant Scheme 2023/2024

- Limerick City and County Council provided strategic investment to Festivals and Events via a complete open call in 2023. The total fund for the Festivals and Events Grant Scheme 2023/2024 was €208,000
- The Scheme was awarded to 34 successful applicants across three strands. These strands were as follows;
 - Strand 1 – Delivery and Programming of Small Scale and New Festivals and Events
 - Strand 2 - Delivery and Programming of Medium and Large Scale Festivals and Events
 - Strand 3 – Festival Development and Sustainability.

St. Brigid's Festival

- In early 2023, The Government announced a new public holiday in honour of St. Brigid, the Patroness of Ireland. The public holiday took place on Monday, 6 February, the first Monday after her feast day of February 1st. Festivals and Events organised a number of events celebrating the work of female art practitioners, including, 'Bantracht' and 'The Land of Saints and Glamour'
- 'Bantracht' featured the work of Rennie Buening, Eva Byrne, Angelina Foster, Lara Grufferty, Carol Kennedy, Sibéal Riordan, Emily Robards and Sinéad Cunneen Williams. The title 'Bantracht' translates from the Irish 'womenkind' or 'womenfolk'– the

central theme of this exhibition. Participants were asked to explore female figures from a historical, current, mythological or folklore context, and to create work in response to their discoveries

- Mná na nEalain is a network of established and emerging female artists and creatives in Ireland, which evolved from the Creative Europe Womarts Program. Twenty female artists across Ireland were invited to take part in Womarts in 2020. Womarts pursues women's equal share of the arts, in terms of visibility, promotion and access to the market, with female empowerment and professional training at its core
- 'The Land of Saints and Glamour' featured the work emerging young artist Aoife Cawley and was showcased at King John's Castle and opened by The Mayor of Limerick City and County Council



St. Patrick's Festival

- Limerick welcomed 80,000 visitors across the festival weekend to the city, with Limerick St. Patrick's Festival proving a massive success. Over 50,000 people lined the streets of the city for a loud, colourful and highly entertaining St. Patrick's Day Parade on Friday 17 March. There was boatloads of creativity on display with impressive spectacles such as the large Viking Long Ship and a nine-and-a-half foot tall Treaty Stone recreation. The parade theme was 'Discover Limerick' and Grand Marshal, actor Jon Kenny got on his bike to promote Limerick's cycling trails. More than seventy groups put their own artistic stamp on proceedings
- The fun continued on the Saturday with St. Patrick's Festival Street Shows providing high-energy acrobatics, magic and comedy on Bedford Row and Thomas Street and a range of amusements on Cruises Street

- On the Sunday, thousands of people were blown away by energetic performances from twenty bands who did not let the wet weather dampen their enthusiasm. Limerick's 51st International Band Championship featured more than fifteen hundred musicians and performers from across the globe. Bands marched the 1.5Km route ending in Arthur's Quay to the backdrop of the in-situ Panoramic Wheel for the annual Jamboree. There were a number of category winners with the overall prize going to The Pride of Bixby Marching Band from Oklahoma



International Band Championships



St. Patrick's Day Parade

Riverfest

- Riverfest 2023 was a huge success with over 140,000 visitors to the city over the bank holiday weekend. Riverfest Limerick's social media campaign generated 9,037,602 total impressions and 1,745,862 video views. The overseas and domestic visitor to Riverfest is estimated to deliver a minimum of €479,000 to the local economy
- The 19th Riverfest Limerick Festival drew massive crowds of people into Limerick City across the May bank holiday weekend. Families and festival fans enjoyed a spectacular fireworks display, stunning stunts on the River Shannon, a sizzling BBQ and live music at King John's Castle. On water activity included Fly Boarding stunt performers which proved a huge hit with young and old alike, swimmable Limerick, stand up paddle boarding, kayaking, and Dragon boat racing
- A first for Limerick saw an Irish Defence Forces transport helicopter touched down at Merchant's Quay to the surprise and delight of hundreds of people. Kids had their fun too with a sold out Slime Lab and a popular scavenger hunt across the city for little explorers to enjoy
- Over 60,000 people soaked up the atmosphere at the Riverfest Village at Arthur's Quay Park with live music, good food and vintage amusements. The Panoramic Wheel and the Free drop into an airbag were ideal attractions for those with a head for heights. Over a thousand people gathered for the Rogu 'Firestorm' fire display later on Friday evening
- The BBQ on the boardwalk fed the masses on Saturday as companies and charities from across Limerick and the Mid-West served up mouth-watering fare to thousands of visitors to Howley's Quay
- Riverfest and The Great Limerick Run go hand in hand. The 2023 Regeneron Great Limerick Run attracted thirteen-thousand-plus participants and their supporters to Limerick on the Sunday. Sunday night saw Hermitage Green at King John's Castle before the Riverfest Fireworks Spectacular illuminated the night sky, watched live by tens of thousands of people who streamed into the city for the display



Flyboarding at Riverfest

Limerick Homecoming

- In what was an unforgettable event, an estimated 20,000 passionate hurling fans congregated at Pery Square on 24 July to welcome and honour the triumphant Limerick Senior Hurling team following their remarkable achievement of clinching an historic four-in-a-row of titles in the All-Ireland senior hurling championships
- Throngs of jubilant supporters draped in Limerick's famous green and white were treated to an evening's entertainment with music from DJ Jen Payne, Limerick band Anna's Anchor, the Limerick senior hurler's favourite singer, Michael Maloney and the ever brilliant The Corner Boys. The event, MC'd by Liam Aherne and Catriona Tierney reached a crescendo as the All-Ireland winning panel were introduced to the crowd, club by club, before the trio of manager John Kiely and captains Cian Lynch and Declan Hannon brought the Liam MacCarthy Cup out on to the stage.



Limerick Homecoming

EVA International

- The 40th EVA International, Ireland's Biennial of Contemporary Art featuring Irish and international artists across venues in Limerick was launched on 31 August at Limerick City Gallery of Art followed by reception at Gardens International. Eva International is a visual arts programme across featuring new commissions and existing works from internationally acclaimed artists. Some of the highlights of EVA this year is a guest Programme curated by Sebastian Cichocki and Platform Commission and Partnership Project initiatives

Cannonball

- The largest organized road trip in Europe made a welcome returned to Limerick from 15 - 17 September with a large-scale spectacle of high-end supercars all in aid of the Jack and Jill Foundation. There was an electric atmosphere in Limerick's Pery Square on the Saturday evening as the Mayor of Limerick City and County Council welcomed the cars.

- In addition there was live music, Brazilian dancers and family fun including a fancy dress competition. The cars parked up in the City for a period of time, giving plenty of opportunity for spectators to enjoy them before heading away the Sunday morning



Cannonball

Christmas in Limerick

- Festivals and Events organised a number of magical activities and events to celebrate Christmas in Limerick 2023. With aerial acrobatics, circus and fire performances, street shows and Santa visits, there was something magical for everyone to enjoy
- The City Streets were abuzz with live music, Christmas style market huts and family street shows featuring jugglers, stilt walkers, mischievous elves, bearded ballerinas and wacky walkabout performers running amok. 'Firestorm' by Rogu, Ireland's Premier Fire Performance Company wowed the crowds with a unique Christmas themed show at Merchant's Quay along with a fantastic mix of music, fire, sparks. In a Limerick first, 3,000 people experienced a Christmas themed aerial extravaganza by internationally acclaimed aerial circus company Fidget Feet at King John's Castle. Other seasonal favourites included, Limerick on Ice at Arthur's Quay, Fossett's Christmas Circus at Cleaves and Toots Train.



Christmas in Limerick

Conferencing and Bids for Events

- The Festivals and Events Team continued to work with colleagues and a range of sectoral stakeholders to support the development of conferencing opportunities and the hosting of international events of scale in Limerick in 2023
- In collaboration with Shannon Region Sports and Conferencing Bureau, Fáilte Ireland and UL, Limerick City and County Council presented Limerick as a high quality destination for hosting sporting and conferencing events in 2023. Significant efforts were made to ensure events had a city centre impact. Closing ceremonies for these significant events were held in the city centre in 2023 assisted by the Festivals and Events Team
- Some of the events secured and supported with the benefit of Council funding included:
 - The World Archery Youth Championships
 - The European Ultimate Frisbee Championships
 - The International Tag Rugby World Cup



Tag Rugby World Cup

Tourism Development

Limerick Greenway

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council continued the promotion and development of Limerick Greenway. There were over 180,000 visitors to the 40km scenic off-road cycling and walking route during the 2023 year. Since it was reopened in July 2021 following a €10 million investment by Limerick City and County Council, walkers, runners, cyclists, and lovers of the outdoors have continued to enjoy Limerick Greenway.

Limerick Greenway Biodiversity Plan

JBA Consulting worked with Limerick City and County Council Tourism Department over the course the year to prepare a Biodiversity Plan for Limerick Greenway, which they completed a final draft of in late 2023. The plan is 300 plus pages, surveying and mapping species and habitats along the full 40km route.

The Limerick Greenway Biodiversity Plan is the first of its kind for any Greenway across Ireland. Limerick City and County Council hosted workshops with Botanist Phoebe O'Brien, where teachers from schools located locally to Limerick

Greenway were brought out onto Limerick Greenway and were educated on the biodiversity surrounding the route and how best to educate their students on the importance of preservation and sustainability along Limerick Greenway.



Familiarisation Trip for Older Person's Executive Limerick Greenway

Events on Limerick Greenway

Limerick Greenway hosted a number of events throughout 2023 including the following:

- On 19 June, the Limerick City and County Council Tourism Department hosted a Familiarisation Trip for the Older Person's Executive on Limerick Greenway, where a walk took place at different sections including near Ardagh and Barnagh Hubs.
- Other events throughout the course of the year included:
 - Barnagh Easter Egg Hunt
 - Bike Week
 - Castletroy College sponsored walk for Down Syndrome Ireland
 - Charity Cycle for Focus Ireland
 - Halloween Trick or Treat at Barnagh Hub
 - Templeglantine Camogie Club Walking Event Fundraiser



Limerick Greenway – Barnagh Tunnel

Limerick Greenway Marketing and Promotion

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council procured Springboard Communications to lead a national integrated communications and marketing campaign for Limerick Greenway to achieve further success following on from the 2022 campaign. Some of the key objectives of the marketing and communications campaign were to increase awareness of Limerick Greenway as a go-to tourism amenity both locally and nationally and to raise the profile of Limerick Greenway with key stakeholders.

The promotional campaign during 2023 included:

- Seasonal photography and videography shoots along Limerick Greenway, with the imagery and videos captured being the key element in driving the marketing campaign
- An online and printed Brochure for Limerick Greenway
- Influencer marketing: three influencer visits were coordinated in 2023 along Limerick Greenway, with a series of content created by each. These influences were Adam King, Éadaoin Fitzmaurice, and April Drew
- Billboards and Transport presence including advertising in five local bus shelters, two airports and one Limerick City bus Mega Rear for six weeks. Four key billboard locations were also secured at Shannon Airport, Arramont Furniture, Parkway Shopping Centre and on the Ennis road
- Radio Adverts proved very successful for Limerick Greenway in 2023 during peak times. The adverts were ran over a number of weeks on both Today FM and Limerick Live 95 FM
- Limerick Greenway featured in the GAA Match Programme as well as the Limerick Guide
- Familiarisation trips with journalists from the Irish Times, Women's Way and Travel Trade News, working with local businesses, including bike hire, hotels, local shops, museums and West Limerick's food providers to create authentic experiences that showcased the real people and stories along Limerick Greenway
- Media Relations: Included 65 pieces of media coverage which resulted in a reach of 3.25 million people and an editorial value of €486,875. Some of these included the Irish Independent, The Irish Times, the Irish Examiner, VIP Magazine, Radio Kerry, RTÉ, as well as the Limerick Post and Limerick Leader locally

Statistics

Google Advertising:

- 2.81 million impressions
- 46.7K link clicks
- 402,000 interactions
- 1.66% click-through-rate – reported industry average is 0.46%

Social Media Platforms Reach for 2023:

- Facebook page reach: 598,968
- Facebook profile visits: 16,282
- Facebook page new likes: 1,117
- Instagram profile visits: 3,216
- Instagram page reach: 47,139
- Instagram page new followers: 1,063



Destination Development Programme Limerick Greenway

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council continued operation, maintenance and infrastructural development of Limerick Greenway.

The maintenance team had a very successful year in maintaining the 40km Greenway. A new tractor, along with a number of attachments, including a sweeper, leaf blower and a hedge cutter was purchased and delivered in January. This has assisted greatly in ensuring the amenity which is the Greenway is of a high quality standard every time people use it.

There were five additional structures added to the Greenway in 2023, one overpass and four underpasses to the value of €1.05m. These structures were installed in place to facilitate the crossing of dairy cows on the Greenway. The installation of these structures has allowed for a safer and more efficient experience for both farmers and patrons of the Greenway.

In terms of trailhead and railway building developments two architect-led multidisciplinary teams were appointed to lead out on designs at Ardagh, Barnagh, Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale. A number of these projects were brought to Part 8 planning phase in 2023 with the next phase of development planned to take place in 2024.



3D Visualization of the Limerick Greenway Hub at Rathkeale

Construction and development works at the Greenway trailhead and hub at Rathkeale commenced in April with a project completion date of April 2024. The €1.9m project has been progressed so as to provide services to Greenway users and the local community. The development sees the derelict railway goods shed being renovated and refurbished which will enhance the Greenway experience for all users.

Pilot rehabilitation works carried out on a section of the 19th century Barnagh Tunnel in 2023. The purpose of the pilot was to inform the long-term rehabilitation of the tunnel and renewal of the railway heritage asset.

West Limerick Tourism Hub at Fullers Folly, Newcastle West

The Preliminary Design and Scheme Design Development Stages were completed in 2023. A Part VIII planning application was submitted in November with the planning report to be put before the Elected Members in 2024.



Visualization of the West Limerick Tourism Hub at Fullers Folly, Newcastle West

Discover Limerick PASS

- Limerick City and County Council and Fáilte Ireland, in partnership with tourism partners and Open Pass UK, launched the Discover Limerick PASS on the 6 June, the first destination sightseeing pass of its kind on the Wild Atlantic Way. The launch took place in King John's Castle, with the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley highlighting this important milestone for tourism in Limerick. Miriam Kennedy, Head of Wild Atlantic Way with Fáilte Ireland also spoke about the pass and how it enhances Limerick's tourism offering and will help visitors easily discover some of the wonderful attractions across both the city and county.
- The Discover Limerick Pass is convenient and easy to use, being readily available to download on your smartphone and ready to use instantly. All visitors need to do is purchase either a 1, 2, or 3-day sightseeing pass at discoverlimerickpass.com. The pass offers access to some of the most popular sites across Limerick city and county, such as The Hunt Museum, Foynes Flying Boat and Maritime Museum, and Treaty City Brewery to name but a few. The Discover Limerick PASS is a winner for all ages and a great way to save money and time. Limerick City and County Council put forward Limerick Greenway Biodiversity Plan and the Discover Limerick PASS for the LAMA Awards for Best Tourism Initiative and Best Environmental/Ecological project/Initiative.
- In 2023, Limerick City and County Council procured Springboard Communications to lead a national integrated communications and marketing campaign for the Discover Limerick PASS where the objective was to raise awareness of the pass and attract other businesses to sign up to become a member.

The campaign during 2023 included the following:

- Billboards and Transport presence including advertising within Train Stations, Airports, Bus Links and Bus Stops and on major routes in and out of Limerick
- A new dedicated website – discoverlimerickpass.com
- Familiarization trips for journalists from The Limerick Leader, Woman's Way, and the Evening Echo, working with the attractions on the pass which included walking tours, historic monuments significant to Limerick's history and the beautiful scenery surrounding Limerick
- Media Coverage included twenty-six pieces of earned media coverage with four National, sixteen Regional and six Trade media articles which resulted in a reach of over 700,000 people. Some of these publications included the Sunday Independent, The Corkman, The Kerryman, The Sligo Champion as well as the Limerick Post and Limerick Leader locally
- Radio Adverts proved very successful for the Discover Limerick PASS in 2023 with adverts running on Today FM over a number of weeks in the summer. The radio advert campaign reached over 500,000 people and the adverts created over 3 million audio impressions.



Discover Limerick PASS Poster



Discover Limerick PASS launch 6 June 2023



Engine Collaboration Centre Exterior 2

In its first year, the Engine Collaboration Centre became home to over 11 businesses accommodating over 50 personnel, in addition to the existing 70 employees in the Engine building through Vitalograph. In excess of 330 events took place in the Engine Collaboration Centre with over 2,000 attendees passing through the doors for networking, meetings and trade events in sectors ranging from medtech, sports tech, Film, early stage start up, community and enterprise networking.



Engine Collaboration Centre Interior 1



Engine Collaboration Centre Interior 2

INNOVATE LIMERICK DAC

Innovate Limerick had a busy year with a number of significant activities taking part in 2023. The Engine Collaboration Centre fully opened its doors as Limerick's only city centre collaborative workspace, co working venue.



Engine Collaboration Centre Exterior 1



Engine Collaboration Centre Interior 3

The Engine Collaborative Centre fosters a collaborative environment where businesses can exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and gain inspiration from one another. Networking events and community-building activities are organised regularly to strengthen connections among members, and gain support from other businesses in the wider network of hubs.

Examples of notable events held in Engine Collaboration Centre in 2022 are:

- One-Zero Sporttech - The inaugural One Zero Limerick Conference event, where sports, business and technology collide, took place on March 31 at The Engine Collaboration Centre. Over 100 leading figures from the global sports industry arrived in Limerick for the One-Zero Conference event at Engine to “show the best in sports technology”



One Zero Event - Engine Collaboration Centre; Interior 2



Basketball Court - One Zero Event, Engine Collaboration Centre



One Zero Event- Engine Collaboration Centre

- Sustainable Paths in Computing Seminar hosted by AMAX, in conjunction with NVIDIA and AMD. The focus was on Ireland’s potential to become a go-to destination for green data centres with over 70 attendees



Sustainable Paths in Computing, Engine Collaboration Centre

- Start-up Grind Limerick held events in Engine Collaboration Centre with over 80 people taking part. Start-up Grind is part of the largest global independent start up community, actively educating, inspiring, and connecting more than 2,000,000 entrepreneurs in over 600 chapters. Founded in Silicon Valley, Start-up Grind has helped millions of entrepreneurs build their businesses, connect with strategic partners, and secure funding
- UL 50 Citizens Assembly- a collaborative event between the University of Limerick, Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Public Participation Network (PPN), and Limerick Comhairle na nÓg, supported by the Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN) . The events was designed to provide a platform for further engagement between UL and the community and brought together over 100 community stakeholders and citizens from Limerick city and county to select four projects from the University of Limerick that will contribute to building a sustainable future for Limerick city and county. Each selected project received €10,000 funding award to make their idea happen

- Monthly start up Network Meeting - over 40 attendees per session
- Learning Cities - Paul Partnership Conference – over 50 attendees

The immediate benefits to Limerick City and County since Engine Collaboration Centre opening in January 2023 include:-

- improved opportunities for SMEs to scale
- enhanced entrepreneurial culture created by the centre
- an increase in the reputation of the Mid-West as a centre of excellence in collaboration, innovation and disruptive technologies
- increased skills, knowledge and innovation capacity returned into the indigenous and multinational companies based across the Mid-West, all of which improve future job sustainability and growth

Furthermore, the Local Enterprise Office is co-located on the Engine campus and provides mentoring, training and events on site. This co-location, coupled with the physical location of the Engine Collaboration Centre in the heart of the Georgian Innovation District in Limerick city delivers natural synergies and networks which are of major benefit to the companies who use the space.

Innovate Limerick continued developing its collaborative reach from its Limerick City hub base of the Engine Collaboration Centre into Limerick County and the mid-west through the Engine Hubs network. Engine hubs continued developing its network to 17 Hubs throughout the mid-west. The Hubs are Spark Hub, Roxboro; Bruere Food Units; Croom Enterprise Centre; The Boat Club, Limerick; The Pavilion, Adare; The Yard, Newcastle West; Engine, Engine Collaboration Centre; Broadford Enterprise Centre; Engine Tipperary Digital Hub; Kantoher Enterprise Centre; Rathkeale Enterprise Centre; WorkBase Abbeyfeale; Head Quarter, Tralee; ACM Castleconnell, and Ballyhoura Heritage.

In 2022, Engine Hubs was a selected flagship partner for the Western Development Commission Digital AEC Connected Hubs showcase. This brought together Hubs from around the county to showcase their offering to enterprise stakeholders in the Midwest, including representatives from Connected Hubs; The National Hub network; Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan; Technological University of Shannon; Midlands Midwest; Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Office Limerick.



Digital AEC Meet Up - Engine

The LEO Limerick worked closely with Engine hubs network to roll out networking events in Hubs located in the County. The Yard, Newcastle West hosted a number of events at their Hub with over 20 attendees in conjunction with LEO Limerick. Engine Hubs also continued work on the Limerick Remote Work Marketing Fund through Town and Village Renewal of €50,000. The Engine Hubs network also established monthly networking for small business in Hubs.

Innovate Limerick continued its work on enterprise development outside of Limerick City and into Limerick County, through its ownership and management of Workbase Abbeyfeale and N21 Enterprise Facility Rathkeale. All enterprise spaces are in high demand and are running at 95-100% full capacity. Over 15 business are located in these facilities in West limerick providing employment for over 100 people. Workbase Abbeyfeale has cemented its role as an important physical space in the town both for enterprise and community with Abbeyfeale Tourist Office re-locating there to welcome visitors to the town during tourist months. In Rathkeale, a 1.5 million horror film, Double Blind was partly filmed at Rathkeale Enterprise Centre brought to Limerick by Film in Limerick through Innovate Limerick.

The Engine Collaboration Centre was successfully shortlisted for:

- Best Enterprise and Start Up Hub at the All Ireland Community and Council Awards 2023
- Promoting Economic Development -Excellence in Local Government Awards, Chambers Ireland



Film in Limerick

Film in Limerick

Set up in late 2019 with support from the three Mid-West councils, Film in Limerick is the film office for the Mid-West and works to attract and support productions to the region as well as developing crew and local film production companies and projects.

2023 was a very busy year to date for TV and Film productions in the region. The 22-million feature film 'God's Spy' (now called Bonhoeffer) filmed extensively in Limerick, Tipperary, and Clare at the start of the year. Hidden Assets, Season 2, shot throughout Limerick and Clare in February and March. Treasure Entertainment (makers of Smother) completed a 13-week shoot for a new TV series 'Blackshore' in Killaloe and Ballina. Like 'Smother' it is hoped the new series will go to three seasons and is worth €30-million in direct investment plus to the region. US TV drama pilot 'Wayfinders' also filmed throughout the region, including at Troy Studios in October, employing a majority locally-based crew.

Several feature films and TV series that were shot in the region were released in cinemas and on TV internationally, including The Pope's Exorcist (shot in County Limerick and Dublin), Foundation Series 2 (part-filmed in Limerick at Troy Studios), Double Blind, (filmed in Rathkeale and UL, Woken and The Gates, filmed in Limerick and Clare).

Munster Film and TV Crew Academy - Year 2

Our Film and TV Crew Academy received further funding from Screen Ireland for a second year, another €300,000 to train hundreds of new local crew and place them on productions locally.

Courses run in 2023 include; Prop making, Prosthetics for Film, Model-Making for Film and TV, Location Skills Course, Location Recce skills for trainees, Firearm Safety course, Feature Prosthetics, Movie Magic Scheduling, Hairdressing and Barbering for Film and TV and Vector Works, Passport to Production Lighting for Feature Films, Travel and Accommodation Coordinating, Audience and Distribution, Extras Coordinating and many more.

Short Film Scheme – Engine Shorts

The first edition of our short film initiative saw the completed six short films screen internationally at over 50 film festivals including SXSW in Austin, Texas and pick up awards at Belfast Film Festival (Best short film) and Discover London (Best Comedy). The second edition launched and went into production in the second half of 2023.

Delegations

Film in Limerick represents the Mid-West at local and major Film Festivals and Film Markets internationally, and leads a number of delegations each year to ensure that local producers and companies can build their networks to fund future co-production productions. Delegations to the European Film Market in Berlin and SXSW in Austin, Texas took place, as well as local delegations to the Galway Film Fleadh and Fastnet Film Festival in Cork. All delegations are connected to training programmes such as our 20-week Producing Course and our 22-week Screenwriting programme.

Promoting the Region Internationally

A major and very successful part of our work is to represent the region internationally and to sell the Mid-West as a location for inward productions. The Regional Film Manager has attended AFICI events in Los Angeles and Focus in London for this purpose. Associations of Film Commissions International (AFICI) are the main industry body that connects film offices and the US studios to develop the sector. As a result of our engagement with AFICI and studios we have attracted more productions to the region, creating new jobs, economic and cultural impact.

LA and Cannes receptions

An AFICI / Screen Ireland / Film in Limerick reception for LA Studios was held in Los Angeles in March and a reception was held with Screen Ireland and Variety Magazine planned in May at the Cannes Film Festival.

Cannes Awards

Film in Limerick was nominated for the inaugural Global Film Awards under the Emerging Location category, and won the runner-up prize. The Awards celebrate outstanding and sustainable work in the world of film and TV production, locations and studios, and were unveiled by Screen International. The winners were announced at a reception at the Cannes Film Festival.



Film in Limerick wins Film Commission of the Year Award at the Makers and Shakers Awards at BAFTA 2023

Film Commission of the Year at BAFTA

Film in Limerick won the Film Commission of the Year Award at the Makers and Shakers Awards at BAFTA in December, beating stiff competition from Film London, Film Paris, Film Colardo, Film Miami and the Portugal Film Commission.

Production Infrastructure and Capacity Report

In late 2023, Olsberg SPI began a report looking at the current capacity and future training needs for the sector to develop in the region. The report funded by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Regional Skills Mid-West and the LEO offices in Limerick, Clare and Tipperary will be launched this year.

Press and Publicity

The two awards received during the year in Cannes and London generated massive profile for Film in Limerick and during the year we have had extensive local and regional coverage and as well national coverage (Six-One News, Pat Kenny Show, Irish Times, and Examiner - front page) and internationally coverage, Variety, Screen International, The Location Guide, and Cannes dailies.



Film in Limerick – Minister of State for Local Government and Planning, Kieran O'Donnell T.D.; Paul Ryan, Regional Film Manager; Joe Leddin, Manager Mid-West Regional Skills Net

DISCOVER LIMERICK DAC

2023 was a productive year for Discover Limerick DAC, with two additional sites transferring over to the DAC portfolio, bringing to three the number of entities under the management and control of Discover Limerick DAC, King John's Castle (April 2022), Lough Gur which transferred over in March '23 and most recently Adare Heritage Centre in



Discover Limerick DAC

December '23.

As the portfolio of Discover Limerick DAC continues to flourish so too does the visitor attractions under its remit. King John's Castle had a successful year, attracting around 100,000 visitors, and also widened its appeal to reach a broader target market, supported with sales and marketing campaigns that resulted in the following key events happening throughout the year;

- **Concerts**

Eight concerts held "Live at the Castle" in conjunction with Dolans Limerick, these were well received by the public with many being "sold out"

- **PR/Media coverage**

King John's Castle attracted in-depth media coverage in 2023, some notable TV highlights included the following;

- RTE Nationwide, September
- Ed Finn Travels to Limerick, programme aired on Virgin Media 4 in October
- Spooked Ireland, an hour-long episode dedicated to the Castle's suspected paranormal activity. Broadcast on Discovery+ channel. Hosted by Vogue Williams, October

- **Collaborations**

King John's Castle teamed up with Limerick Racecourse on a two-day racing festival called the "King John's Castle Munster National Racing Festival" in October. A new departure for the Castle, this partnership was successful in building brand awareness for the Castle, targeting a new audience of race-goers. Feedback was very positive, bolstered by a strong social media and print media campaign, it is hoped this festival could become an annual event in the King John's Castle and Limerick Racecourse calendar



Kings John's Castle

Christmas 2023

- Festive themed lighting was installed to light up the Castle walls for the Christmas campaign and it was well received by the public, capturing a lot of positive attention on social media
- 'Christmas in Limerick Aerial Extravaganza', show occurred on 16 December. Sponsored by Limerick City and County Council, hosted by King John's Castle, in conjunction with Fidget Feet and Dolan's, it made the front page of the Limerick Post-dated 21st December
- 'Lough Gur Santa Experience', ran over four weekends from 25th November to 17th December and was hugely popular with 600 booking slots selling out in just two hours



Limerick

Discover Limerick DAC – Corporate Identity

March 2023 saw the unveiling of a new designed corporate logo for Discover Limerick DAC. Modern and succinct in style this is an important marketing tool to drive brand awareness for the DAC into the future.



RURAL, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT





2023 was another busy year for the Council's Rural, Community and Culture Development Directorate, which manages the newly established Rural Development Section, Community, Culture Development and responsibility for Property Management services for the Local Authority. The Directorate has responsibility for overall strategy, policy formulation, operation and delivery of many programmes, services and funding streams in the relevant areas.

Limerick is very fortunate to have strong community structures in place throughout the city and county. Limerick City and County Council seeks to support the development and enhancement of these communities and further fostering the community spirit that exists to improve the quality of the lives of all inhabitants of Limerick, through the delivery of high quality services. One of the guiding principles of the Directorate is to support communities and local community and voluntary groups throughout Limerick to access supports, funding streams and programmes in a coordinated manner which meets the needs of local communities.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Engagement with communities is the cornerstone to ensure there is effective delivery of services by Rural and Community Development sections and this engagement continued in 2023. The Directorate played a critical role coordinating the provision of support services for communities throughout Limerick. The use of online technology and support for communities to adapt to this technology resulted in the continuation of strong community engagement. The Council have continued to work with local communities throughout Limerick to identify their needs and to seek funding to address the needs that exists.

A new section was introduced to the Local Authority, mid 2023, titled the Rural Development section, the section seeks to focus on rural Limerick, to establish a thriving rural area, which is integral to the growth and development of Limerick, the Council recognises the interdependences that exists between urban and rural areas and seeks to capitalise to deliver growth for Limerick. Investment is crucial to the development of rural towns and villages and this is supported by government policies such as Our Rural Futures and Town Centre First. The Council continue to engage with communities to deliver funding through the various funding streams in conjunction with the Department of Rural and Community Development

Town Centre First

Town Centre First Policy was introduced by government in 2021, Abbeyfeale was identified as the pilot town for Limerick. The Council established a Town Team for the town, with responsibility for the formulation and delivery of the Town Centre First Plan, in conjunction with the Town Regeneration Officer. The Plan has been prepared in line with the new National Policy and is a focused plan to target regeneration and renewal in the town. The Plan has been formulated with a bottom up approach with the local community, which now translates into an ambitious action plan for the future development of Abbeyfeale.

Key Programmes and Funding Streams

The delivery of a rural development programme for Limerick is underpinned by a number of funding programmes funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, the Council continue to work with community groups and relevant stakeholders to identify projects to enhance rural communities. The Department of Rural and Community Development issued a call under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund in November and applications are currently being prepared to meet the call to deliver funding for Limerick. The Council continues to progress funding proposals the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and the CLÁR programmes.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, is provided for the development of new and existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas with a particular focus on developing amenities for adventure tourism in rural Ireland. Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme builds on the commitment under "Our Rural Future" and is a key strand to the implementation of "Embracing Ireland's Outdoors", the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2024. The Scheme provides funding for small-scale repair, development or promotion and marketing in relation to existing infrastructure, medium/large scale upgrade works and new trail or amenity developments as well as a Project Development Measure to provide for the development costs for strategic large-scale projects. In 2023, projects completed included the upgrade and provision of universal access to the Kilmallock Riverside Walk, signage and animation on the Limerick Greenway and the upgrade of Adare Riverside walk, in addition, €84,200 was allocated for two project development measures at Kiltillery Pier, Loughill and Blackrock Loop, Ballyhoura Way. A number of applications have been submitted under Measure 1, 2 and 3 relating to the funding call for 2023, which are yet to be announced by the Department Rural and Community Development.



Adare Riverbank Walk Nature Trail Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme
2021 - completed in 2023



Adare Riverbank Walk Nature Trail Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme 2021 - completed in 2023



Kilmallock Riverside Walk Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme 2021 – completed in 2023



Information and Discovery Point Signage at Abbeyfeale Trailhead



Barnagh Tunnel – Bike Repair Picnic Tables



New Signage at Barnagh Station



Ardagh Trailhead



Sample of Animation of Limerick Greenway Signage



Foynes Parish Centre Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022



Foynes Parish Church Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022



Brothers of Charity Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022



Foynes Aviation and Maritime Museum Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022



Feenagh Community Park



Feenagh Community Park Entrance



Feenagh Community Park Official Opening

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

In July 2023, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme was announced with a national €15 million fund to revitalise and regenerate rural towns and villages. The 2023 funding continued to focus on tackling vacancy and dereliction and bringing additional footfall into town and village centres. The funding would also be available for outdoor public realm projects, such as plazas, parks or farmer and artisan markets, as well as refurbishment of existing community centres. The 2023 Scheme sought to prioritise projects that align with the objectives of Government policies, such as Our Rural Future and Town Centre First. Submissions under the 2023 Town and Village Renewal Scheme were submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development in November 2023, following a public call for expressions of interest that closed in September 2023.

Works under the Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022, in the village of Foynes, were completed in 2023. Eight projects were undertaken to enhance the streetscape in Foynes with funding of approx. €58,000 provided.

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais)

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that provides funding for small infrastructural projects in rural areas that have suffered the greatest levels of population decline.

Ten projects approved under the 2022 Scheme were implemented during 2023, with all projects approved under

Measure 1. Martinstown National School, Athea GAA, Killeely Tidy Towns and Kantoher Development Group all had their car parks resurfaced, Glenroe GAA installed LED flood lighting at their All-Weather Sports Facility and Templeglantine GAA and Camogie Club developed the artificial playing surface at their Ball Wall. Both Mountcollins AFC and Oola GAA club installed fencing and walkways around the perimeter of their pitches, Glin Development CLG upgraded their Adult Exercise Equipment and Tournafulla Community Council used their funding to develop an Outdoor Community Recreation Area.

This year, the Council submitted 15 project application to the Department of Rural and Community Development. In the 2023, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced a new €5 million fund to support over 100 sports clubs throughout the country. Seven Limerick clubs received a total of €263,426 in funding; Athea Utd, Ballylanders AFC, Mountcollins AFC, Galtee Gaels GAA, Galbally GAA, Cappamore GAA and Blackrock GAA were successful in receipt of funding. These projects range from improving spectator areas, refurbishing clubhouses and installing outdoor gym equipment. There is more funding due to be announced by the Department of Rural and Community Development in the coming weeks and hopefully the remaining applications will be successful. Examples of the prospective projects are community centre upgrades, car park developments and resurfacing and outdoor gym equipment.



Patrickswell Community Centre



The Feohonagh Castlemahon Porochial House was acquired under the Buildings Acquisition Measure which is a funding stream that was introduced under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and supports the purchase of vacant or derelict buildings for development as community facilities. The building will be developed as a Local Resource Centre and the long term lease to the Community Group was approved at the November Full Council Meeting. Construction work began on site in September 2023 and is due to be complete by summer 2024.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Rural and Community Development sections are intrinsically linked in terms of the delivery of the various programmes and funding streams for the communities of Limerick. Engagement and good working relationships with communities, development companies and stakeholders is key to the delivery of community development. Extensive consultation was carried out in 2023, to inform the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan for Limerick, this consultation is important in informing the policy context and the needs of the local communities. The Council continues to engage with local communities to support and deliver services to enhance the quality of life for those communities.

Local Economic and Community Plan

The Framework Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028 was in preparation throughout 2023. Goals and objectives of the Local Economic and Community Plan must be consistent with higher level national and regional plans – in particular, the National Planning Framework Ireland 2040 and the Regional Economic and Spatial Plan for the Southern Region (2021) - and with the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. The objectives of the Plan are also aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Local Economic and Community Plan has a Community Plan, an Economic Plan and an Integrated Plan, with shared objectives across Economic and Community elements. The preparation of the Community Plan is led by the Local Community Development Committee, the Economic Plan by the Economic Strategic Policy Committee and the Integrated Plan overseen by both Committees. A multi-stakeholder Local Economic and Community Plan Advisory Steering Group was set up in 2022 to guide the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan. This Group includes representatives of all the key statutory agencies, the higher Education sector, community and voluntary sectors partners, including the Local Development Companies, youth services and general community and sectoral interests.

An extensive public consultation process on the Plan was undertaken. This involved hosting community workshops across different geographic areas of Limerick, workshops involving people with disabilities, youth and new cultural communities to Limerick. As well as input from the consultation process, the Plan is underpinned by a detailed socio-economic analysis of Limerick and a review of a cross-section of relevant international, national, regional and local policies. The overall aim of the Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan is “to create healthy resilient local communities with good infrastructure and services and a resilient local economy, consolidating successes in recent years, and promoting sustainable economic development”. A further process of presentation and consultation on the new Local Economic and Community Plan to the Elected Members and review by the Regional Assembly will be undertaken in 2024. The Final Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028 is expected to be approved by the Full Council in 2024.

Key Programmes and Funding Streams

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme

The Local Community Development Committee oversaw the delivery of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme. This programme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the European Union. In 2023, the Local Community Development Committee approved payments to the three Local Development Companies contracted to deliver the programme in Limerick – PAUL Partnership in the city/urban Limerick, West Limerick Resources in West Limerick and Ballyhoura Development in East Limerick. All Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set for the three areas in Limerick - urban, east and west Limerick - were met. The programme budget in 2023 was €2,598,398.

The core Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme budget was €2,389,664 with an additional €208,734 provided for services targeted on Ukrainian refugees located in Limerick. The current Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme came to an end in 2023. In the second half of the year, a process of tendering for the new Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme for the period 2024-2028 was completed by Limerick Community Development Committee. The value of the Limerick Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2024-2028 Framework Contract for the five year period is some €19.2 million. In December 2023, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme contracts were awarded to West Limerick Resources CLG for West Limerick rural area, to Ballyhoura Development CLG for East Limerick rural area and to the PAUL Partnership Limerick CLG for Limerick Urban area.

Limerick Traveller Community Development Programme

Under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme in urban Limerick, Travellers were identified as a priority group for support. Significant progress was made by Traveller women in the city, supported by the PAUL Partnership and Exchange House (national Traveller advocacy and support organisations) in creating a structure to represent all Traveller communities, across the various Traveller Halting sites in Limerick city and suburbs. In April 2023, the Minister for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien, TD, formally launched the Traveller Community Development Project, with a reception hosted at Our Lady of Lourdes Community Centre. Under this project, funding for Traveller workers and associated costs/expenses for a period of three years was approved by the Department of Rural and Community Development. The Traveller Community Development Project continues to receive support from Exchange House and the PAUL Partnership, with these organisations working collaboratively with the Council.

Rathkeale Together

In Rathkeale linked to the large concentration of the Traveller population living in the town, a specific programme is in place to build cohesion and the relationships between the Traveller and the settled community. The current programme, Rathkeale Together, follows on from an earlier project, the Rathkeale Pre-cohesion Project, delivered with philanthropic funding and subsequently funded by the Department of Justice and the Department of Rural and Community Development. Rathkeale Together is delivered under the management of West Limerick Resources, with specific funding provided for a worker to support the Traveller and settled communities working together.

Empowering Communities

In recognition of the extreme deprivation experienced in specific urban areas across the state, the Department of Rural and Community Development made funding available for a specific programme, Empowering Communities, to support participation in community and civic activities and work to empower such communities. An Empowering Communities programme was approved in the latter part of 2022 for St. Mary's Park, Limerick City with the Department of Rural and Community Development working with the Council and the PAUL Partnership to agree the objectives, work programme and outcomes. The purpose is to build community capacity, harnessing community spirit in the area. Funding was provided for a dedicated worker, employed by and under the management of the PAUL Partnership, to work with local residents, using a community development approach. Following the first year of operation (2022-2023) and successes arising from it including community events and significant community participation, the Department of Rural and Community Development approved funding for the programme to continue into 2024.

European Union LEADER Programme

The delivery of the European Union LEADER Programme (€14.233 million) advanced in 2023 and applications from various community and specific interest groups were evaluated and considered. The Local Community Development Committee, as the Local Action Group for the LEADER Programme completed the full allocation of the 2014 -2022 LEADER Programme Budget. In 2022, the Local Community Development Committee approved 13 Projects to the value of €351,849.74.

Community Support Fund

In 2023, the Local Community Development Committee secured funding under the Community Support Fund which provides funding to community groups to support groups in disadvantaged areas. The purpose of this scheme was to assist groups/organisations with grants towards their non-pay running costs and grants towards necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities and purchasing of equipment.

The Local Community Development Committee on behalf of the Department and of Rural Community Development allocated funding under the Community Support Fund during 2023. The Local Community Development Committee approved 117 applications to the value of €354,098.00 broken down as follows.

- Metropolitan Area – 29 Applications Approved
€117,696.04
- West Limerick – 52 Applications Approved
€119,230.85
- East Limerick – 36 Applications Approved
€117,171.11

The majority of the projects funded were completed in 2023 and contributed significantly in supporting communities particularly in disadvantaged areas with running costs such as utility bills, insurance costs whilst projects improving buildings and facilities were also completed.

Community Recognition Fund

At the start of 2023, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced the launch of the first ever Community Recognition Fund. This fund is targeted at projects in communities hosting beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection applicants in recognition of their contribution to the emergency response.

In May, the Department of Rural and Community Development approved €1,389,505.00 for the delivery of 90 projects throughout Limerick. These projects were recommended to the Department by Limerick City and County Council from across the city and county, based on direct engagement with local communities. Proposals were required to be consistent with the Local Economic and Community Plan for Limerick.

Over 60% of the projects have been delivered in 2023, with the rest of the projects ongoing. The projects have contributed significantly to local communities and include the upgrade sports facilities, improvement of community centres, such as energy efficiency upgrades, purchasing of equipment for festivals, clubs and community projects and the construction of a childcare facility among other projects.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

The Public Participation Network Secretariat had seven meetings in 2023 with two plenary meetings held. There are now 200 Public Participation Network member groups across the Municipal Districts and a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the Council and Limerick Public Participation Network.

Public Participation Network Limerick Launched their "Community Voice" Podcast in 2023. This series consisted of a seven episode series of podcasts focusing on the fantastic work being done in the community/ voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors of Limerick.

Public Participation Network Limerick Partnered with University of Limerick Engage to deliver the University of Limerick Citizen's Assembly. This initiative was a collaboration between UL Engage, Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Public Participation Network, Limerick Community Education Network, and Limerick Comhairle na nÓg. Its goal was to provide a public focus on sustainability and SDG focused actions from the University of Limerick that can have a positive impact for Limerick in addition to providing a public and inclusive forum to share collective knowledge and experience about the kind of projects that the University of Limerick should support. The winning four projects were funded to be delivered within communities in Limerick.

The Public Participation Network Limerick launched their 5-year Strategic Plan; which was adopted at their end of year plenary meeting on the 7th of December 2023. This strategy will guide the priorities, vision and Work plans of Public Participation Network Limerick in the years to come. It will ensure that the voices of all Member Groups are heard and that we will increase our influence in policy decisions at local government level.

The vision of the Public Participation Network Limerick is that it will remain an effective link through which Limerick City and County Council connects with the community and voluntary sector and vice versa and a route for member groups to receive information regarding capacity building, funding, and consultation opportunities. The Strategic Plan will be an essential reference for Staff and the Secretariat going forward.

The Public Participation Network Linkage Groups continued to support the Public Participation Network Reps on the various committees by meeting in advance of committee meetings to discuss matters relevant to their respective committees and give feedback on previous meetings.

Community Playgrounds

Limerick City and County Council continues to provide operational support to 19 Community Playgrounds. Limerick City and County Council also provided financial support to a number of playgrounds in December 2023 to carry out minor repair works to the Community Playgrounds.

Awards Programmes

The Directorate coordinated and supported community groups to enter national award programmes that acknowledge and showcase the efforts and quality of their activities to improve quality of life and social community and economic benefits to their local communities.

Pride of Place

Pride of Place is an all-island competition run by Irish Public Bodies and Cooperation Ireland and run in conjunction with Local Authorities north and south. It aims to recognise and celebrate the contributions that communities make to society along with generating awareness, respect and inclusion for every facet of society. Limerick has an impressive record of achievement in this competition. Limerick community groups triumphed at the Pride of Place community awards on 10 November 2023 at a gala ceremony in Armagh City.

- Killeedy Community Projects took joint first place in the Village - population between 0-500 category, with judges particularly impressed with the efforts they saw to regenerate the area;
- Southill HUB came runner up in the Urban Neighbourhood/Village with a population under 3000 category;
- CareBright, Bruff, Limerick, received a nomination and were represented on the night.



Pride of Place Killeedy Community Project – Killeedy Eco Park



Pride of Place Southill HUB



Pride of Place Carebright, Bruff

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Healthy Limerick was successful in its submission under the Healthy Ireland Fund for the period 2023 – 2025. Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. Healthy Ireland takes a 'whole of government' and 'whole of society' approach. The Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 provides a roadmap towards good health, access to services, healthy environments and the promotion of resilience in a manner that leaves no one behind.

Relaunch of the Not Around Us Campaign

This campaign was relaunched by the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, on 31 May marking World No Tobacco Day. The campaign aims to de-normalise smoking and vaping for the next generation. The campaign was first created, established and launched here in Limerick in 2019. Given the prevalence of smoking is on the rise again (18% nationally) and vaping especially among young people and in schools is a big issue at the moment, and the recent changes around legislation it was deemed timely to re-launch and re-energise the campaign. A QR code linking to a newly created partner pack was developed increasing the accessibility of the campaign. The signage continues to be distributed internally within the Council and to external stakeholders and will target both primary and post primary schools.



Healthy Ireland Not Around Us Campaign launched by the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley, in conjunction with the Health Service Executive

Migrant Health and Wellbeing

A pilot event, a migrant women's health fair took place on 16 June, in Limerick City Centre. The aim of the event was to create an environment which provides access to information and services that support healthier lifestyle choices, to inform and direct members of the migrant community to existing services, and to scope out health and wellbeing needs of migrant communities. Invites were sent to all communities including international protection and Ukrainian refugees.

The project is a collaboration between Limerick City and County Programmes (Healthy Limerick, INTEgreat), PAUL Partnership, community partners and statutory agencies. A further Health and Wellbeing Fair was held in the Southcourt Hotel in October and this event was expanded to include interactive workshops provided by Gender, Orientation, Sexual Health, HIV (GOSHH), The Women's Collective, ABC Startright, The World Academy of Music and Dance, and Limerick Sports Partnership.



Healthy Ireland, INTEgreat and participants



Healthy Ireland, Health Migrant Health and Wellbeing Stands and participants

Healthy Ireland Ukrainian Refugee Fund

Health and Wellbeing focused activities were organised for Ukrainian refugees across Limerick City and County. These activities are funded by the Healthy Ireland Ukrainian Refugee Fund. Some key projects included:

- Dance workshops throughout Limerick City and County provided by Dance Limerick.
- A day trip to the Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch was organised over the Easter break. Individuals travelled from various sites across west Limerick with a large concentration of people from the accommodation centre in Clarina, who were newly arrived at the time.
- Art and Craft workshops run over the summer months of June, July and August for adults and children, facilitated by the Hunt Museum. The workshops proved very popular.
- A six week pilot migrant cookery programme was facilitated by Limerick Food Partnership (LFP) in late summer in the Lord Edward St kitchen. Women from accommodation in the Travel Lodge batch cooked meals and brought their meals away in a storage containers to be stored in freezers within their accommodation. Following the success of this programme, LFP recently starting cooking with another group from this accommodation centre on Saturday mornings with Midwest Simon providing supervision in Tait House kitchen.
- Limerick Opera Festival hosted an evening of opera and contemporary music, featuring Irish and Ukrainian performers in the Abundant Life Centre, Henry St, Limerick in November. The event was opened by the Deputy Mayor, translation was provided by a member of Limerick City and County Council staff.



Healthy Ireland, Dance Limerick – Movement Classes



Healthy Ireland, Limerick Opera Festival

Limerick Food Partnership

After a successful recruitment process a new Limerick Food Partnership coordinator is in position three days a week since November. The post is funded by Healthy Ireland, the Redemptorists and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. This position will largely be focused on collating localised data on food poverty. It is proposed to establish a research sub group to oversee this project. Nine, Healthy Food Made Easy (HFME) Programmes were delivered by Limerick Food Partnership outside of Sláintecare areas in 2023.

Social Health and Education Project

The Social Health and Education Project programme is well-established in Limerick and Healthy Ireland funding has led to the expansion of the programme. The programme aims to achieve improved health and well-being for our communities through the delivery of community-led supports in the form of advocacy, counselling, community organisation supports and improved interagency approaches at local level. Programme delivery got underway in the autumn. Five programmes commenced in County Limerick. These programmes directly support actions within Connecting for Life – Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2024.

Healthy Limerick collaboration with Limerick Sports Partnership

Healthy Limerick collaborated with Limerick Sports Partnership in the provision of funding toward inclusion programmes targeting people with disabilities across Limerick city and county. Some programmes that commenced in September included: Inclusive Rowing at Castleconnell Boat Club and Adapted Physical Activity Programme Brothers of Charity Rathkeale, and Adapted Physical Activity Programme Daughters of Charity, Lisnagry. A migrant specific badminton programme, also ran in Limerick City Centre.



Rathkeale Adapted Physical Activity Class

GAA Wellbeing Boards

The prototype of the GAA Health and Wellbeing Boards was launched at a GAA Health and Wellbeing evening hosted by GAA Healthy Clubs. All Healthy Clubs (15 + one for the Gaelic Grounds) within Limerick City and County will receive a Health and Wellbeing board. The Boards contain numbers to crisis services both nationally and locally. The project is collaboration between the GAA, Limerick Sports Partnership, Mental Health Ireland, the Health Service Executive's Office of Suicide Prevention and Healthy Limerick.

Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme

Slaintecare Healthy Communities, Limerick, has successfully secured €75,000 Department of Health Seed Fund for 2023. This place-based initiative is part of the broader Healthy Ireland programme, aiming to reduce health inequalities across the country. Launched in 2021, the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme operates in 19 community areas, where health inequalities are most prevalent, using an evidence-based approach to address local needs and building upon existing health and wellbeing programmes. The programme creates a collaborative platform for agencies and government departments including residents, the Health Service Executive, and community partners. Its primary objective is to work collectively towards enhancing the long-term health and wellbeing of Healthy Community residents.

Enhancement Fund Projects

The Enhancement Fund supports infrastructural projects aimed at improving health and wellbeing in Sláintecare Healthy Communities. With a €250,000 fund awarded to Limerick City and County Council, the fund has been allocated to the delivery of three Greenspace projects within the programme area, work is ongoing to complete these projects, in Garryowen, Ballynanty and Johnsgate, works includes enhancements to greenspace to deliver enhanced recreational amenities and facilities.

Healthy Relationships

This project supports young women and men in Southill by addressing consent, agency, and healthy relationships by fostering a culture where they can challenge sexism and advocate for themselves. The goal is to initiate similar movements in other Healthy Community areas, addressing gender inequality faced by Youth Workers in daily conversations with young people. The project includes a Train the Trainer component to replicate the programme in other youth work settings.

Move Well Physical Activity for Health

This programme targets health inequalities by promoting physical activity and improving the overall well-being of individuals with chronic conditions in Limerick's Healthy Community areas. Stakeholders, including Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Sports Partnership, and other health organisations were selected strategically based on their shared values and expertise. Training staff to supervise and implement these tailored programmes is a key aim to ensure longevity and sustainability of the programme. Engagement and consultation involved strategic stakeholder selection and ensuring alignment with Healthy Communities' framework. The project will require upskilling Limerick Sports Partnership staff with the British cardiac exercise-training program (BACPR). The programme is ongoing.

Venture Out

The Venture Out project encourages the participation of Healthy Community residents in taking part in targeted activities which will improve their overall health and wellbeing. Through engagement with those, most vulnerable living in Healthy Community areas a need was identified from people who have not engaged in a social/physical activity for a long time which leads to isolation, loneliness and inactivity. They face multiple barriers which prevent them from accessing supports and activities in their communities, including a lack of confidence, fear of commitment to longer term activity. Engaging in taster sessions in small group settings allows people to try something new in a safe structured way and builds confidence, making it more likely that they will engage in activities, groups, and classes in their own community.

Period Poverty

The Period Poverty scheme has extended its reach since last year in collaboration with Sláintecare Healthy Communities to Limerick City and County Council public bathrooms and community partners in Healthy Community areas. The initiative has been successfully implemented in locations throughout Limerick. The overall response to the programme has been very positive, reflecting its significance and positive impact on the communities most in need. The project is ongoing in all of the original sites.

Autism-Friendly Limerick

In 2023, twenty-six sessions of Autism Awareness training were delivered to Local Authority staff, elected members and members of the Public Participation Network, with further sessions proposed to take place in 2024. As part of the initiative, the libraries were allocated funding to purchase sensory equipment for their branches such as sensory mood light tables, liquid floor tiles and numerous fidget toys and sets. Funding was also provided for both the St. Patrick's Day

festival and Riverfest to provide an area designated as an Autism friendly space in conjunction with ASD Ireland. At a community level, the Council engaged with West Limerick Resources who have initiated some Autism friendly work in West Limerick. Funding was provided to West Limerick Resources to purchase a sensory room package for St. Ita's Hall in Abbeyfeale which is currently being renovated.

Comhairle Na nÓg

Limerick City and County Council continued to support Comhairle na nÓg in 2023. Comhairle na nÓg worked collaboratively with various stakeholders on their chosen theme of mental health. The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, opened Limerick Comhairle na nÓg annual youth conference on the 30 November. Over 120 young people from Limerick attended on the day to voice their opinions on the issues that are important to them and to potentially become new members. The delegates at this year's Youth Conference chose the issue of 'Vaping, Drugs and Smoking' as the theme to address in 2024.



Annual Youth Conference 2023 opened by The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell.

Lifelong Learning Limerick

The Learning Limerick Steering Group is a partnership forum that brings together sectoral networks and partnerships and is committed to creating a culture of learning in Limerick. It is made up of statutory, local development, business, community, and voluntary sector partners. Learning Limerick's primary role is to promote the value of learning in Limerick, across all stages of the life cycle, to share information that enhances members and partners' organisational learning, and to support sectoral networks and groups in their efforts to engage communities in positive learning experiences.

The launch of the 13th annual Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival took place in Istabraq Hall, City Hall in March. The event was a precursor to what was a very successful weeklong run of events that spanned a variety of topics and sectors. This year's theme 'Come learn with me in 2023' saw a number of events taking place ranging from Art, Cookery, Early Childhood Development, Wellness Clinics and Language Taster Sessions.

Learning Limerick hosted a Shared Island “Learning City” exchange programme in May 2023. The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Francis Foley also welcomed delegates to the two day conference at the Strand Hotel.



Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2023

LIMERICK INTEGRATION PROGRAMME

Ukrainian Community Response Forum

Limerick Ukrainian Community Response Forum has been meeting fortnightly throughout 2023. The role of the Forum is to facilitate the coordination of support services and to coordinate the community-lead response in the provision of assistance to displaced Ukrainians in Limerick. The Forum, chaired by the Chief Executive of Limerick City and County Council, has a membership of over 22 organisations across the state, private, community and voluntary sectors. The forum has ensured that the required supports are delivered in a co-ordinated manner and identified gaps in service provision are addressed where possible.

EU INTEgreat Project

The EU INTEgreat project co-funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund involves the participation of seven partners with cross-cutting complementary skills from five European countries: Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Spain, reflecting a range of geographic and socio-cultural conditions. The project aims to build a stronger integration strategy and ecosystem for migrants and asylum seekers in Europe.

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council with our local partner Doras continues to work on the implementation of Limerick pilot activities. The pilots align to the Integration Strategy Framework in Limerick Urban Area through a series of activities in four main areas: healthcare, employment, social cohesion, capacity building and training of both migrants and local citizens.

Main Council lead activities included:

- Establishment of Limerick Migrant Integration Forum - consultation meetings with migrants took place in March and June and the official inaugural meeting was organised in November. Currently the Forum has over 40 members from over 20 diverse backgrounds. The main aim of the forum is to empower migrant communities to collaborate, network and represent migrant voice towards achieving social inclusion, integration and participation in the decision-making process.



Migrant Forum

- Information Hub for New Communities making Limerick their new home is available on Limerick.ie website. The page includes information on: housing and accommodation, childcare and schools, health services, further education and training, employment and more. Information is provided in English and will be available in Ukrainian.
- Migrant Health and Wellbeing Fairs and Arts and Crafts classes- are a great example of collaboration to deliver the best services and to maximize resources available within Limerick City and County Council. Both activities were delivered as a partnership between Healthy Limerick and INTEgreat



Migrant Well Being Event

- Africa Day was held on 28 May at The Limerick Milk Market. It was a family fun day of traditional African music and dance performances, a fashion show and food sampling which allowed participants and attendees to gain a richer understanding of the cultural significance of African and other new communities in Limerick. African indigenous arts and crafts, drumming, storytelling, face painting and clown appearances were also part of the activities.



Africa Day 2023

AGE FRIENDLY LIMERICK

Limerick City and County Council continued to support the Age Friendly Limerick Programme throughout 2023. Liz Stanley and Paddy Hyland were elected Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Old persons Executive by means of a postal ballot.

Some key Age Friendly events include:

- The Limerick Age Friendly programme and three Old person Executive members attended the Age Friendly Ireland National Older Peoples Convention in the Rose Hotel Tralee.
- Age Friendly Limerick were proud to support our Age Friendly Alliance partner An Garda Síochána for National Community Engagement Week by loaning out one of our Property Marking machine. A number of property making events were held at Dromcollogher and Kilmallock Marts and also at Old Pallas Co-Op.
- In June 2023, Limerick Older Peoples Executive in collaboration with the Tourism promotion section conducted a familiarisation trip to the Limerick Greenway to ascertain insights and views of our Old Peoples executive members on making the greenway age friendly.
- In June, Age Friendly Limerick in partnership with St. Munchin's Community Centre, held an event to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This is a significant event, which occurs every year on the 15 June, which is dedicated to raising awareness about the alarming issue of elder abuse. Headquarters at City Hall, Merchant's Quay also lit up purple in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.
- In November, Age Friendly were delighted to attend the Dementia Conference hosted by Family Carers Ireland at the Strand Hotel.



Limerick Age Friendly Older Peoples Executive members conduct mini walkability audit at Carebright, Bruff.



Limerick Age Friendly Greenway Familiarisation Trip in June 2023



Community Property Marking Event May 2023

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

National Tidy Towns

In 2023, the Tidy Towns competition saw judges return to carry out onsite visits to the fifty-six Limerick entrants to the competition. Adare Tidy Towns were awarded a gold medal and Ardpatrick, Castleconnell, Galbally, Limerick City and Newcastle West were awarded bronze medals in the national competition. The Limerick County Awards were; Adare 1st, Galbally 2nd, Ardpatrick 3rd. Glenroe were awarded the Endeavour Award. In addition, Adare won the Circular Economy Award, were Highly Commended in the Young Person in Tidy Towns Award, and Ballysteen Askeaton Natural Heritage won the Waters and Community Award.

Going for Gold

Kilfinane took first place in the Tidy Towns Category of the Limerick Going for Gold Competition sponsored by the JP McManus Charitable Foundation and organised by Limerick City and County Council. The following were also successful, Askeaton 2nd, Bruff 3rd, Athea 4th and Kiltelly 5th.

In the Limerick in Bloom Category Kilmeedy was the overall winner, Ardpatrick 2nd and Meadowbrook 3rd. Garrienderk and Carrigerry were highly commended. In the Residential Estates category Pallasgreen were awarded first prize and Woodlawn awarded 2nd place with Thomondgate coming in 3rd.

The Reuse Award sponsored by Limerick City and County Council were awarded jointly to Taithouse Community Enterprises, Southill - ReLove Paint, Castleconnell Tidy Towns - Herbicide prevention and Limerick Gateway to Education – Circular Fashion and reuse.

The Limerick Going for Gold Judges Award went to Castleconnell, Garryowen, Knocklong, Newcastle West and Kings Island Community Allotments.

The Limerick Going for Gold Best Front Garden Category is sponsored by the Parkway Shopping Centre and was won by John Nash Charity, Henry Street with Anne Lynch, Murroe 2nd Benn and Anne O'Sullivan, Kilmallock in 3rd place.



Team Limerick Clean Up volunteers Good Friday 2023

Team Limerick Clean Up (TLC8)

For Limerick City and County Council Team Limerick Clean Up is a unique collaboration with the general public, public agencies and private partners in terms of an environmental countywide initiative. The collaborative nature of Team Limerick Clean Up's with stakeholders including the citizens of Limerick, the National Schools around the county, along with key stakeholders the McManus Benevolent Fund and Mr. Binman, it promotes sustainable environmental goals and lifelong learning in relation to the environment particularly in schools.

To date the overall participation figures are close to the 122,000 mark with record numbers registering in 2023 and include volunteers from all walks of life including schools, colleges, sporting organisations/clubs, community groups, residential groups, businesses, charities, nursing homes and well-known local faces. Official media partners include Limerick Leader, Limerick Post, Live 95, I Love Limerick and ELive.

Over 21,500 volunteers took part in TLC8 made up of 568 groups, including 85 schools and 56 businesses. Over 59 tonnes of litter was collected, which is equivalent to approximately 2,400 household wheelie bins. Team Limerick Clean Up contributed significantly at local level on the ground to the delivery of a number of the UN Sustainable Goals.

Waste Prevention

There were a number of initiatives facilitated under Waste Prevention including three Upcycling Workshops with the Revamp Tramp for the general public one each in Kilmallock, Limerick City and Newcastle West during Life Long Learning week. There were three Sustainable Gardening Workshops with Aoife Munn during 2023 in Limerick City, Kilmallock and Croom. In addition the Environment Awareness Officer gave a number of presentations on managing waste and recycling, including a Christmas Event in conjunction with the Council's new Community Climate Action Officer and the Limerick City Library.

Limerick City and County Council's Food Waste Recycling / Climate Action had a stand at the Cappamore Show on 19 August. Four hundred Food waste recycling kits and 200 reusable cups were distributed with an excellent level of engagement from people on the day. Limerick City and County Council also hosted a Sustainability Tent at the Limerick Show on 27 August. Circa 4,000 plus people were engaged with across the sustainability stand during the day. 1,500 food waste recycling kits, 300 reusable cups and 500 battery-recycling boxes were distributed on the day.



Mayor tried out new water fountain in Kilfinane

Green Schools and other campaigns

Over 60 teachers from schools across Limerick participated in the Limerick City and County Council Annual Green School Seminar online. Thirty-five schools renewed their flags over a range of themes including energy, water, travel, biodiversity and global citizenship. A total of 154 schools are registered for the National An Taisce Green Schools programme. The PickerPals (managed by VOICE Ireland) initiative continues to grow in popularity with 51 Limerick Primary Schools Participating. In addition six Limerick Schools are participating in the Climate Literacy Programme facilitated by Education for Sustainability.

An Anti-Dog Litter Awareness campaign along with an Anti-dumping campaign was also undertaken in 2023, which included digital campaigns, and local radio adverts. Limerick City and County Council continued its bronze level membership of Leave No Trace. The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, and the Chair of Limerick City Centre Tidy Towns, Helen O'Donnell launched IBEC's National Gum Litter task forces, "Chew'n Out– Bin your Gum When You're Done" campaign in Limerick City centre.

Fairtrade

Hundreds of pupils from across Limerick participated in the Limerick's annual schools Fairtrade Fortnight Poster Competition. This initiative highlights support for the people who grow our food - people who are often exploited and underpaid. During Fairtrade Fortnight a Fairtrade International Ambassador, Innocent Owomuhangi, a worker on the Kayonza Growers Tea Factory Limited, Uganda visited Mary Immaculate College, Newcastle west and Bruff. In November, Limerick City celebrated its 18th year as a Fairtrade City with Limerick's annual Fairtrade School's Christmas Card Competition with the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell in attendance.



"Chew'n Out– Bin your Gum When You're Done"

Bin Waiver Scheme

Approximately 3,600 Waivers were issued to applicants under the Bin Waiver Scheme in 2023, which was funded by Limerick City and County Council.

CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

LIBRARY SERVICES

Limerick City and County Library continues to create innovative and resilient services to build on the core library offering of reading, literacy and access to opportunities through lifelong learning and cultural experiences. Over the course of 2023, Library staff successfully delivered a suite of programmes via the network of 16 libraries, the mobile library service and school delivery service.

With over 421,000 visits to libraries, 437,233 library loans and 100,000 e-book loans in 2023, Limerick libraries continue to positively impact the wellbeing of our communities and remain one of the most widely used services of the local authority.



Refurbished Library at Newcastle West

Inclusive Libraries

In 2023 substantial progress was made to achieve on the aim of Library's Development Plan 2021 – 2025: People – Place – Platform to offer attractive and welcoming spaces where people can reflect, connect and learn.

Stage 2 detailed design plans for the flagship City Library at the Opera Square development at Rutland Street were submitted to Department of Rural and Community Development in May of this year in collaboration with Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development Company.

The major refurbishment of Newcastle West Library was completed in 2023, achieving an ambitious remodel of the Library, both internally and externally which has enhanced facilities at the Library and will enable the library team to deliver innovative customer focused services to the community. The library service continues to improve and maintain the fabric of our library network with a rolling programme of improvements across libraries in the city and county.



The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, Larysa Gerasko, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Ireland and Brenda Frawley, Senior Executive Librarian at the launch of the Ukrainian Bookshelf at City Library.

Diversity and Inclusion

In October the Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland, Larysa Garasko launched the Ukrainian Bookshelf, a collection of material for both young people and adults. The Ukrainian Embassy generously donated this curated selection of Ukrainian books spanning various genres. The Ukrainian Bookshelf at Limerick City Library is the first to be established outside of Dublin.

The principal of diversity and inclusion is one of the keystones of public library collections and programmes. We endeavour to reflect our diverse communities and promote integration by enabling individuals of all ages to access opportunities for reading, learning and cultural experiences, which are inclusive by nature and design. "Scéalta agus Ránnta" at Rathkeale, Dooradoyle, Kilmallock and City Library is a bi-lingual event for young children. "Cuenta Cuentos" a bi-lingual Spanish /English story time runs at City Library. Festive Folk Tales at Dooradoyle, Kilmallock and Watch House Cross Libraries focuses on seasonal stories from all over the world. Book launches during the year include Cnuasach Focal Paddy Fennessy – the Lost Language of the Ballyhouras edited by Evelyn Fennessy and Róisín Ní Ghaibhí at Kilmallock Library and local Limerick Polish author Ewa Bilicka launched her second Polish language novel at City Library.



Magic Table and Interactive Screen at refurbished Newcastle West Library

Sensory and Autism Friendly Libraries

We continue to develop autism and neuro diverse friendly services throughout the library network. The Library successfully secured funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund in July to operate the Magic Table, an interactive light projector game at Newcastle West Library and Kilmallock Libraries. This facility adds to the existing offering of the Sensory suite at Watch House Cross Library and Sensory Pod at Abbeyfeale Library. This aspect of the library service has had a hugely positive response and reinforces the vision of our libraries as neuro diverse friendly, welcoming and inclusive places of interest for all.

Age Friendly Digital Skills and Tablet Lending

Limerick City and County Library were delighted to partner with the Vodafone Ireland Foundation to pilot a tablet tuition and loan scheme for older people in November. The objective of the scheme is to eliminate barriers and to enable older people to access the digital world. Nokia T20 Tablet devices are available for loan from the Library. This scheme is targeted at older people who have the option of taking part in a four week tuition course funded through

Europe Direct or to follow the Hi Digital self - directed learning option which the Vodafone Ireland Foundation have developed with older people in mind. The Nokia T20 Tablet is a further addition to the suite of devices available for loan to enable older people to develop digital skills and literacy.



Nokia Tablet device available for loan at Limerick Libraries

Europe Direct

The Europe Direct Information Centre at City Library holds a range of information on the operation of the European Union. The highlights of this year's programme include the Europe Day Eurovision talk on 9 May when Dr. Aileen Dillane from University of Limerick Music Department charted the evolution of the Eurovision Song Contest in tandem with development of the European Union. In the annual Europe Direct Soapbox competition, at Royal College of Physicians Dublin, regional winners Erin Hayes, Gaelcoláiste Luimnigh and Molly Flanagan, Ardscoil Mhuire represented Limerick Europe Direct with Molly taking an impressive second place in the over 17 category.

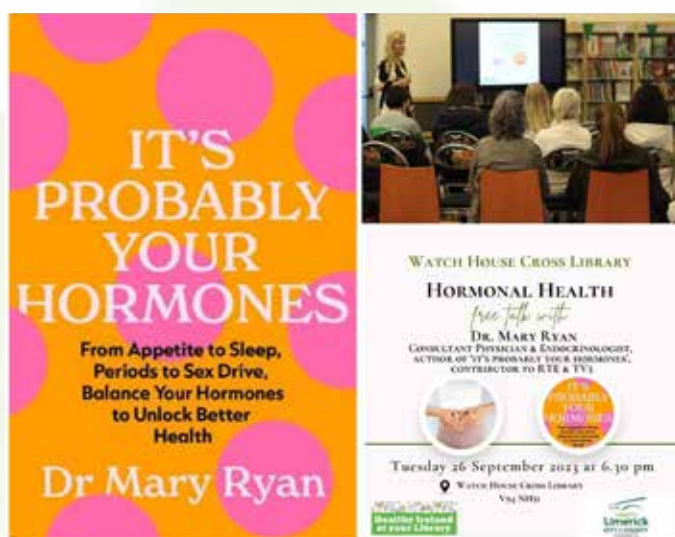


Erin Hayes and classmates from Gaelcoláiste Luimnigh at the Europe Direct National Soapbox Final

Healthy Ireland at Your Library

In 2023, The Healthy Ireland at Your Library programme at Limerick Libraries demonstrated continued growth, delivering a total of 45 in-branch events throughout the year, with over 1,000 attendees. These events were strategically targeted towards the promotion of health and wellbeing in our communities. The event topics spanned many diverse subjects, including nutrition for children, meal prep for families, Tai Chi, breast cancer awareness, yoga, the importance of exercise for children, women's

health, mindfulness, and transitioning to secondary school. Additional book titles were distributed to all library branches, enhancing the existing stock of health-related information. Limerick Libraries collaborated with community partners, including the Limerick Mental Health Association, Mental Health Ireland, Men's Sheds Ireland, Women's Sheds, Limerick Sports Partnership, Breast Cancer Ireland, as well as local schools and nursing homes in Limerick. Department of Rural and Community Development funding facilitated the acquisition of wipeable/washable portable seating sets designed specifically for children, enhancing the overall accessibility and functionality of library spaces.



Digital and Literacy Supports

Limerick Libraries offers access to a suite of digital literacy supports both via device lending and access to software licenses. In 2023 the library service expanded the range of supports available to include the following elements.

- TTRS Touch Type Read Spell is a multisensory, structured online course which assists students to learn at their own pace. In addition to developing typing skills, TTRS is designed to benefit students of all ages in particular those who experience challenges in reading spelling or writing.
- Reading Eggs is an App to develop the reading skill and support core literacy teaching with a focus on phonics and sight words. The App is designed for children from age 3 upwards to become independent readers.
- C-Pen reader is a portable, pocket-sized device that reads text out aloud with an Irish accented digital voice. The C-Pens are useful for people with visual impairment, dyslexia and other challenges. Seven C-Pens are available across our Library network.
- Audio Magazine, Fact Factory is a magazine for primary school age children with assistive technology (C Pen Reader) that aims to benefit visually impaired children, children with dyslexia and those who struggle to read. The products have been developed with input from the NCBI National Council for the Blind in Ireland. Our aim is to ensure accessibility for children with additional needs. This magazine is also available in Ukrainian.
- Acorn Tablet and Nokia T20 Tablet devices are targeted at enabling older users to access the digital world more easily.

Families and Children

Right to Read is the national initiative to promote literacy and reading development for people of all ages. This includes national seasonal programmes specifically targeted to promote the joy of reading for children – Spring into Story time, Summer Stars, Children's Book Festival and Family Time at your Library. This year the programme also included the Little Library Bags initiative in collaboration with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy.

- Spring into Story time - With a total number of 112 events with 2,357 participants in the month of April, Spring into Story time programme was very successful
- Summer Stars - The annual Summer Stars promotion took place in all our libraries throughout the months of July and August. Summer Stars is all about the joy of reading. It is not competitive and every child who joins the promotion and borrows books over the holidays is considered to have taken part. A total of 82 events, with 2,520 participants were delivered with 1,538 certificates awarded this year to every child who took part in the programme.



Emily O'Grady and Lisa Cahill from Our Lady's Abbey NS Adare launching Summer Stars

- Little Library Bag - This wonderful initiative is a collaboration between libraries and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy. Little Library Bags were given to 1,788 children who started school this year. The Little Library Bag contains books on starting school, making friends and being comfortable to be yourself. Children are able to keep their books and book bag along with their very own library card and wallet.
- Children's Book Festival and Family Time at the Library are held during the months of October and December. These national programmes are focused on sharing the enjoyment of books and reading among children and families. The Library team together with writers and illustrators bring a programme of workshops, writer visits, talks and conversations to libraries and schools throughout the city and county. Children's Book Festival comprised a total of 90 events with 2,637 children attending. Family Time at the Library ran throughout the month of December with 36 events in total.

- Online Services - The range and variety of reading opportunities and recreational activities and information sources available through Limerick Libraries continued to grow in 2023. The uptake of this offer continues to grow apace. The range of material available directly at home or on the mobile device in your pocket includes:
 - E-Books, E- Audio;
 - Digital Comics and Graphic Novel;
 - Online Courses;
 - National and International Newspaper;
 - Popular and Special Interest Magazines;
 - Limerick Studies Online.

E-books and E-audio – online books and audio – Borrowbox	100,368 loans
National and International Newspapers – Press reader	67,444 issues
Popular and Special Interest Magazines – Libby Overdrive	22, 133 issues
Language Learning Courses	71,101 circulations
Online Courses	4,225 lessons viewed

Social Media

Our social media presence continues to grow across all platforms in 2023. We have seen wonderful engagements across all platforms. The spread of platforms enables us to broaden our reach across the generations. Much of our content has been reposted and reaches a global audience. This year a special recognition was given to the 'Wes Anderson' style video which was judged a 'Top piece of Engagement' in the #YourCouncilDay campaign on 23 June. This video's reach is over an amazing 6,500 views.

Decade of Centenaries

The Decade of Centenaries programme in Limerick for this final year of the commemorations was varied in form, with exhibitions and publications to seminars and theatrical presentations. Early in the year, a seminar was held at Kilmallock Library at which several contributors to the book, *The Inevitable Conflict* (published by Limerick City and County Council in 2022) presented papers followed by a round-table discussion on various aspect of the Civil War in Limerick. The 2023 publication, *Histories of Protestant Limerick 1912-1923*, has been warmly welcomed as a significant contribution to consideration of the experience of minority communities in revolutionary Limerick. A new edition of the *Mayors of Limerick* booklet was issued, in collaboration with Limerick Museum, in memory of the 1923 Mayor of Limerick, Bob de Courcy, who spent much of the year of his mayoralty incarcerated. Two major online exhibitions were launched – an *Illustrated Biography of Liam Lynch* (who was from Anglesboro), IRA Chief of Staff for much of the Civil War period, and another celebrating the 1923 accession of Ireland to the League of Nations. The Friction



Fighting Words creative writing workshops at Rathkeale Library with students Sarah William, Tess O'Donovan, Amber Egan, Lily Guinane, Ellen Walsh, Victoria Gammell, Candice Quilligan from St. Anne's National School

of Freedom was a theatrical presentation, written and directed by Clara Planelles, based on the correspondence between Constance Markievicz and Kathleen Clarke. The play was a huge success at Limerick's People's Museum, and plans are underway for further performances in 2024. The year closed with two significant events – a symposium, in collaboration with Limerick Museum on the topic Legacy of a Decade of Commemorations at which seven historians presented papers and reflected on the experience of the Decade and its legacy into the future. The symposium was video-recorded and will be presented as a feature on the



Music Generation workshop of budding musicians at Kilmallock Library

new Limerick Local Studies website, which will be launched in early 2024. The very final event of the Decade of Centenaries in Limerick was the unveiling on 26 December of the memorial information board at Bruff. This event commemorated the events at Caherguillamore on that date in 1921 – one of the most significant events of the entire revolutionary period in Limerick was finally commemorated in a fitting conclusion to the Decade of Centenaries in Limerick.

Visits	421,423
Number of Items Borrowed	438,830
Number of Borrowers	32,197
Number of Events for Adults	1,242
Number of Events for Children	1,866
Public Access PC Use (No of People)	23,391
Number of Public Access PC Hours	15,984

LIMERICK MUSEUM

In 2023, Limerick Museum held sixteen temporary exhibitions, the largest number in its 116 year history.



JP McManus, The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, Zara Power, Assistant Museum Curator at the "Limerick's All-Ireland Glory 1887-2023" exhibition

As part of our continuing commitment to Limerick lace, its history and heritage, the Museum acquired the large and historic Maude Kearney collection of Limerick lace and lace patterns from Maude's granddaughter, Grania McElligott. As a result, Limerick Museum now has the largest collection of Limerick lace in existence. Also, as part of Heritage Week, Limerick Museum hosted a Bring Out Your Lace event organised by the Friends of Lace which included a pop-up exhibition.

The Museum enjoyed significant coverage in local and national media this year. On 25 September, Limerick Museum featured on the television programme Nationwide on RTE 1. The programme was dedicated to Limerick City's 1,100th anniversary and included the Museum's Postcards from Limerick exhibition and the Celebrating 130 Years of Local History. On 14 October, Limerick Museum featured on the television programme The Travel Show, broadcast on Virgin Media 4 and presented by award-winning journalist Ed Finn. On 20 December, Grania McElligott was interviewed on the RTE 1 Nine O'Clock Show by Brendan Courtney in relation to The Art of the Stitch exhibition.

As part of Culture Night, Limerick Museum and Limerick City and County Library collaborated in marking the 26th anniversary of the death of Jim Kemmy (1936-97), former TD, Mayor of Limerick and long-serving member of Limerick City Council. On 22 September, the Library and Museum hosted 'Brick by brick, stone upon stone: Jim Kemmy and the Cultural Life of Limerick city', a lecture by Professor Eoin Devereux of the University of Limerick held in Council Chamber, Merchant's Quay.

Successful collaborations were continued with our existing partners including the Limerick City and County Library, Hunt Museum, St. Mary's Cathedral, the University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College, Friends of Lace, Discover Limerick and the Foynes Flying Boat and Maritime Museum. Limerick Museum sponsored the Crafts Section of Limerick

Show, which was held on 27 August. We also commenced two new collaborations: with Askeaton Civic Trust and with the Thomond Archaeological and Historical Society as joint curators of an exhibition for the first time.

Limerick Museum's social media platforms continued to attract much favourable attention. In July, the number following our twitter account exceeded 2,300 for the first time. On the 14 February, the Assistant Curator displayed Valentine's Day related objects from our collection on the Museum's social media platforms. On the 16 February, an image she posted of two racing cars whizzing around Punch's Cross, Limerick, during the 1936 Grand Prix was viewed by 5,500 social media users. In addition, our Object of the Week every Wednesday continued to be very popular.

LIMERICK CITY GALLERY OF ART

In line with our Arts Council funding Limerick City Gallery of Art mounted six contemporary exhibitions in 2023 reflecting the national significance of this institution. Opening in February a joint exhibition with Mel French and Celine Sheridan was curated by Catherine Marshall. A separate solo exhibition featured Casey Walsh with the first institutional exhibition of her career. In April, we hosted a solo exhibition by Limerick born artist, Diana Copperwhite this was part of a national touring exhibition initiated by Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda. Over the summer, an exhibition, Night Painters, included three Limerick-based artists: Gerry Davis, Stephen Murphy and Paddy Critchley. A round table discussion took place in July with critic, Cristin Leach. The 40th edition of EVA International opened in Limerick City Gallery of Art with 17 international artists exhibiting in the Gallery. Our final exhibitions for 2023 included the Turner nominated artist, George Shaw, Limerick City Gallery of Art is the only gallery in Ireland who will host this significant exhibition. This other exhibition, Screen Dance is a collaboration with Light Moves Festival which celebrates dance on the screen. Each year Limerick City Gallery of Art awards a graduate the opportunity to exhibit a piece of work from their degree show. The 2023 recipient was Eric O' Sullivan whose exhibition, The Site, opened on 18 December.

Permanent Collections Exhibitions

Limerick City Gallery of Art's Permanent Collections featured eight individual exhibitions with over 300 artworks exhibited in the East Gallery and the first floor galleries. These exhibitions show cased artworks by local artist Walter Verling who died in May 2023. These exhibitions continued to show case artworks from the collections on rotation basis highlighting recent loans, donations and acquisitions. These exhibitions were very popular and firm favourites for local, national and international visitors. One exhibition from the Permanent Collections was selected by artist George Shaw which ran in conjunction with his solo exhibition at Limerick City Gallery of Art.

Limerick City Gallery of Art continues to collaborate with local, national and international institutions and organisations in relation to making artworks available for exhibitions and in providing information about the Permanent Collections.



Night Painters Exhibition Opening Night

Donations and Acquisitions to Limerick City Gallery of Art Collections

- Donation by Print Networks Ireland for inclusion in Limerick City Gallery of Art Print collection.
- Donation by Martin Parr of a photographic work featured in retrospective exhibition at Limerick City Gallery of Art in 2020.
- Donation by Samuel Walsh of artwork by Ursula Brick in memoriam.
- Acquisitions of works by artists, Casey Walshe, Celine Sheridan, Mel French, Patrick Critchley, Gerry Davis, Stephen Murphy.

Permanent Collections Loans out

- Loan to the Revenue Commissioners Offices, Limerick of the artwork by Tim Humphreys to celebrate the 30th Anniversary in Sarsfield's House, Limerick.
- Loans to the Model, Home of the Niland Collection Gallery in Sligo with works by Sean Keating and Paul Henry for inclusion in 'Last of the Visioners' curated by Ruth Clinton and Niamh Moriarty.
- Loans from National Collection of Contemporary Drawing were made to Donegal, An Gailearaí: Ionad Áislann and the exhibition was well received.
- Loans of works by Dorothy Cross and Charles Harper to Esker Arts Centre, Tullamore, Co. Offaly for an Arts Council Collection Exhibition, the inaugural exhibition for the new arts centre.
- Loans from the Permanent Collection continued to be featured in the Mayor of Limerick City and County Council's Office.
- Loan from the Permanent Collection continued with the Portrait of Michael Hartnett to Newcastle West Library for the official opening of the Eigse Festival 2023.



40th EVA International - Ireland's Biennial of Contemporary Art

Events/Meetings

Limerick City Gallery of Art continues to provide a meeting place for a number of organisations including University of 3rd Age (U3A), Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD), and Paul Partnership who held a series of art workshops for adults to provide a safe space for adults with mental health issues. Limerick City Gallery of Art was the venue for the annual Helium exhibition that supports children with long-term illnesses. The Wheel, held a one-day workshop supporting the charitable sector. Print Networks Ireland held a one-day meeting with all the Print Studios from Ireland. In September, Limerick City Gallery of Art was the venue for a North/South meeting on approaches to supporting neuro-divergent visitors. Listed below is the complete list:

- Angie Smalis, Performance installation;
- Limerick School of Art and Design Ceramics Exhibition by 3rd Years;
- LCFE Photography Exhibition by students;
- U3A Meetings at Limerick City Gallery of Art – three days a month;
- Helium Workshops;
- Helium Exhibition;
- Limerick Hurling Team Civic reception at Limerick City Gallery of Art;
- Limerick City Gallery of Art Graduated Award – Limerick School of Art and Design –Eric O'Sullivan;
- North/South VAN Workshop at Limerick City Gallery of Art;
- UL, Irish World Academy of Music and Dance workshop at Limerick City Gallery of Art;
- National Print Studios meeting/workshop at Limerick City Gallery of Art;
- Paul Partnership Workshops at Limerick City Gallery of Art;
- The Wheel Workshop at Limerick City Gallery of Art;
- Limerick City Gallery of Art Artists Talks by five for each exhibition at Limerick City Gallery of Art;

Education/Outreach

The Shinnors Scholar is a vital cog in the Limerick City Gallery of Art's operation. This year's recipient, Aoife Doherty, will focus in developing the outreach and education programme. Aoife has made a significant contribution and developed significant partnerships with EDNIP, Dance Limerick, Creative Ireland and Paul Partnership. The programme has a strong focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in line with Arts Council priorities. To date a number of school tours and workshops have been delivered reaching approximately 229 primary school pupils from 11 participating schools. This is a vital part of the Limerick City Gallery of Art's programme as it introduces young children to our exhibitions thereby demystifying a gallery visit, which we hope will remain with them into adulthood.

94,953 people visited the Gallery throughout 2023, which represents a significant increase.

ARTS OFFICE

The adopted Limerick Cultural Strategy Framework 2016-2030 sets out a clear vision and ambition for Limerick.

Creative Ireland

Creative Ireland is an all-government five-year initiative, now extended to 2027, which places culture and creativity at the centre of public policy. The Limerick Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023 – 2027 sets out five strategic priorities for Limerick:

- i. Place – Making;
- ii. Cultural and Creative Careers;
- iii. Connections;
- iv. Change – Making;
- v. Cultural and Creative Economy.

In 2023, the seventh year of the Programme, the Arts Office Team secured the following funding:

Core Grant Funding	€161,290
Cruinniú na nÓg	€30,000
Creativity in Older Age	€45,000
Additional Cruinniú Funding	€8,550
Supplementary Funding	€13,500
Total	€258,340

A new position of Creative Communities Engagement Officer was part funded by Creative Ireland, to support the Creative Ireland co-ordinator and the Arts Office team. In 2023, under the Core Grant Funding Programme there were 89 projects uploaded to the Creative Ireland portal. A selection includes:

Made in Limerick Grants

Made in Limerick Grants were offered as part of the Limerick Creative Ireland Programme to deliver activities taking place in 2023 that support Pillar 2 of the Creative Ireland Programme, Creative Communities. Sixteen Creative Ireland Made in Limerick grant applications were recommended for funding, with a total of €42,000 being awarded to a diverse range of high-quality projects and events.

International Christmas in Limerick

International Christmas and Winter in Limerick began on 25 November with festive storytelling in Kilmallock Library. Events spread across the winter season; across a range of creative art forms; and across the city and county. International Christmas and Winter in Limerick is funded by Creative Ireland and Limerick City and County Council through Creative Ireland Made in Limerick. A celebration of Christmas traditions and non-Christmas winter traditions with our international communities in Limerick. Highlights of the International Christmas programme included, An Afternoon of International Dance with Dance Limerick, featuring Mexican, Chinese, Palestinian, Irish and Indian Dance. Tasting Culture at The Hunt Museum where recipes and stories were swapped. International Winter Celebrations at Limerick City Gallery of Art, a family art workshop inspired by Winter Solstice and traditional winter customs.



International Christmas in Limerick

Youth

Projects that support the ambitions of the Creative Youth Plan published by Creative Ireland include Future Creators and the Emerging Limerick Filmmakers (ELF). 2023 is the fifth developmental year of the project, which specifically supports youth and takes a collaborative interdisciplinary approach.

- **Cruinniú na nÓg 2023** - A National Day of Creativity for children and young people, Cruinniú na nÓg, took place on 10 June. Children and young people were invited to take part in a range of events and workshops delivered by the Arts Office, in partnership with Fresh Film. All events were free of charge, child-centred and activity-based. Limerick City and County Council secured additional funding of €4,550 to deliver events that targeted equality, human rights and diversity as part of Cruinniú na nÓg 2023. The programme was delivered in partnership with the Library Service, Hunt Museum, Music Generation, Irish Chamber Orchestra Youth Orchestra, Emerging Limerick Filmmakers, King's Island Lego Club, the Limerick and Clare Local Creative Youth Partnership and Glórach Theatre Abbeyfeale to deliver a wide ranging and exciting programme for the day! Limerick also engaged in several national youth arts initiatives including Circus Explored, Youth Theatre Ireland Taster workshops, Rap Music Workshops with Rhyme Island and This Is Art, a national art competition. As well as, Shadow Animation @ the Ark UHL and partner event workshops with Ukrainian teenagers.
- **This is Art** - This is Art, a young people's art competition organised by RTÉ and the Creative Ireland Programme, was held in conjunction with Cruinniú na nÓg and a selection of work was chosen. Celebrating visual art made by young people, 'This is Art' invited young artists of all abilities, aged 18 and under individually or in groups to create an original piece of art that will be showcased in an online art gallery. This year's Cruinniú na nÓg saw partnerships with Limerick City and County Youth Service, Foroige Newcastle West, The Local Creative Youth Partnership Young Beoirs Gathering, East Limerick Youth Services, Dóchas Mid-West, Emerging Limerick Filmmakers and Clare and Limerick Education and Training Board. As well as participating in workshops on the day, these groups took part in in-person workshops in the weeks building up to Cruinniú na nÓg and were targeted at groups who found it difficult to connect due to restrictions.
- **Musicians on Call - Creativity in Older Age 2023 – Additional Funding** - Limerick secured a grant of €50,000 as lead partner for Musicians-on-Call (Phase 2). This project is delivered in partnership with Artistic Partner Music and Health Ireland, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Clare and Tipperary County Councils. This brings professionally trained musicians to work in healthcare settings in the Mid-West Community Healthcare Region, to connect music-making opportunities to residents and healthcare staff in Nursing Homes and Community Hospitals.
- **Decarbonising Together shortlisted for Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards** - Decarbonising Together was shortlisted in the category of sustaining the arts for the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards. Decarbonising Together invited five communities from the Limerick Metropolitan area to examine how meaningful climate action can become part of their lives. Each group explored an aspect of Decarbonisation through a creative collaboration with arts and creative industry partners resulting in five creative outputs. Decarbonising Together was a joint cross Directorate collaborative project between Limerick City and County Council's Urban Innovation Department (Project Management and implementation) and Arts Office. Delivery was through the Citizen Innovation Lab and supported by Limerick City and County Council, University of Limerick Department of Economics and School of Architecture/Fab Lab Limerick, Colaborativa.eu and Space Engagers.
- **Funding and Open Calls** - Funding opportunities were implemented through a series of Open Calls, designed to support individuals, creative practitioners and groups organising and engaging in cultural and arts activities that deliver the aims of the Limerick Cultural Strategy.
 - Grants under the Arts Act 2023 - There were 44 applications for funding. Twenty-seven were successful, with a total allocation of €20,000.
 - Individual Arts Bursary Awards Scheme 2023 – There were 15 applications for funding. Seven were successful, with a total allocation of €21,000.
 - Dolores O'Riordan Music Bursary 2023 - There were five applications for funding with the successful candidate awarded a bursary of €4,000.
 - Limerick Theatre Bursaries 2023. There were nine applications for funding, with four Bursaries being awarded a total allocation of €18,000.
 - The Strategic Fund - There were 77 letters of support issued in 2023 offering 10% of the award issued. To date, 25 applications were successful, leveraging over €900,000 from The Arts Council and other national funding bodies for artists in Limerick.
 - Tyrone Guthrie Centre Regional Bursary Scheme - two Tyrone Guthrie Bursaries were awarded in 2023, for 2024.
- Additional opportunities for professional artistic development included:
 - Words Ireland National Mentoring Programme 2023
 - Summer School Bursaries
 - Visual Artists Ireland (VAI), Professional Development
 - Arts and Disability Ireland Training
 - Sliabh Luachra Residency
 - Stony Thursday Poetry Book

- **International Partnerships-European Projects** - Limerick City and County Council are participating in Creative Europe funded projects as an associate partner on Libertalia Labs and Performances. Libertalia sees the formation of a new partnership between three past and future European Capitals of Culture, an European Capital of Culture candidate city, a Borough of Culture and two cultural organisations. The final lab and presentation took place in Veszprem, Hungary, and the Arts Office was in attendance.
- **Portfolio of Cultural Properties** - The Arts Office continues to manage the operation of cultural properties including:
 - Limerick's Residential Artist Apartments Scheme, 1-2 John's Square, Limerick
 - Short-term Artists Apartments, 1-2 John's Square, Limerick
 - Artists' Studios, James Street, Limerick City
- **Culture Night Limerick/Oíche Chultúir** - Culture Night took place in Limerick City and County on 22 September. There were almost 70 free cultural events taking place across the city and county from 4pm to 2am. The night was programmed into hubs, creating hives of activities. From family friendly performances by Fidget Feet in Robert Clancy Park, to showcasing local and national electronic music in King John's Castle, the night saw letterpress print workshops, dance performances, film screenings, opera, talks, walks, tours, and street art creating an enjoyable night for all. At the centre of the programme at King John's Castle was a live music concert featuring the best of local and national electronic music scene featuring Chaz Moloney and Brawni, Bon Voyage, Hi Vista, and more. This event was produced in association with the SIONNA Festival, TOT Events and Culture Night Late. Additional funding of €16,000 was secured from the Arts Council for this event. Other late-night events happened in conjunction with Dance Limerick, and another saw The Belltable hosted the Jazz Festival in their foyer.

There were also live hubs of activity at the Hunt Museum, Dance Limerick and Milk Market. The Hunt Museum played host to a live broadcast of Lorcan Murray's Classic Drive, along with hosting the Polish Arts Festival and more. The Milk Market hosted the Limerick Food Group who launched their Pigtown Culture and Food Series with a display of their Giant Pig after it paraded through the town, with their recently commissioned family pig floats. They also hosted live music and a petting farm for kids and families. Culture Night was supported by over 20 volunteers.



Culture Night Limerick 2023

- **The Arts Council** – Framework Agreement A Framework for Collaboration (2016 – 2025) is a commitment allowing Limerick City and County Council and The Arts Council to enter into Framework Agreement with shared strategic priorities for arts development in Limerick. Under this framework agreement, the Arts Office supports a number of organisations in delivering their programmes:
 - **Helium Arts** are delivering their programme for children and young people with chronic illnesses. Other organisations supported by the Arts Office included Ormston House, Limerick Print Makers and Irish Aerial Creation Centre.
 - **Castleconnell Autumn Concerts Series 2023** The Castleconnell Autumn Concerts Series takes place between August to November which is presented by Limerick City and County Council Arts Office. A fully live programme of enchanting and beautiful music and song returned to the All Saints Church in Castleconnell in autumn 2023. Castleconnell Autumn Concert Series is programmed by Limerick Arts Office, with financial support from the Arts Council and Creative Ireland. The concerts are presented in partnership with Love Castleconnell. All concerts will be broadcast on RTE Lyric FM, The Full Score Programme with Liz Nolan.
 - **Éigse – Michael Hartnett Literary and Arts Festival 2023** is held annually in Newcastle West, County Limerick, celebrating the poet Michael Hartnett, poetry, and Newcastle West. Éigse included workshops, screenings, book launches, talks and more. This was the twenty-first year of the Michael Hartnett Poetry Award, which is jointly funded by Limerick Arts Office, Limerick City and County Council and The Arts Council. The prize fund to the winning poet is €8,000, and this year was awarded to work in the Irish language. The winning poet was Cathal Ó Searcaigh.
 - **Artist in Schools** programme works to develop opportunities for engagement for young people through involvement in culture and aims to

achieve this by placing professional creative practitioners in a primary school setting to enhance and diversify pupil's creative education.

- **County Limerick Youth Theatre** Shane Hickey O'Mara, Artistic Director of the County Limerick Youth Theatre has delivered a packed programme including the writing, producing and showing of plays. The County Limerick Youth Theatre rehearsed and performed productions including *Pride and Prejudice*, *Model Behaviour*, and *In Quest of a Play*. They were also awarded an Analog Devices Community Award.
- **Integrated Dance** - This project introduces participants to dance as an art form whilst facilitating active and productive engagement in dance activities amongst disabled and non-disabled participants. In 2023, an evaluation took place to review the programme and plan for the future. A report for delivery was presented by Promenade, and training and development in this area will be delivered in conjunction with Dance Limerick, Firkin Crane, Cork.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The Property Management Department covers four specific areas:

- Property – Acquisitions and Disposals;
- Property Management and Digitisation;
- Dereliction, Vacancy, Reuse;
- Rural Limerick Housing Development.

Property Acquisitions and Disposals provides a key support to other Directorates for the acquisition, disposal, leasing and licencing of council properties. During 2023 this team acquired Properties for the Housing Directorate under the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP), Buy and Renew, Part V and "Notice to Quit" programmes. In addition, the Department supported numerous house swaps for Regeneration among other strategic acquisitions and disposals managed during 2023.

• Acquisitions

Ongoing (all acquisitions – housing and others)	186
Completed property acquisitions	60

Significant acquisitions were being processed by the Property Team included:

- Barrow House – completed;
- Parochial House, Feoghanagh – completed;
- Garda Stations in Galbally and Shanagolden – completed;
- Lands in Newcastle West for extension of Burial Ground – completed;
- Croom Post Office – completed.

The Department is also responsible for all disposals (including freehold and leasehold property interests) under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended).

• Disposals

Completed	56
Ongoing	168

Significant disposals that were processed to Section 183 approval included:

- Lands at Speakers Corner to Tinwat Holdings Ltd. (as nominee for Cluid Housing and Whitebox Ltd.);
- Lands in Ballygrennan to Tinwat Holdings Ltd. (as nominee for Cluid Housing and Whitebox Ltd);
- Lands in Thomondgate to Tinwat Holdings Ltd. (as nominee for Cluid Housing and Whitebox Ltd);
- Lands in Mungret to Cluid Housing Association;
- Disposal of Limerick City and County Council option over Car Park, Arthur's Quay;
- Parochial House, Feoghanagh to Feoghanagh Castlemahon Resource Centre CLG;
- Herbertstown Store Building to Herbertstown Hub Company CLG;

The Property Management section looks after capital works on existing, acquired and vested properties. During 2023 the following projects were procured and completed:

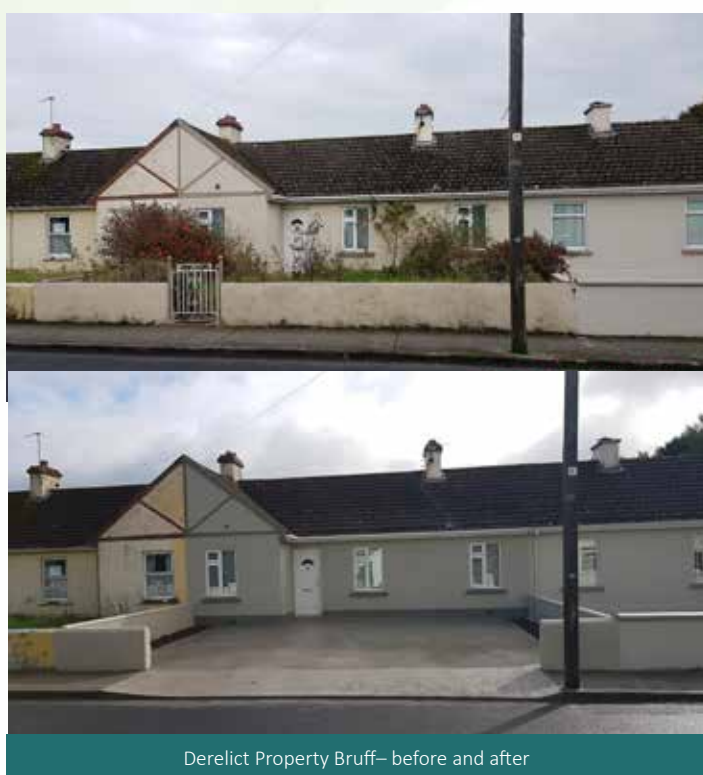
Minor Works (<€ 2,000)	22
Medium Works (€2,000-10,000)	26
Major Works (>€ 10,000)	2

- The Department responded to 463 new property related queries in 2023.
- The Department also prepared legal mapping for 110 Acquisitions, Disposals, Leases and Licenses.
- The new Property Interest Register (PIR) software system went live in December 2022 with 603 entries validated in 2023. This bespoke software system is the first of its kind in the country and will help the Department rationalise its data sources for all Acquisitions, Disposals, Leases and Licenses. Validation is time consuming and requires dedicated staff resources but the benefits will be seen in the long term.

The **Dereliction, Vacancy and Re-use** section is committed to supporting communities by taking a proactive approach to dereliction and vacancy in Limerick City and County. The team works collaboratively with property owners, seeking timely actions and improvements to sites of concern. Staff collaborate closely with Housing Development, Planning and Enforcement, as well as public representatives and communities to bring properties back into use. Owners of derelict and vacant properties are advised in relation to schemes such as Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, Buy and Renew, Repair and Lease, Retail and Business Incentive Scheme and the Council's Paint Scheme that provides funding for property owners to improve the appearance of their properties. Where all reasonable alternatives are exhausted, the Council may commence compulsory acquisitions under the Derelict Sites Act 1990.

Outcomes	2023	2022
Derelict site and vacant homes inspections	1648	1506
Statutory Notices issued under Derelict Site Act, 1990	657	644
Properties added to the Council's Derelict Site Register	102	153
Properties removed from the Derelict Site Register	59	53
Compulsory Acquisitions were commenced under Derelict Site Act 1990	52	54
Vesting orders made for properties acquired compulsorily	41	29

€286,076.14 in Derelict Sites Levies collected supported by the Debt Management Unit.



Derelict Property Bruff– before and after

- **Vacant Sites** - There are currently nine sites on Limerick City and County Council's Vacant Sites Register. Limerick City and County Council collected €127,000 in Vacant Site Levies in 2023 supported by the Debt Management Unit.
- **Vacant Homes** - Utilising existing housing stock is a key pillar under of the Government's 'Housing for All' policy. The objective of the Limerick City and County Vacant Homes Activities is to establish

an accurate picture of vacancy in Limerick and to increase availability of housing supply by assisting property owners to reactivate their properties for social or private housing.

In 2023, the Council continued to identify vacant properties, particularly in areas of high housing demand, and work with property owners to bring their properties back into housing use. The Vacant Homes Officer works with the Housing Directorate in relation to liaising with owners about Buy and Renew and Repair and Lease Schemes.

In 2022, the Department Housing, Local Government and Heritage launched the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant that the Council administers for those applicants who wish to turn a formerly Vacant/Derelict house or building into their principal private residence or to make available to the private rental market. Grants up to €70,000 are available for refurbishment of such properties and the grant may also be used in conjunction with the SEAI's Home Energy Grants.

The table below summarises the outcomes of the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant 2023

Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant 2023

Applications Received	215
Applications Approved	148
Applications Paid	10
Value of Grant Payments made	€ 503,740.48
Total Grant Aid Committed	€ 9,002,676.51

Example of two properties which were entered on the Council's Derelict Sites Register and were returned to family homes with funding from the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant



Ennis Road, Limerick Property refurbishment Before and After



Sean Heuston Place, Limerick refurbishment Before and After

- **Urban Regeneration Development Fund Call 3** – Tackling long – term Vacancy and Dereliction - Limerick City and County Council has been allocated €9 million to continue tackling long-term vacancy and dereliction in the Metropolitan District of Limerick. The funding is part of a new €150 million Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) introduced by the Government under the Housing for All Plan.

Limerick City and County Council is one of the most pro-active in the country in terms of using its powers under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 (as amended), to bring derelict and vacant houses back into use.

- **Rural Limerick Housing Development (RLHD) Project** - A successful application was made to the Rural Regeneration Development Fund in 2020 with an allocation of €2,500,000 grant funding toward the regeneration in towns and villages across Limerick.

This provides an additional approach to tackling dereliction in Rural Limerick. Properties vested in LCCC via the Dereliction Process, for which there is a limited market in the private sector, in their existing state, will be refurbished and sold on the open market. This is a demonstrator project with Limerick being the first county to receive such funding. It is hoped that the project will provide local employment and will breathe new life into local communities. 2023 has seen significant advances in this area with four completed properties now on the market for sale - one in Bruff, one in Abbeyfeale and two in Askeaton.

Activity in 2023

- 33 properties – Feasibility Reports: Structure, Cost plan, Asbestos Assessment;
- Four properties – Design and Tender to main Contractor stage;
- Seven properties – On site refurbishment.



William Street front – before refurbishment



William Street rear – before refurbishment



William Street front – after refurbishment



William Street rear – after refurbishment



REGENERATION, SPORTS AND RECREATION





REGENERATION, SPORTS AND RECREATION

The overall aim of Limerick Regeneration is to enable safe and sustainable communities by improving quality of life and promoting greater social and economic inclusion in the designated regeneration areas of Moyross, St. Mary's Park, Southill, and Ballinacurra Weston. This aim is supported through the implementation of Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) This Programme is funded by the Department of Housing Heritage and Local Government.

The objective in terms of Sports and Recreation is to support the sporting activities of our citizens together with the sustainable development and maintenance of sporting facilities in collaboration with the Limerick Sports Partnership, National/Regional/Local Sporting Bodies, Clubs, Community groups and other bodies across the entire city and county.

Draft Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) Status Update 2024 - 2030

Limerick City and County Council with the support of the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government commissioned KPMG, in association with O'Mahony Pike Architects and Tobin Engineers, and in consultation with the relevant communities and stakeholders in the City to prepare a Status Update of the previous strategy the LRFIP, that was in effect for the period 2014 – 2023. The Draft document assesses the current position in the four designated Regeneration areas of and recommends an updated physical, social and economic regeneration strategy with indicative actions. It concludes that the communities need significant ongoing investment from 2024 – 2030, to support the provision of additional housing and place-making infrastructure, together with an economic and social intervention fund that underpins and builds on the successes already made.

In July, the draft strategy was submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) for consideration. The DHLGH have since confirmed that, while a detailed review of the broader request under the Draft LRFIP Status Update is ongoing, funding will be available in 2024 for the continuation of ongoing projects and for funding applications under the Economic and Social Intervention Fund (ESIF). A proposal for ESIF 2024 – 2030 was submitted to DHLGH in December which focuses on the principles and objectives outlined in the Draft Status Update 2024 – 2030.



A trackside view of the Limerick Regional Athletics Hub

REGENERATION AND SPORTS

Regeneration Economic

The economic development strategy for regeneration is focused on the delivery of a number of key objectives. They include;

- ensuring the growth of local capacity through the provision of focused sectoral training and employment opportunities;
- fostering a culture of social innovation and social enterprise in the areas as well as create a programme of civic and economic interventions to attract, support and grow micro and community enterprise; and,
- attracting inward investment into Limerick City and the areas of Regeneration from the private and public sectors that stimulates additional economic activity.

There are a number of routes to employment for residents of regeneration areas. For example, Regeneration supports jobs creation by investing in the development of community and social enterprises through the Economic and Social Intervention Fund (ESIF). These are largely hosted and supported by the community enterprise centres in which the fund invests. Other ESIF funded organisations such as Limerick Island Community Partners and Limerick City Build, provide incubation space and/or business supports to local start-ups and jobs are created in social enterprises, such as community cafés and meals on wheels.

The ESIF supports programmes that reach out to unemployed individuals in order to reconnect them with education, increase their employability and help them progress into the labour market. There is a focus particularly on addressing youth unemployment in the regeneration areas.

The ESIF has partnered with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) on projects which are delivering results in the area of pathways to employment:

- The Hospitality Education and Training Centre (HETC) in Roxboro was set up as a joint project between Regeneration and the LCETB.
- The ESIF supports the FAI Soccer Skills programme, with a number of participants coming from Regeneration areas. Trainees are unemployed young men and women, and the programme uses football as an access point to education and training.

The ESIF also provides for interventions to re-engage adults in education as well as young people at risk of leaving school. Ongoing support from the ESIF has seen some projects develop links with Access Programmes in local third level institutes.



The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, at Holly and Ivy Hair, Moyross Community Enterprise Centre, Moyross.

Outreach to Employment

The Outreach to Employment Programme is an initiative led by the Regeneration, Sports and Recreation Directorate 'to promote, support and contribute to the development of sustainable Regeneration Communities with the capacity within themselves to respond to their needs as part of a successful Limerick.'

The Outreach to Employment Programme is led by the Employment Co-ordinator and implemented by a multi-stakeholder project team including Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Department of Social Protection, Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), Paul Partnership, Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (LEDP), Community and Industry representatives.

This programme has been delivered by way of an integrated service approach that is designed to equip unemployed young men and women from the areas with the skills and confidence to secure training, further education and employment.

The integrated service approach will be delivered via three strategic aims:

- Community Mentorship Programme Development: Recognising and reducing barriers to employment;
- Coordination and Collaboration: Connecting training, industry, and jobseekers
- Governance and Monitoring: Ensuring continued innovation and development through oversight and progress tracking

A key component of this programme is the role of the Community Mentors. They work with the communities to provide the wrap around support to further education and employment. This pre-employment, person-centred process involves identifying individuals seeking employment and ensuring steps are taken, on a case-by-case basis, to reduce barriers. Barriers to employment include education, training, CV writing skills, lack of transportation, addiction, lack of driving license, access to childcare, access to bank account /email address / PPS number, lack of confidence.

The Mentors also engage with the key stakeholders such as Limerick City Build and Moyross Youth Academy, who are facilitating the delivery of industry led training through LCETB and employer led programmes. Also, the Mentors worked with TUS to support their Access to Apprenticeship Programme.

53% of the participants in the Outreach to Employment Programme have successfully engaged in further education/training or were placed in employment in 2023. Extensive collaboration with community partners took place during 2023. Employment Project Teams were established in each of the areas to put a particular focus on the long term unemployed and most marginalised within these communities. The Outreach to Employment Programme engages directly with employers and training bodies in order to match individuals' skills development to jobs, thereby creating employment opportunities for residents of the regeneration areas.

Developing relationships with new employers was a key focus which resulted in 14 new employers participating in various initiatives delivered by the Outreach to Employment Programme.

Jobs Fair

A Jobs Fair was held in each of the Regeneration communities. 2023 resulted in significant number from the local community and residents attending these events which were held in community settings in each Regeneration area. 45 people were directly employed from these community events. A host of new employers participated in the Jobs Fair enabling direct engagement with the local residents on job opportunities in each of these companies.



Jobs Fair, Southill Hub, October 2023

Junior Careers Fair

The Outreach to Employment Programme is keen to highlight the opportunities that are on the doorstep of the Regeneration communities from an early age. With this in mind a pilot initiative, in partnership with Junior Achievement Ireland, working with the primary school children, was delivered. A 'Junior Careers Fair' was hosted in St. Mary's National School, Bishop Street and Corpus Christi National School, Moyross.



Iarnrod Éireann in attendance at Corpus Christi National School, October 2023

The objective of this initiative was twofold – exposing the children of the regeneration communities to employment opportunities but also involving their parents. The programme commenced with a Junior Careers Fair with the 6th class pupils and their parents interacting with companies in the school. Following this event, the children chose a company to visit and the employer facilitates a two-hour plant tour for the pupils and the parents accompanying their children. This is a great opportunity for the children and their parents to engage with the company at an early stage and again on the plant tour to see first-hand a real work environment and highlight what opportunities are available for their children in the near future.



Johnson & Johnson in attendance at the Junior Career Fair, October 2023

Regeneration Social

Under the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP), the Economic Social Intervention Fund (ESIF) is the main component of the social pillar of the regeneration programme. The fund underpins the LRFIP's primary objectives but also aims to close the gaps with the average population by improving access to opportunities for residents of the regeneration areas, as well as improving service provision across the statutory and voluntary/ community sector. As such, the ESIF invests in projects that share these aims, whether the projects are run by voluntary and community organisations or other public agencies. Projects supported by the ESIF fall under the following themes:

- Education and Learning;
- Health and Wellbeing and Ageing Well;
- Employability and Work;
- Families and Youth at Risk;
- Community.

The ESIF funding is provided annually, for projects that meet the objectives of the LRFIP. All projects are treated equally in terms of assessment and approval through relevant administration and validation at Council level before being directed for consideration at the Local Strategic Advisory Monitoring Group (LSAMG) and its Sub Committees. The Department of Housing Heritage and Local Government (DHLGH) approves the grants following a recommendation from the LSAMG

The LSAMG is made up of Chief Officers and Senior Managers from the relevant statutory and public agencies, together with community representatives. It oversees the overall programme and makes recommendations of allocations. The Sub-committees operate within the respective themes/categories outlined above. Their membership is drawn from the public service and its service partners.

In 2023, allocation of funding to grass-roots community organisations has been maintained. While involving relatively small amounts of funding, these projects are generally volunteer-led and are highly appreciated and visible in local regeneration communities. A core group of projects supporting youth and families with complex needs have also maintained their funding in 2023. These are important in stabilising that population, connecting them to mainstream services and promoting social inclusion. Most of these projects now operate on the basis of referrals from statutory agencies and/or work in co-operation with and are co-funded by other statutory bodies. The Regeneration Team have continued to engage with this group of social inclusion projects to promote good connectivity with economic development initiatives and where there is scope, to encourage those with potential into training and employment opportunities.

Grants to schools and other services for education and learning have also been maintained. The evidence indicates that additional support into programmes delivered in schools or out-of-school services (after school programmes, summer camps, therapeutic services offered to children in schools) is contributing to the achievement of better educational outcomes for children in regeneration areas/ from disadvantaged social backgrounds. These outcomes include better educational attainment, improved school attendance, improved retention in second level education and improved behaviour. Employability and work projects, skills training and access to employment for regeneration area residents continues to be a high priority. A strong link with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and the LCETB (Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board) is particularly important in order to promote the sustainability of these initiatives



Children participating in an ESIF Project

HAPPEE project

This is a newly established project, funded by ESIF, St. Gabriel's Foundation and the University of Limerick (UL) through its UL Engage programme. UL health professional students (Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Music) carry out their practice placements in schools as opposed to clinical settings. It is designed to improve outcomes for schoolchildren by placing University of Limerick students in a particular school. The UL students supervised by clinical supervisors from the University of Limerick and St. Gabriel's Foundation will work with class teachers, whole class groups and individual children and their families to support the children to achieve their academic and health goals. The intention is to benefit the community by increased early identification of need, reducing non-attendance for health interventions, and providing services in communities with community support. The programme benefits UL by creating new and sustainable student placements.



Pupil engaged on the Equine Programme learning to jump fences

Equine Education and Therapeutic Programme

This programme is funded by ESIF, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine along with Moyross Youth Diversion Project. It operates in six primary schools across the Regeneration areas of the city. This includes Corpus Christi, Our Lady of Lourdes, Le Chéile, St. John's, St. Mary's and Thomond Primary Schools. Animal welfare is to the fore with educational visits to RACE jockey academy, the National Stud and to Clare Equestrian Centre where the practical element of the programme takes place. Terry Casey became the tenth young person from the project accepted into RACE as an apprentice jockey and graduated in 2023. Professional jockey Wesley Joyce is also a graduate of the programme.

In 2023, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage approved € 3.9m in ESIF grants. Last year 194 projects from over 90 different state, non-profit and community organisations were supported under that one call. The amounts allocated have varied over the years depending on the number of requests and type of expenditure proposed. One off capital investment measures can involve higher allocations. Last year the allocations ranged from €194,000 (highest) to €500,000 (lowest). The Draft LRFIP Status Update 2024 –2030 seeks to maintain and maximise the impact of ESIF to 2030 with the stated objective for 2024 and beyond to:

"OBJ3 - Improve the social and economic impact from the Economic and Social Intervention Fund (ESIF) and ensure better value for money. It should encourage innovation in responding to the changing needs of residents."

Regeneration Physical



An aerial view showing the development at Cosgrave Park, Moyross, Limerick in winter 2023.

Housing contracts completed in 2023:

- Cliona Park Phase 3 (18 units), Moyross – substantial completion 24 October. 18 households took up residence in these high efficiency A-rated properties. The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchel formally launched these properties and met with many of the new residents in November.



The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchel handing the keys of a new home as part of Cliona Park, Phase 3, Moyross to Alan Duggan, Amy Butler and baby Jaylen.

- Dalgaish Park/Cosgrave Park (10 units), Moyross – substantial completion 7 November. These A-rated and energy efficient units were made available to residents during November.
- Peter McVerry Trust Infills at Delmege Park (14 units), Moyross. These sustainably built units welcomed 14 households into Delmege Park, Moyross during the autumn.

Housing contracts awarded / under construction in 2023:

- Churchfield Phase 2 (38 units), O'Malley Park, Southill – construction continued
- Sheep Street/Athlunkard Street (8 units), King's Island – construction continued
- Dalgaish Park/Cosgrave Park (47 units), Moyross – construction continued

Housing projects at design stage in 2023:

- Cliona Park Phase 4 – 15 houses.

Housing projects at concept stage in 2023:

- The Pineview Gardens Infill Project, Moyross received Stage 1 Approval for 55 units.

Housing projects at pre-construction stage 2023:

- Orchard Housing development (27 units), King's Island – progressed final tender documents.

Thermal Upgrade contracts awarded/under construction in 2023:

- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 121, Moyross (47 Units) – works continued
- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 122, St. Mary's Park (19 Units) – snagging
- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 123, Southill (53 Units) – works continued
- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 124, St. Mary's Park (17 Units) – snagging
- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 126, Southill (50 Units) – contractor appointed
- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 127, Ballinacurra Weston (12 Units) – works continued

Thermal Upgrade contracts at pre-construction stage in 2023:

- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 125, St. Mary's Park (26 Units) – awaiting contractor paperwork to appoint
- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 128/129, St. Mary's Park (25 Units) – awaiting contractor paperwork to appoint

Thermal Upgrade contracts at design stage in 2023:

- Thermal Upgrade Contract No. 130, Pineview Gardens, Moyross, (55 Units) – Stage 1 to 3 approval now attained from DHLGH.

Thermal Upgrade mop-up contracts at scoping stage in 2023:

- St. Mary's Park – 6 units
- Moyross – 19 units
- Ballinacurra Weston – 2 units
- Southill – 30 units.

Demolitions

The Regeneration Team continued with its programme of strategic demolitions to facilitate new development and safer places. There were 12 strategic demolitions carried out in 2023 as per table 1.1 below:

Area	Total
St. Mary's Park	5
Moyross	4
Southill	3

Table 1.1: Strategic demolitions in Regeneration areas 2023

Community and Social Infrastructure

Continued to improve communities by delivering community infrastructure projects including:

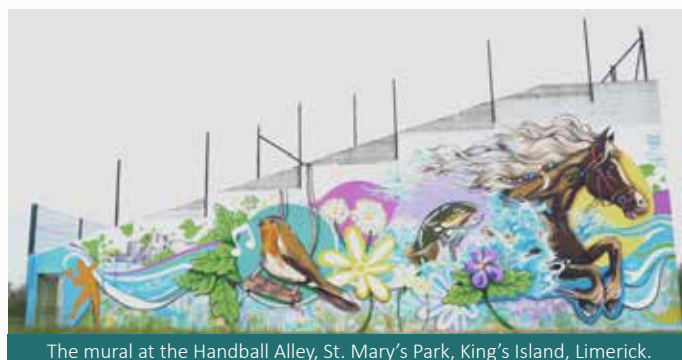
- Upgrade works, Southill Hub, Southill**
 The appointed Fire Engineer led Design Team issued the Certificate of Practical Completion in relation to Fire Safety upgrade works to Southill Hub, Southill.
- District Play Area, Southill**
 Post Stage 1 Approval a Design Team (inclusive of a sociologist with a focus on active citizenship) was procured and appointed in relation to the progression of the Southill Play Space and Associated Landscaping. Based on extensive community consultation and endorsed by the Southill Regeneration Committee a Part 8 proposal was tabled at and approved by the Metropolitan District of Limerick. The project has now progressed to preparation of tender documentation.

- King's Island Community Centre**

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage provided Stage 1 Approval of the King's Island Community Centre, St. Mary's Park, Limerick.

Development of the proposal evolved through the formation of a King's Island Community Centre Working Group and extensive engagement with the community of St. Mary's Park and King's Island stakeholders culminating in a Stage 1 scheme endorsed by the St. Mary's Park Regeneration Committee. The proposal incorporates retention of an element of the existing community building and a proposed new build and associated public realm along Verdant Place and the River Shannon.

This approval enabled the project to move forward to the next stage of procuring a Design Team.



The mural at the Handball Alley, St. Mary's Park, King's Island, Limerick.

- Mural at St. Mary's Park handball alley**
 Limerick City and County Council's Regeneration team worked with the local community and lead artist Louise Keeley to deliver a community mural at the Hand Ball Alley in St. Mary's Park.



An artist's impression of the District Play Area, Southill.

A huge community effort was present along with members of Limerick Youth Service and children from St. Mary's National School who designed some of the images which feature now on the wall. A designated community day brought the community and children out where everyone rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the project earlier this year.

- Restoration and Refurbishment of Turner Vinery, South Hill House**

Through the support of the Historic Structures Fund, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Regeneration Directorate (in conjunction with the Conservation Section) appointed a Grade 1 Conservation Architect led Design Team to progress the restoration and refurbishment of Turner Vinery, South Hill House.

- St. Mary's Park, Multi-Use Games Area**

The Regeneration Directorate were successful in securing Economic Social Intervention Fund funding for a Multi-Use Games Area to be provided for at St. Mary's Park.



The Mayor of the City and County of Limerick Councillor Gerald Mitchell, met with members of the Regeneration team and the Limerick Island Community Partners overlooking the River Shannon in King's Island.

- Integrated Youth Centre**

The Regeneration Directorate submitted a four site Integrated Youth Centre Stage 1 application to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The proposal was inclusive of potential resource developments for the LCETB Kilmallock Road Campus, Our Lady Queen of Peace Community Centre, St. Gabriel's, Southill Junior School and amenity provision at Southill Hub. It outlines options for the provision of permanent community, sporting and youth services facilities for the Southill area, including all weather training pitches, a sports hall and gym, a through campus connection from the Bawnmore Road to the Kilmallock Road, a Multi-Use Games Area and rehabilitation facilities for persons with disabilities.

- Equine Centre**

The Regeneration Directorate submitted a Stage 1 application in relation to the provision of an Equine Centre based in Moyross with a city-wide remit. The proposal is based on the Working with Horses: Pathways to working in the Equine Industry program run in conjunction with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) and initiated by a Steering Group of relevant stakeholders from Education, Industry, Community, Central and Local Government. The objective of the Equine Centre is to deliver a sustainable facility that will provide training education and employment access to the Equine sector.

- Refurbishments**

27 houses were refurbished in 2023 within Regeneration areas for letting. Of these properties, 21 were new allocations, with the remaining six with tenants in situ during the works – all 27 are now occupied following the works.

Sport And Recreation

The Sports and Recreation department is working with key stakeholders including the voluntary and community sector in the development, facilitation, direct provision, enhancement and operation of sports and recreational infrastructure throughout the city and county. Our aims include encouraging our citizens to increase their levels of physical activity, ensure optimal access and inclusivity for all, thus improving the overall wellbeing of both our community and visitors to the Limerick area. Capital projects milestones were reached with tenders published for the Mechanical and Electric upgrade for Askeaton Pool and Leisure Centre and the operational and maintenance contracts for both Askeaton Pool and Leisure Centre and Grove Island Leisure Centre, Limerick. A tender for an energy upgrade on the clubhouse facilities for Rathbane Golf Course was also completed.



The Chief Executive of Limerick City and County Council, Dr. Pat Daly, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, T.D. and Director of Services, Limerick City and County Council, Gordon Daly at the launch of the Limerick Regional Athletics Hub in Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.

Limerick Regional Athletics Hub

On 14 September, the official opening of the Limerick Regional Athletics Hub took place. An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, T.D., in the presence of the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell, officially opened the state-of-the-art facility, which is located just a short distance from the centre of Newcastle West in County Limerick. Other political figures including Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht Sport and Media, Thomas Byrne T.D. as well as former Olympic athletes, Thomas Barr and Caroyln Hayes were in attendance to launch the facility.

The 9.5 acres site encompasses a floodlight 400m, eight-lane synthetic track, which is of International Amateur Athletic Federation standard, as well as all the capabilities for field events; shot putt, javelin, long-jump etc. In addition, there is a 500m floodlight walking track and viewing area. The site is completed by a toilet block, car parking, electrical vehicle charging points and storage facilities.

At present, the facility has two full-time, Limerick City and County Council staff who help operate and maintain the facility, which is open to the public, seven days a week. A significant portion of the funding for the track was granted from the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund. €1.2 million was received from this fund in 2020, while €1.1 million was received from the same funding in 2023. The over cost of the facility was approximately €4.2 million.

Sports Capital Funding

In 2023, the Directorate applied for Sports Capital Funding on four projects across Limerick City and County. These are pending approval in 2024. All four projects are aimed at improving existing sporting facilities in a wide spread of sports, in different areas of the city and county.



Limerick Regional Athletics Hub was opened in September 2023 by An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, T.D.

HOUSING





The Housing Directorate is responsible for the selection, funding and delivery of housing projects under the Government's 'Housing for All' programme and works to fast-track the supply of housing to address homelessness. The Housing Directorate and the stakeholders with whom they work are committed to improving the quality of life for people and communities, whether long established or newly created.

The Housing Directorate consists of the following units:

1. Housing Support Services.
2. Local Authority Construction and Maintenance.
3. Strategy and Non Local Authority Housing Construction.
4. Traveller Accommodation

Housing for All

'Housing for All' launched on 2 September, 2021 is the Government's housing plan to 2030. It is a multi-annual, multi-billion euro plan, which will improve Ireland's housing system and deliver more homes of all types for people with different housing needs. The policy has four pathways to achieving housing for all:

1. Supporting home ownership and increasing affordability;
2. Eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion;
3. Increasing new housing supply;
4. Addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock.

The pathways contain actions to be taken by government departments, local authorities, State agencies and others. The pathways are supported by actions to enable a sustainable housing system.

Limerick's target under 'Housing for All'

In Limerick, the delivery target for 2022-2026 is 2,693 new homes. This is twice the target under the 'Rebuilding Ireland' programme from 2018-2021 of 1,365 homes. Build is the main delivery streams to deliver 2,693 new homes with 40% to be delivered by Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) and 60% by Limerick County and County Council.

The table below provides the Government's target for Limerick for each year from 2022 to 2026.

Delivery Type	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
New Build	9000	9100	9300	10000	10200
Acquisitions	200	200	200	200	200
Long Term Leasing	1300	1200	800	200	0
Mortgage to Rent	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Short Term Leasing	200	200	200	200	200
RLS	120	130	130	140	140
	11820	11830	11630	11740	11740
Limerick Targets Total 2693	565	502	513	551	562

In 2023, Limerick City and County Council delivered 310 Build Units and 31 Leasing units for a combined total of 419.

New-Build	Buy	Lease
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHIP Construction and Turnkey Regeneration CAS Construction and Turnkey AHB CALF Construction and Turnkey Part V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHIP Acquisitions Buy and Renew Acquisitions Regeneration Acquisitions CAS Acquisitions AHB CALF Acquisitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair and Lease Mortgage to Rent Payment and Availability Agreements Long-term leasing (rollover leases from 2020 as Limerick has no target from 2022-2026)

HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES

Assessments and Allocations

Housing Assessments

The total number of social housing applicants approved on Limerick City and County Council's social housing waiting list at 31/12/2023 is 6,090. This includes applicants who have secured HAP and RAS accommodation and Council/Approved Housing Body tenants who have been approved for a transfer.

The Net Social Housing Need excluding HAP and RAS tenants and Council/AHB tenants that have been approved for a transfer is 2,568 households.

Summary of Social Housing Assessment

The Annual Housing Assessment of Need was successfully completed by the Assessment Team, which consists of contacting approved housing applicants in order to establish if they are still interested in social housing support and to establish if they are still eligible.

This is a statutory requirement to be carried out on an annual basis as notified by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Housing Allocations

Allocation of social housing increased significantly in 2023 with 383 units from Limerick City and County Council housing stock allocated to successful applicants and a further 305 social housing nominations made to Approved Housing Bodies.

Community Sustainment

The Council's Community Sustainment Unit provides an essential service supporting tenants and residents of its estates and Council accommodation generally. The key objectives of the Unit include Garda vetting of prospective tenants, comprehensive tenancy induction for new occupants, follow-up visits to such tenants to assist them in bedding into their new homes and communities, developing partnerships with other relevant state agencies such as An Garda Síochána, HSE, Tusla etc., and forging closer links with Approved Housing Bodies.

The Unit is comprised of three main strands:

- Estate Supports
- Individual Tenant Support
- Tenancy Enforcement/Anti-Social Behaviour

Estate Supports

The main aim of this programme is the provision of supports with a view to improving quality of life and developing community spirit within Council estates. To this end, the Unit works closely with existing residents' associations and encourages the formation of new such groups, supporting the implementation of key actions identified by them to improve their estates. The support provided varies from assistance in provision of minor infrastructural works such as fencing, walls, signage etc. to softer measures such as committee skills training, contributing towards clean-up days, events for children etc.

There were many projects carried out in 2023 by the Community Sustainment Unit in conjunction with the residents and in collaboration with other units across the Council. These included:

- Groundworks to enhance the front of the Churchview Estate, Askeaton
- Stonework cleaning of sculptures in Cois Daoile, Rathkeale; The Gardens, Ballingarry and Corgrigg Wood, Foynes
- Enhancement works in Cois Ma, Croom
- Ornamental grass planting in Castleview Estate, Newcastle West
- Gardening projects in Canon Breen Park, New Road and Cross Roads Thomondgate
- Provision of new allotments in St. Mary's Park
- Bulb planting in Parkview, Thomondgate
- Communal area in O'Donnell House/James Street refurbished
- Completion of painting of Meagher Close Residential Units, Prospect
- Clean ups in Riverview Estate, Kilmallock; Sharwood Estate, Newcastle West; Laneways in De Valera Park, Bruree and Scanlan Park, Castleconnell

In 2023, all relevant stakeholders across the Council in conjunction with external stakeholders have invested significant resources into the revitalisation of Johnsgate Village. Enhancement works such as tree and bulb planting, restoration of Limerick city walls etc. have been carried out. The refurbishment of Council owned vacant units is a top priority to create a safe and sustainable community.



Johnsgate Village Revitalisation



Johnsgate Enhancement Works outside No. 30



The Community Sustainment Unit provided limestone rockery nameplates for Redgate Close; St. Lawrence's Park, Abbeycourt and Johnsgate Village housing estates.

Individual Tenant Support

The Unit provides a service, supported by the Housing Welfare Office, of intensive support for tenants who may be identified as vulnerable or in need of such help for any other reasons. In addition, there is monitoring of individual tenancies that may require particular attention to prevent problems occurring. Tenancy Induction training is provided for all newly appointed tenants. Among other things, the terms of the Letting Agreements, which are signed, are clearly explained so that the obligations of both the tenants and, indeed, the Council, are clearly understood. The number of such training meetings conducted in 2023 was 335. Community Sustainment Officers carried out in excess of 3,390 visits/inspections during the year, and this figure included visits to newly appointed tenants to offer support.

Tenancy Enforcement/Anti-Social Behaviour

The Unit deals with in excess of 550 complaints each year, with approximately half of these relating to anti-social behaviour. The Council's policy is to respond to these issues quickly and firmly and it works in close co-operation with An Garda Síochána where necessary. The Council uses all legislative tools available to it to try to deal with anti-social behaviour. One of the most effective tools is seeking Excluding Orders against individuals barring them from specified estates for periods of up to three years. Limerick City and County Council is one of the most proactive local authorities in the country in the use of this measure. In the period 2013-2023, 25 such orders were secured. The Unit carries out formal Garda checks on prospective new tenants. Approximately 1,170 such formal reviews were undertaken during the year.

Grants, Loans and Affordable

Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016

55 applications have been received by Limerick City and County Council under the Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016. Of these, 35 were deemed eligible to proceed to letter of offer. By year-end of 2023, 21 properties had been sold by Limerick City and County Council under the Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016.

Housing Loans

The Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) is a government backed mortgage scheme available nationwide from all local authorities. Limerick City and County Council offer first-time buyers' mortgages and Fresh Start Applicants of 90% loan-to-value (LTV) up to a maximum property value of €300,000 in Limerick. €5,150,000 was allocated for new lending approvals in 2023. The actual loan drawdown may take place in either 2022 or 2023. Loans approved in principle in 2023 remain valid for six months.

78 applications have been received by Limerick City and County Council under the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme for 2023. 18 loan applications have been approved to a total value of €2,066,000 of these three relate to the Tenant Purchase Scheme, where tenants were approved funding to buy the property they were renting from Limerick City and County Council. 21 approved loans, based on 2022 and 2023 approvals in principle, to a total value of €2,814,955 have been drawn down by the applicants in 2023. These include both Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans and Local Authority Home Loans. Nine loan offers, approved in principle during 2023 are still valid and may be drawn down. All Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan approvals have now expired or been drawn down.

Housing Grants – Adaptation, Mobility Aid and Housing Aid for Older People

A total of 8,853 housing adaptation grants were completed under the Housing Adaptation, Mobility Aids and Housing Aid for Older People grant schemes in 2023. The total expenditure on grant schemes was €4,869,703.66

Jan - Dec 2023		Total
Mobility Aid Grants	No. Approved	85
	MAG Expenditure	€318,453.81
	No. Paid	70
Housing Adaptation Grants	No. Approved	377
	HAG Expenditure	€2,537,120.46
	No. Paid	317
Housing Aid for Older People	No. Approved	573
	HOP Expenditure	€2,014,129.39
	No. Paid	466
YTD Total No. Approved		1,035
YTD Total Monies Paid		€4,869,703.66
YTD Total No. Paid		853

In addition to private grants, adaptation works were completed to a further 50 local authority properties at a total spend of €583,588.78.

The Disabled Persons Grant (DPG) scheme provides funding for extensions and adaptations to existing social housing stock for older people and people with a disability such as grab rails, disabled access ramps, wet rooms, downstairs bedrooms etc. The scheme also provides extensions in cases of overcrowding.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

The number of properties in the private rented sector under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) was 698 and a further 547 tenancies were supported under RAS in the Voluntary Housing Sector at year-end.

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

There were 2,091 active HAP tenancies in Limerick City and County Council at the end of December 2023.

HAP enables Limerick City and County Council to provide housing assistance for households who live in the private rented sector who qualify for social housing support. The HAP Unit set up 223 HAP tenancies in 2023.

Homeless Operation

Homelessness is currently at the highest level in the history of the Irish State. Locally Limerick City and County Council have experienced unprecedented levels of homeless presentations in the past five years.

The number of homeless cases at the end of December is as follows:

- Individuals - 184 singles
- Families - 70 families (96 adults and 107 children)

The Limerick Homeless Action Team continues to operate a multidisciplinary team, staffed by operational clinical staff from the HSE; Support Staff from the Approved Housing Body Sector; Welfare Services from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and Accommodation/Case Managers from the Local Authority. In the changing homeless environment, prevention of Homelessness has become as important as the delivery of accommodation services. In this regard engaging with those who are at risk of becoming homeless is critical. The rollout of Family Hubs, the Place Finder Service, shared living options, street outreach services and Housing First has added to the service options available and our ability to respond to the issue of homelessness in the Region.

The Homeless Action Team was developed as a direct result of actions arising from the Governments National Homeless Strategy. As part of Limerick City and County Council's Housing Support Services, the team is focused on ensuring that all services to homeless persons are delivered to the highest quality and in a co-ordinated and integrated way. This allows a wide range of supports to be put in place, not only giving people a roof over their heads but also providing elements of health care essential to the needs of homeless persons via a multi-disciplinary team. On presentation to the Homeless Action Team, service users are fully assessed to ensure that all their economic, health and accommodation needs are addressed in line with Homeless Policy.

In 2023, the following services continued to be rolled out in relation to supporting those at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the Limerick region:

- **Housing First**
Housing First targets people who have experienced long-term homelessness and are currently experiencing mental health and/or addiction issues. Housing First has resulted, to date, in 45 tenancies being set up since February 2018, housing individuals in permanent, stable and supported housing units for homeless single persons. The original pilot from 2018-2021 has ended with Housing First becoming an integral part of the 'Housing for All' plan.

- **HAP Placefinder**

Two HAP Placefinder roles were integrated into the Homeless Action Team. The Placefinder Service is also one of the key responses from Limerick City and County Council in the prevention of homelessness, as it engages with HAP tenants and landlords who may be involved in Notice-To-Quit (NTQ) in an effort to avoid the closure of a tenancy. Additionally this year, this team also assess families for CRTiS and TiS schemes.

- **Tenancy Sustainment**

Clients access this support through various service providers in Limerick. Tenancy Sustainment Services provide a key response in preventing tenancies from ending and in providing support to clients to maintain their accommodation.

- **Street Outreach**

The Street Outreach team have seen an increase in numbers accessing this service throughout 2023, each client is engaged with to ensure a seamless support is offered.

HOUSING WELFARE AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

Housing Welfare

In 2023, the Housing Welfare Team continued to circulate the new housing welfare referral form to various internal and external agencies. A housing welfare referral database has been developed as a result in order for housing welfare staff to track referrals. The development of the database in conjunction with the referral form has proved to be a very using tool when highlighting vulnerable families and adults to the Allocations Team. 285 Housing Welfare Referrals were received in 2023, of which one third were housed successfully.

The Housing Welfare Team work collaboratively with all departments in Housing, in particular Community Sustainment, Assessments and Allocations. In 2023, the Housing Welfare Team focused strongly on streamlining the Supported Tenancy Service with Community Sustainment and the Approved Housing Bodies, namely Sophia Housing, Peter Mc Verry and Focus Ireland. The Housing Welfare Team liaise with specialised services such as Tusla, Disability Services, Children Services and approved housing bodies in order to explore options and improve the quality of accommodation that vulnerable families and individuals are residing in.

Traveller Accommodation

The Traveller Accommodation Programme for 2019-2024 sets out to accommodate 105 Traveller families over its lifetime. The Local Traveller Consultative Committee (LTACC) is made up of Public Representatives, Traveller Representatives and Council Officials with four meetings held in 2023. One of the targets of the Traveller Accommodation Programme was to make 105 offers of accommodation over the lifetime of the plan. From 2019 to December 2023, there have been 155 offers of accommodation made, of which 98 have been accepted (with three pending).

In 2023 Limerick City and County Council:

- Has completed caravan loan schemes for 11 families who will now be responsible for their own repair and maintenance costs going forward
- Have undertaken social work assessments for individual housing applicants
- Received 463 new requests for maintenance on the Metropolitan halting sites through Customer Services and Sugar CRM. 406 requests were completed and closed in the same period. The remaining cases are being dealt with by the technical staff in the Traveller Accommodation Unit or have been closed due to the unfounded nature of some requests
- Capital Works undertaken at:
 - Longpavement
 - Reduction of site by nine Bays (8-13) and (15-17)
 - Reduction in rear hardstand by 70%
 - Illegally constructed wall removed and replaced to include enhanced safety on site and resurfacing of roadway
 - Askeaton
 - Capital project awarded, due to commence 2024
 - Hillview HS, Rathkeale
 - Scope developed with a target of tender advertisement in 2024
 - Villa Maria
 - Demolished
 - Toppins Field
 - Demolition and replacement of Welfare Facility
 - Improved safety to all walkways through reduction in vehicle congestion and bollard installation
 - Boher
 - Demolition and replacement of Welfare Facility

LA HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

The team is dedicated to delivering the build programme on local authority owned lands and the refurbishment and maintenance of social housing stock.

The Local Authority new build units are funded by the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) and are constructed on Local Authority owned land.

Name	No. of Units
Ballysimon/Greenhills Road	17
Gough Place	17

Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) has a four Stage approval process. During 2023, the Housing Construction Unit had a total of 383 units being advanced through various stages of this process.



Gough Place



Ballysimon/Greenhills Road

Project Name	Number of Units	Project Status
82, 84, 86 Hyde Road	1	Tender stage
Lot 1	2	Complete
Lot 2	10	Complete
Lot 3	13	Nearing Completion
Lot 5	12	Nearing Completion
The Lodge Cottage, Patrickswell	1	Stage 2 Approved
Bridge Street, King's Island	6	Capital Appraisal
Mary Street, Kings Island	50	Capital Appraisal
Mulcaire Drive, Annacotty	6	Stage 1 Approved
Mill Road, Corbally	7	Stage 1 Approved
Ballycummin Road	19	Stage 1 Approved
Brugh na Deise, Bruff	17	Stage 2 Approved
52 New Road	6	Stage 1 Approved
Michael Street, Limerick	9	Stage 1 Approved
Colbert Terrace, Abbeyfeale	4	On-Hold awaiting completion of road works
Church Glen, Ballylanders	9	Stage 2 Approved
Radharc Cillin, Kilfinane	10	Stage 2 Approved
Mountcollins	4	Stage 2 Approved
O'Connor Park, Ardagh	10	Stage 2 Approved
Deerpark, Adare North Site	13	Stage 2 Approved
Broadford	11	Stage 2 Approved
Broadford	8	Stage 2 Approved
Patrickswell (Barnakyle Site 2)	24	Stage 2 Approved
Deerpark, Adare South Site	18	Stage 2 Approved
Sycamore Crescent, Newcastle West	31	Stage 2 Approved
Station Close, Knocklong	12	On-site
Glenview Drive, Hospital	20	On-site
Clare Street, Limerick City	7	On-site
Clonmacken, Limerick City	43	On-site

Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) Renew

SHIP Renewal is a housing delivery stream, which is 100% exchequer funded construction on derelict vacant properties. These can be derelict properties acquired, within Local Authority ownership already or derelict properties vested under a compulsory acquisition. SHIP renewals are managed and delivered by Limerick City and County Council under LA Construction and Maintenance unit.

In 2022, an application was made to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for 31 units under SHIP Renew. The application was approved for €5,398,709. In Quarter 4 of 2022 work began on returning these derelict units back into housing stock and continued throughout 2023.

VOIDS and Planned Maintenance Programme 2023

Limerick City and County Council refurbished 73 units under the Voids Funding scheme in 2023. These units were completed using a combination of direct labour teams and contractors depending on available resources and scale of works required on the unit. Units were returned to stock for letting throughout the year. Funding of €1,862,711.00 was drawn down on completion of the units during 2023.



Limerick City and County Council completed planned maintenance works on 15 units under the Planned Maintenance scheme in 2023 along with 43 Stock Condition Surveys. The nature of the works included providing new concrete floors, boundary wall and roof repairs. Funding of €186,083 was drawn down upon completion of works during 2023.

Energy Efficiency Retrofit Scheme 2022/2023

Work was completed to retrofit 54 occupied housing units across the four Municipal Districts in 2023. The units achieved a minimum BER rating of B2 on completion. This scheme was grant aided by the European Regional Development Fund as part of the EU Operational Programme and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Funding of €1,950,750 was drawn down upon completion of the works during 2023. Remaining costs of €2.128 million were funded from the Council's own resources.



Response Maintenance

Housing Maintenance received 13,526 new requests for maintenance through Customer Services and Sugar CRM in 2023. 13,333 requests were closed off in the same period. This is a reduction of 7.8% in new requests for maintenance from the previous year.

The response maintenance works undertaken during 2023 were completed in compliance with HSE and Health and Safety guidelines. Customer Services provided a vital role in this regard in advising tenants of this in advance.

Though issued in 2020 the Tenants Handbook continues to have a positive impact with regard to additional clarity for tenants of services that are provided under response maintenance.

Defective Concrete Block Grant Scheme

During 2023, Limerick City and County Council commenced the rollout of the Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme and administered it for eligible houses in Limerick within Department guidelines. A total of 30 applicants registered on the Departmental Portal. 18 full applications were received with 15 applications being validated. 12 applications were deemed to have met the damage threshold for eligibility for the Scheme by the Housing Agency by the end of 2023.

STRATEGY AND NON LA HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

The team is dedicated to delivering:

- Formulation of Housing Strategies and Policies
- Build programme with Approved Housing Bodies and Private Developers
- Acquisition Programme
- Lease Programme

Affordable Housing Fund

The Affordable Housing Fund (AHF), which assists local authorities in developing affordable housing schemes, has replaced the Serviced Sites Fund (SSF).

AHF applications and approval for funding, enabling works, viability reviews, site investigations and preplanning design have been progressed throughout 2023 on each of the following former SSF sites:

- Toppins Field – Proposed development of 285 residential units, of which 143 units are proposed for affordable purchase housing
- Guinness Lands – Proposed development of 300 residential units, of which 270 units are proposed for cost rental housing
- Clonmacken Lands – Proposed development of 25 residential units, of which 22 units are proposed to be affordable purchase housing
- Sonny's Lands – Proposed development of 19 residential units which are proposed to be cost rental housing
- Curragower Lands – Proposed development of 8 units, of which 7 units are proposed to be affordable purchase units

A proposed 250 unit residential scheme at Dromdarrig, Mungret of which 181 units are earmarked for Affordable Purchase was progressed during 2023 with a public consultation opening for submissions in December. The proposal was accompanied by An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report with the screening processes intended to be completed in early 2024 upon completion of the public consultation.

Build Programme with Private Developers

Land owned by Limerick City and County Council that is appropriate for building new housing is finite. The Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) informs the policies and objectives of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, playing a key role in translating national and regional housing policies to the local level.

Following the launch of a Turnkey campaign in 2019, the interest generated will see Turnkeys continuing as a key delivery mechanism in the housing programme. The Turnkey campaign is about getting live planning permissions

that have stalled, particularly due to financial issues, up and running. In locations where we have a housing need, Limerick City and County Council enter into a contract with the developer to buy the properties at a price that includes a builder's profit. Workshops were held with Elected Members in 2023 to discuss the existing and proposed Framework to ensure an appropriate tenure mix in large-scale turnkeys. The proposed Framework mix of future large-scale turnkeys are to align to 50% affordable (including cost-rental), 30% social-rental (including private-rightsizing) and 20% private.

Pipeline Sites for Social Housing

Limerick City and County Council recognises the State's requirement for public housing and the target for Limerick of 2,693 new homes by 2026 under 'Housing for All'. The Council are focussed on significantly increasing new build delivery and to move away from delivery via long term leasing and acquisitions that may impact on the first-time buyer market.

After consultation with the DHLGH, the Council published its final Housing Delivery Action Plan in August 2022, which sets a strong delivery pipeline from 2022 to 2026 to ensure that each settlement of the City and County reaches its assigned target.

By 2026, we are confident of meeting our delivery target for social housing of 2,693 homes. The Council are actively prioritising an increasing number of acquisitions where valid NTQs have been served. In addition, all new Council led schemes are providing for 15% to be designed to a Universal Design standard so that it can meet the needs of widest range of tenancies possible (disability, elderly etc.).

Advance Purchase Turnkeys for Affordable Housing and Mixed Tenure

Three Affordable Housing campaigns were launched in 2023, seeking homebuilders and housing developers in Limerick city and county to consider offering unbuilt houses or apartments with planning permission to Limerick City and County Council under an advance purchase turnkey arrangement. Limerick City and County Council sought to enter into advance purchase arrangements to secure turnkey homes in areas where the need, in particular for affordable housing, was most acute. The campaigns were targeted at advance purchase opportunities for a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 150 dwellings in any one scheme.

Limerick City and County Council sought to agree advance purchase of unbuilt turnkey properties 'off-plan' in the following areas:

- Abbeyfeale
- Adare
- Bruff
- Caherconlish
- Cappamore
- Castleconnell
- Doon
- Hospital
- Kilmallock
- Limerick City (all areas including suburbs)
- Newcastle West

These advance purchase opportunities were put in place to provide for accelerated delivery of housing generally, and primarily, to provide affordable homes for eligible applicants nominated by the local authority in areas where a significant need for affordable has been identified. Two affordable purchase housing schemes were launched in 2023 - a scheme of 25 affordable purchase units in Brú na Gruadán, Castletroy, Limerick and a scheme of 21 affordable purchase units (Phase 1) in Woodfield Manor, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick. A further 21 affordable purchase units were also agreed in 2023 as part of Phase 2 of the development at Woodfield Manor, Newcastle West and these are expected to be launched in early 2024. An additional pipeline of potential affordable purchase units, via advance purchase turnkey expressions of interest, were progressed with home builders and developers throughout 2023 with a view to progressing them as affordable housing schemes in the future.

In order to launch the affordable purchase housing schemes in Castletroy and Newcastle West, a Scheme of Priority for Affordable Housing needed to be agreed and adopted by Council, and an online portal created for the submission of affordable housing scheme applications.

Partnerships with the Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) Sector to Deliver Cost-Rental and Private Downsizing

In addition to the targeted provision of social housing units by 2026 under 'Housing for All', the expanded provision of new and affordable homes is another key objective. The Housing Directorate is setting out an ambitious agenda for increasing the supply of new private homes and particularly new affordable homes for starter families and key-workers on suitable sites in its ownership in the city.

Private Rightsizing Scheme

Limerick City and County Council developed a policy where persons over the age of 55 who own their own home, and who find their dwellings too large for their needs, may request the Council to purchase their home in return for a lifelong tenancy in a managed Older Persons Scheme. The 'rightsizing' scheme is entirely voluntary and in partnership with AHB's.

Limerick City and County Council in partnership with Clann Housing, launched its third Private Rightsizing Scheme at Woodfield Manor, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick in August and included two-bed bungalows. The two-bed bungalows are set in a well-established and well-serviced area benefiting from countryside surroundings with plenty of amenities nearby.

The fourth Private Rightsizing Scheme also in partnership with Clann Housing launched at Newtown Meadows, Castletroy in October, which included one-bed and two-bed apartments. The apartments are located in one of the most sought after locations in Limerick with links to the newly opened Greenway, Castletroy Shopping Centre, University of Limerick campus along with a host of local bars and restaurants.

Clann Housing is a dedicated age-friendly housing provider, committed to providing high quality housing, which enables people to age in place, create homes and thriving communities.

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs)

Approved Housing Bodies are non-profit organisations that provide and manage good-quality housing at affordable rents for households on the Local Authority housing waiting lists.

Examples of Limerick Based AHBs: Arlington Novas Ireland CLG, Mid-West Simon Community CLG, Athea Voluntary Housing Association CLG, Dromcollogher Community Housing Association CLG, Focus Housing Association CLG, Glin Homes for the Elderly CLG, Cluid Housing Association CLG. AHBs work closely with Limerick City and County Council to meet their housing targets under Housing for All.

The Capital Assistance Scheme provides funding to AHBs to deliver housing to the priority groups of Elderly, Homeless and Disability by way of a loan of up to 100%. These loans are not repayable, provided that the accommodation continues to be let to eligible categories of persons and is properly maintained.

The Capital Advance Leasing Facility Scheme is a facility available to assist AHBs to access private or Housing Finance Agency (HFA) loan finance for the purchase and construction of units that will then be made available for social housing under the leasing initiative.

Under the Mortgage to Rent scheme (MTR) borrowers who are in mortgage arrears can apply to become a social housing tenant of an AHB. The property is sold to the AHB, which in turn leases the property back to the borrowers.

The Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA) was established in 2021 to regulate Approved Housing Bodies operating nationally. Limerick City and County Council has a local oversight role in the regulation of Approved Housing Bodies and at present there are approximately 53 Approved Housing Bodies operating in Limerick City and County. As per the most recent AHB Occupancy Audit for the year 2022, AHBs collectively own, lease and manage 2,104 homes in Limerick with new units continuously increasing annually via the schemes mentioned above.

Acquisitions

Housing Acquisition continues to be an effective housing delivery mechanism. Mindful of first-time buyers, the need for vacant possession and house price inflation, Limerick City and County Council is focusing on houses that are vacant for long periods and in areas where the private market deems the refurbishment of such properties unviable to reactivate. There was an increase in Notices to Quits in 2023 following the ending of the eviction ban in place since November 2022 and the Council had delegated sanction from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to purchase homes where the tenant was at risk of homelessness. AHBs can still access funding for acquisitions under Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) streams but the national target overall under 'Housing for All' is capped.

Leasing

Under 'Housing for All' the following leasing streams were pursued in 2023;

- **Repair and Leasing Scheme (RLS)**

The scheme is aimed at better utilisation of existing housing stock. Properties must be vacant for at least one year, and property owners and contractors engaged under the scheme must demonstrate that they are tax compliant through the provision of tax clearance certificates on request. The Repair and Leasing target for 2023 was seven.

The ideal units targeted under the RLS will require a low level of investment to bring them to the required standard for renting. Capital repairs cost on a single unit must not exceed €60,000 (including VAT). All direct leases must be for the duration of between 5-25 years. No shorter terms will be eligible. The cost of the repairs shall be offset against the agreed rental payment until the value of the works is repaid.

There was an expansion to the RLS which removed the requirement that a property owner must be unable to fund or access funding to bring vacant properties into compliance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.

This modification applied to certain categories of vacant properties only. These are:

- Vacant commercial properties;
- Vacant units associated with a commercial property (e.g. over a shop);
- Vacant former institutional buildings and
- Unfinished developments where these have been vacant for a significant period of time.

This expansion is on a pilot basis. Approval was required to be granted by the local authority or DHLGH, where appropriate, on or before to 31 December 2022. The pilot period has been extended to 30 June 2024.

- **Short Term Rental Agreements (RAS type)**

Short Term Rental Agreements (RAS type) are used to secure the availability of privately owned property for the purposes of social housing support. The Short Term Rental Agreement target for 2023 was 20. The arrangement takes the form of a series of contracts between a property owner, a housing authority and a tenant. The arrangements are normally for periods of up to 10 years, but can be for the duration of the existing tenancy only. The arrangements are structured so that the housing authority can allocate tenants to the property while the property owner is obliged to be the landlord to the tenant nominated by the housing authority.

- **Mortgage to Rent**

The Mortgage to Rent (MTR) scheme is a government scheme, which helps homeowners who are at risk of losing their homes due to mortgage arrears. It lets homeowners in mortgage difficulty switch from owning their home to renting their home as social housing tenants.

The MTR scheme is a social housing option only available if one is eligible for social housing support and the mortgage is unsustainable. To qualify for the scheme the property owner must have participated in their lender's Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP), a process in which the lender and the owner must take part in order to try to resolve their financial difficulties.

Approved applicants will voluntarily surrender possession of their home to their mortgage lender who immediately sells it to a housing association who will then rent it back to the family. The proceeds from the sale of the property to the housing association will go towards the mortgage debt and the applicant makes an arrangement with their lender for any remaining payments owed, if any. There is potential to buy back the home after a period of 5 years if the household's financial situation improves.

- **Research and Policy Formation**

A New National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022–2027 (NHSDP) was launched on the 14 January 2022 and clearly sets out Government's vision for the delivery of housing and related support services for disabled people over the next five years.

Limerick City and County Council finalised the Housing Disability Strategy Plan in early 2022. The vision of Limerick City and County Council's Housing Disability Strategy Plan is to facilitate access, for people with disabilities, to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustained manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living.

All new Council schemes are designing 15% of total units to Universal Design standard which is a wheelchair liveable standard. 1.8m turning circles for wheelchairs in kitchen, living, bathroom, bedrooms and hallway. Floor areas are +12m² above minimum floor area standard.

The National Launch of the Implementation Plan for the strategy was held on the 22 June 2023 in Dublin. As part of the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 and 'Theme 2 – Interagency Collaboration and the Provision of Supports', the first meeting of Regional Interagency Groups was held on the 27 September.

The role of these Groups is to bring together the local authority dedicated disability representatives and the HSE dedicated housing representatives for both Disability Services and Mental Health Services to allow for cooperation and collaboration at an operational level. The Regional Interagency Group offers an opportunity for stakeholders working in local authorities and the HSE to work collaboratively, build relationships, improve knowledge within their organisations, share best-practice methods, and implement effective delivery of housing and supports for disabled people in their areas.

Quarterly meetings of the Housing and Disability Steering Group (HDSG) took place in 2023 with key service providers (HSE, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, Enable Ireland, Brothers of Charity and other key service providers). A HDSG Implementation Workshop was held by the Housing Agency during the Housing and Disability Steering Group meeting in October. This Implementation Plan builds on the Outcomes and Actions of the Strategy. The Plan documents the actions that will be required to deliver on the outcomes and assigns those actions to identified stakeholders. The Plan also sets out indicative timeframes as well as key performance indicators for each of the actions.



TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY





The Transportation and Mobility Directorate plays a vital role in the delivery of transport infrastructure for Limerick City and County. The Directorate leads in the development of quality transport infrastructure for Limerick, the day-to-day maintenance of the road network and the development of sustainable travel options, thereby playing a major role in climate change mitigations. The Transportation and Mobility Directorate is responsible for policy and strategy and supports and administers the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee (SPC). The Directorate has the lead role in the prioritisation and funding of all major physical and infrastructure development projects relating to roads and sustainable Travel schemes. The Directorate also incorporates the Mid-West National Road Design Office (MWNRO), which is responsible for delivering major infrastructural projects including the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Road Scheme and the Foynes-Limerick Road (including bypass of Adare). The Directorate also works closely with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the Department of Transport (DoT) on the delivery of major road projects and active travel projects and the NTA has now appointed a consultant team for the Limerick City Centre Transport Plan, with commencement of the preparation of this plan in January 2024. The Directorate will continue to work with the NTA into 2024 to facilitate the proposed improved Bus network and services under Bus Connects and to assist in developing and implementation of a Transport Plan for Limerick City as set out in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) to enhance sustainable connectivity and mobility through the region. The MWNRO also manages the Limerick Greenways on behalf of TII.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road

Bam Civil Ltd undertook the successful completion of the partially constructed Ballygrennan Railway Bridge in 2023. Wills Bros Ltd have substantially completed the laying of the Trunk Watermain on the CKDR Scheme. The Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road Main Works Contract is currently out to tender. Works are expected to commence in Quarter 2 2024. The full scheme will take approximately 24 months to complete broken down into two Phases.

Phase One will see the completion of the Mainline Dual Carriageway from Coonagh Cross to Knockalisheen Road including works on the Old Cratloe Road and the new Moyross Link Road, which is expected to take 12 months.

Phase Two is the completion of the full road reconstruction of Knockalisheen Road to Watch House Cross including the reconstruction of Ballynanty Railway Bridge, which is expected to take 12 months.



Ballygrennan Railway Bridge

Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

Transport Strategy are currently developing the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, which is due for completion in early 2024. The strategy is taking a proactive approach in assessing the expected power requirements on the network and determining the necessary number of charge points needed to support the growing number of electric vehicles across Limerick. In tandem with the development of the strategy document, Transport Strategy have progressed the development and delivery of a pilot EV charging project which will be operational in 2024.

BusConnects Limerick

BusConnects is a key part of the Government's policies to improve public transport and address climate change in Ireland's major urban centres. In December 2023, the National Transport Authority published the final new bus network for Limerick. The new network will be delivered on a phased approach from 2025. Key benefits of the new network include;

- An approximately 70% increase in the amount of bus services in Limerick city and its suburbs.
- An extension of bus services to new areas with more routes.
- A new 24-hour bus service operating between University Hospital Limerick, the City Centre and the University of Limerick.

Bike Week 2023

Bike Week 2023 was an opportunity for Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) to celebrate and promote cycling as a sustainable mode of transport and a fun leisure activity. A weeklong schedule of free bicycling events was hosted from the 13-21 May throughout Limerick City and County.

Bike Week began on the 13 May with a Family Cycle along the Limerick Greenway from Rathkeale Greenway carpark. Bike Clinics were held around Limerick throughout the week. Bike Mechanics were in attendance at various locations including People's Park, Murroe Wood Park, Arthur's Quay Park, and Castletroy Neighbourhood Park where more free bike checks and repairs were undertaken.

Community groups, schools and workplaces had the opportunity to apply for funding support to run bicycle related events throughout the city and county. 31 applications for funding were received and events included free bicycle repair workshops, organised cycles, and safety promotions.

Limerick City and County Council flagship Bike Week event took place on 14 May. A parade of almost one hundred cyclists took to the streets of Limerick to mark the end of another successful Bike Week. The cyclists left Arthur's Quay Park for a 4km Three Bridges loop route that took in King John's Castle, Thomond Bridge, Clancy Strand, O'Callaghan Strand and Shannon Bridge. Along with the bike parade, the crowds also enjoyed an afternoon of entertainment in the park with a pop-up Street Velodrome, music, face painters and a puppet show.



Bike Parade, Thomond Bridge



Bike Parade, Honan's Quay



Bike Parade, Arthur's Quay

European Mobility Week

European Mobility Week took place from 16-22 September and is an initiative aimed at promoting sustainable and active modes of transport. During this week-long campaign, the Council committed to raising awareness about sustainable mobility and inspiring behavioural change towards active and sustainable travel methods, including walking, cycling, carpooling, and public transport.



Mobility Week

Dockless Bicycle Scheme

The pilot Dockless shared bicycle scheme was launched in Castletroy on 3 April and officially commenced on 12 April. Operated by Nextbike by Tier, the scheme offers electric bicycles as well as push bicycles which can be parked in marked bays or at selected existing bike stands throughout the Castletroy area as well as at Colbert Bus and Rail Station and Locke Quay in the City.



Dockless Bike Scheme, Newtown Park



Dockless Bike Scheme, Newtown Park

ACTIVE TRAVEL

The Active Travel team, through funding from the National Transport Authority (NTA), has been continuing to upgrade and expand Limerick's cycling and pedestrian networks in 2023. The NTA allocated €21 million in funding to the Active Travel team for 2023.

It's estimated around 9km of Active Travel infrastructure in the city and county has been completed since the team was established. A further 22km of Active Travel infrastructure is in design. Approximately 10km of proposed infrastructure in the Metropolitan area and 1km in the county area have commenced non-statutory public consultation processes.



Hyde Road Scheme

Hyde Road

Construction was completed on this scheme in December 2023. The project, which is approximately 1km in length, includes segregated cycle facilities, an improved footpath, drop-curbs, tactile paving and junction improvements at Crecora Avenue, Lenihan Avenue, Byrne Avenue and Meagher Avenue. Table top ramps and new road markings are also included in the project.



Brookville Avenue

Brookville Avenue

Construction on this scheme was completed in Quarter 2 2023. A two-way segregated cycle track has been installed, along with the tightening of a number of junctions for pedestrian safety. The Scheme provides cycle connectivity from the Moylish Roundabout to Caherdavin Cross (formerly Ivan's Cross).

Patrickswell Village Renewal Scheme

Significant progress on construction took place in 2023 with the scheme to be fully completed and launched in early 2024.



Patrickswell Village Renewal Scheme

Mill Road, Corbally

A contractor was appointed for this scheme in November 2023 and initial site clearance works begin in December. Construction of the scheme is anticipated to take approximately 18 months to complete.



Mill Road

Plassey Road/ Plassey Park Road

Construction began in September 2023 and is anticipated to last approximately 12 months.

Father Russell Road, Raheen Phase 1

Construction began in October 2023 and is anticipated to last approximately twelve months. The link is to provide segregated cycle lanes on both sides of the road from Quinn's Cross to the junction of the Gouldavoher residential area. The footpath and cycling facilities at Racefield Roundabout will also be upgraded, along with overall improvements to crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at junctions.

Ros Mor Roundabout and Active Travel Link

Construction began in Quarter 4 2023 and is anticipated to take approximately eight months to complete. Initial works include site clearance at Mount St. Oliver Cemetery, in order to accommodate a new boundary wall construction. Preparation work to undertake roundabout construction at Ros Mor has also been conducted.

Metropolitan District – Asset Renewal Cyclepaths and Greenways

Works were completed on the R526 cycle path to Patrickswell, Baggot Street, Kennedy Park, the cycle way from Clare Street to UL Boat Club and the cycle ramp link to Athlunkard Bridge and link to Spring Grove.

Metropolitan District – New Footpaths

New footpaths have been provided at Lower Park Road, Rosbrien Road, School Road (Lisnagry), Ballybrown, Condell Road, Garryowen Green, Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh, Mountshannon Road and Drombanna.

Metropolitan District – Asset Renewal (footpaths)

Footpaths were improved at Scanlan Park, Hilltop, St. Patrick's, Walnut Drive, College/Janemount Park and Laurel Park, Clarina.

Low cost Junction Tightening/Pedestrian Crossing Schemes

Low cost Junction tightening and Pedestrian Crossing schemes were completed at Lisnagry National School, Arthur's Quay, Mallow Street/Pery Street junction, Ballingarry and in county schemes in Cappamore/Kilmallock and Adare/Rathkeale (Banogue).

Low cost permeability measures

Low cost permeability measures were completed from Monaleen Heights to Kilmurry, Elm Park, Galbally, Kilmallock and Garryowen Green.

Adare/Rathkeale Municipal District

Minor footpath projects were undertaken in Banogue, Cappagh, Askeaton, Ballysteen, Fedamore and at Adare Riverbank.

Newcastle West Municipal District

Minor footpath projects were undertaken in Athea, Mountcollins, Ardagh, Abbeyfeale and Feenagh.

Cappamore/Kilmallock Municipal District

Gotoon and Millennium Bridges: Draft options reports completed for Gotoon Bridge, Kilmallock and Millennium Bridge in Caherconlish. Part 8 process anticipated in 2024.

Cappamore and Doon Public Realm: Draft options reports completed for the public realm in both Cappamore and Doon. Part 8 process anticipated in 2024.

Minor footpath projects were undertaken in Galbally, Herbertstown, Bruff, Elton, Caherconlish, Ballylanders and Pallasgreen.

Projects under development

Safe Routes to School

During 2023 works progressed on the delivery of the Safe Routes to School programme at a number of Limerick schools in the city and county, as part of the first and second rounds of the programme. Round one schools include: An Mhodhscoil ('School Street' completed in September 2022), Gaelscoil Sáirséal, Bóthar Shíol Bhroin; Laurel Hill Coláiste FCJ, Cnoc Na Labhras; Limerick School Project National School, O'Connell Avenue; Scoil Íde, Corbally; St. Munchin's College, Corbally, St. Pauls National School, Dooradoyle; St. Nessan's National School, Mungret.

In March 2023, a 'School Zone' was officially launched at Gaelscoil Sáirséal on the Shelbourne Road. The 'School Zone' creates a safer environment for children going to school and raises awareness to vehicle traffic that they are directly outside the school and should proceed with caution. The works included a new, raised crossing on the Shelbourne Road; junction improvement works at Mayorstone Estate; pencil-shaped bollards and planting; the existing school gate being widened and more.

Work around St. Paul's National School in Dooradoyle was also completed in 2023 following a successful trial before the summer period.

Part 8 planning permission was granted for the Corbally Road Safe Routes to School Scheme (Scoil Íde and St. Munchin's) in Quarter 4 2023. A contractor is now to be appointed with construction anticipated to begin in 2024.

Round two schools include Caherconlish National School; Crescent College Comprehensive S.J., Dooradoyle; Hazelwood College, Dromcollogher; Lisnagry National School and St. Patrick's Girls National School, Dublin Road. Work and engagement with the schools has been ongoing throughout 2023 to develop plans and deliver safety improvements through upgraded and additional infrastructure outside these schools.

Wickham Street to Clare Street

A non-statutory public consultation process for the Scheme was completed in Quarter 2 2023. An Economic Assessment examining a number of potential routes for the Scheme was commissioned in September 2023. A public information to update stakeholders in relation to the Scheme was held in December 2023. It is anticipated a second round of consultation will be held in Quarter 1 2024, with statutory processes to follow in Quarter 3 2024.

St. Paul's to Ballykeefe

A non-statutory public consultation process for the Scheme was completed in Quarter 3 2023. A public information session on Part 8 proposals was held in October 2023, with statutory processes beginning thereafter. A planning decision on the project is due in early 2024.

Baggot Estate

A non-statutory public consultation process for the Scheme was completed in Quarter 4 2023. It is expected the Scheme will progress through statutory processes in 2024.



Baggot Estate

South Circular Road

Part 8 planning permission for the Scheme was approved in February 2023. Detailed design is continuing to progress on the Scheme. A contractor will be appointed with construction expected to commence in Quarter 3/Quarter 4 2024.

TUS Moylish to City Centre

Detailed design continued to progress throughout 2023. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2024.

R510 Quinn's Cross to Raheen

Detailed design continued to progress throughout 2023. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2024.



Quinn's Cross

Abbeyfeale Greenway Extension

A non-statutory public consultation process for the Scheme was completed in Quarter 4 2023. It is expected the Scheme will progress through statutory processes in 2024.

Roxboro Road

Consultant engineers engaged in 2023 following a consultation process. Options report and non-statutory public consultation anticipated in 2024.

Ennis Road

Car parking surveys ongoing in 2023. Options report and non-statutory public consultation anticipated in 2024.

Ballysimon Road

Options report and non-statutory public consultation anticipated in 2024.

Other projects of note

Bus Shelters

Funding granted up to €600,000 for bus stops across the city and county. Work on the rollout of shelters continued to progress in areas such as Hospital, Bruff, Askeaton, Mungret and more.



Bus Shelter, Hospital

Air Quality Monitors

The team began monitoring air quality across the Metropolitan District. NO2 diffusion tubes were installed across 15 different areas:

- Ballycummin Road
- R510 Quinn's Cross to Raheen
- Fr. Russell Road
- Dooradoyle Road
- Childers Road (West)
- Childers Road (East)
- Plassey Park Road
- Corbally Road
- Mill Road
- Milk Market
- Bellefield
- Ennis Road (Lawn Tennis Club)
- Ennis Road (Gaelic Grounds)
- TUS Moylish
- Old Cratloe Road

Mobility Counters

The team began overseeing the installation of radar mobility counters, to compare traffic/cycle/pedestrian levels before and after the delivery of projects. The devices being used identify cars, bicycles and pedestrians based on a vehicle/person's size and shape using radar technology. No cameras are used and no personal data is recorded.



Mobility Counter, New Street

Pop Up Playgrounds

Trees felled to progress Active Travel projects were reused to facilitate 'pop up playgrounds' in Kennedy Park; Corbally Baths and Mayorstone Quarry. It is anticipated similar initiatives will follow in suitable areas in 2024.



Kennedy Park, Corbally

ROAD, TRAFFIC AND CLEANSING

The Roads, Traffic and Cleansing Department (RTC) manages most of the Limerick's road improvements across a wide range of services and is subdivided into Sections and Teams.

The primary expenditure area is delivered at District Level and is referred to as Road Maintenance Section. This includes General Maintenance, Safety Maintenance, Road Reconstruction, Road Re-surfacing as well as day to day Patching and Drainage Maintenance for the circa 4,000km of the county and city public road network.

Improvements are delivered through the Municipal District Offices and our Central Services Team based in County Hall. The RTC Department manages Road Closures, Road Opening Licences, Public Lighting, Road Safety, Traffic Management and Structures (Bridges and Crash Barriers). It also provides resources for delivery of flood protection schemes, CLÁR funded measures, Active Travel schemes and Climate Change Adaption schemes.

Within the RTC Department is the Fleet Management and Machinery Yard Team which has bases in Newcastle West and Limerick City. This team manages the Council's Fleet and Machinery as well as providing significant resources to facilitate the Roadworks Programme. They also play a key role in operation of the Winter Maintenance Plan.

The Insurance Team oversees Insurance, and Public Liability related management on behalf of key operational areas of the Authority.

The Traffic Section manages traffic and parking in the city and provides support to developments, events and new infrastructure. Traffic Wardens provide patrols and enforcement throughout the city. In 2023, the Traffic Warden presence in the suburbs was increased and focused on illegal parking. School Wardens provide supervised crossings at national schools and busy junctions.

The Cleansing Section is responsible for street cleaning and public realm washing, litter bins and road sweeping. In 2023, the Cleansing Section implemented specific planning for cleansing operations arising from various large events which occur throughout the year. The Cleansing Section is currently maintaining several new cycle ways and now regularly sweeps approximately 70km of cycle ways in Limerick City.

The Department delivered over €41.5m of expenditure on Roads related projects in 2023.

Expenditure Category	€Million
Non- Core Public Road Expenditure 2023	
MD Delivered Active Travel 2023	€5.5
MD Delivered Climate Change, OPW, CLAR, TVR, ORIS,GMA etc.	€2.75
Sub-total non-core Public Road Expenditure 2023	€12.3
Core Public Road Expenditure 2023 (primarily grant aided)	
Restoration Improvement (incl. Former National Roads and Own Resources)	€14.3
General Maintenance 4000 km of roads (Patching, Road repairs, drainage etc.)	€5.1
Public Lighting (O&M) -23,000 Lights	€2.9
Restoration Maintenance – 4048km (Surface dressing of Roads)	€2.9
Specific Drainage Grant (Roads related drainage)	€0.9
Bridge Rehabilitation	€0.8
Winter Maintenance – up to 800km per event	€0.6
Safety Improvement Schemes –	€0.4
Community Involvement Scheme*(Total Spend) *Primarily to cater for Local Tertiary Roads (CIS)	€0.60
Sub-total Core Public Road Expenditure 2023	€28.27
Non-public Roads	
Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) Grant 2022	€1.2
Total Project Spend 2023	€41.45

**Table - Expenditure in 2023 on Roads related projects

Active Travel Measures 2023 (City Environs and County)

Following on from the significant additional expenditure allocated to Limerick in 2021, further Active Travel projects valuing over €5.5m were delivered in 2023 through the District Engineering teams completed throughout the City and County.

Non-National Roads Programme 2023

Restoration Improvement (Local and Regional Roads) Expenditure of €14.3m

Typically, the most significant annual expenditure category in this Department is termed as Restoration Improvement. Restoration Improvement works are those deemed necessary to first strengthen and then surface or reseal public roads. There are a variety of methods used including:

- Crushed Stone Overlays (Where the existing structure is weak)
- Recycled Stone Overlays (Using the existing stone to reshape the road)*
- Macadam Overlays (Structural Improvements typically to trunk roads)

A greater emphasis is now being placed on reducing the transportation of material where this can be avoided. Recycling existing stone road structures are considered where engineering assessments justify such an approach. This approach is consistent with low carbon and green policies.

In 2023, €14.3m (including €0.6m on former National Roads) was expended on Restoration Improvement schemes throughout the County improving over 105km (2%) of the road network. This provides for a one in 50-year treatment cycle.



Athea Village

Restoration Maintenance (Local and Regional Roads) – Expenditure of €2.9m

More commonly referred to as Surface Dressing, restoration maintenance works are used to extend the life of a road, protect the road structure from ingress of moisture and provide a durable wearing course for traffic.

These schemes offer best value and provide longevity when the road drainage and roadside hedges/trees are well maintained. The role and responsibility of landowners in this regard is critical and their co-operation is greatly appreciated.

In 2023, €2.9m was expended on 90km of Restoration Maintenance Schemes improving 3% of the network. The Network maintenance rate of 1 in 34 years.

Minor Private Roads

Community Involvement Scheme 2022 (Public Roads)

Department of Transport Grant – Expenditure of €584,000

In 2023, we completed 14 schemes costing an average of €41,700. This scheme is aimed at funding upgrades and resurfacing of roads that would not have been carried out as soon under the annual programme based on current prioritisation.



R505 Leahy's Cross towards Grange

Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) Private Roads DCRD Grant – Expenditure of €1.17m

As a result of funding in 2023 we completed schemes at an average cost of €68,800 under this programme with grant aid from the Department of Community and Rural Development.

Bridge Rehabilitation Expenditure of €780,000

The purpose of this programme is to repair existing road bridges. Works are managed through our Central Services Section. Depending on costs, extent of repairs and available funding, we typically repair 10 bridges per annum. Fleet Management and Machinery Yard RTC continue to invest in our plant and machinery, with €900,000 from 2023 budget and €1.5m in 2024 (expected). The Fleet Management team supports all the operational sections in the Council with a significant portion associated with Roads, Traffic and Cleansing.



Barber's Bridge



Rathoran Bridge

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ADARE-RATHKEALE

Roads

Regional and Local Roads

Expenditure on maintenance and improvement works on roads in 2023 was financed by way of Government Grants and the Council's own resources.

Road expenditure programmes included:

- Surface Dressing works of 27 kilometres of road network carried out at a cost of €708,000
- Road Reconstruction works were carried out on 20 kilometres of roadway at a cost of €2.584m
- Six Drainage Improvement Schemes totalling €200,000 were undertaken
- Two Schemes were funded via Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Works at a cost of €380,000: Kilmacow Road Flooding and Ballingarry Low Road Verge Stabilisation
- Winter maintenance of the N21, N20 and N69 (TII funded) and Regional Roads (Department of Transport funded)

Community Involvement Schemes

Six Community Involvement Schemes were completed at a cost of €485,000 at Fanningstown, Croom; Ballyhomack, Cappagh; Ballymacstradeen, Mainister; Faha, Kildimo; Courtmatrix, Rathkeale and Caherass, Croom.



Ballymacstradeen Mainister Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)

Local Improvement Schemes

Five Local Improvement Schemes were completed during the year at a cost of €483,375 at Old Court Croagh; Glenogra, Fedamore; Kilfinny; Cherrygrove, Croom and Fedamore.

Office of Public Works (OPW) Minor Flood Mitigation Works

A new 300mm storm main with a headwall and outfall to local stream was constructed at Coolfune, Fedamore with funding from OPW of €117,225. This new storm main will prevent future flooding of public road and private properties.

Bridge Rehabilitation

Bridge Rehabilitation works were carried out on an emergency basis on a collapsed Bridge at Lissatotan, Rathkeale during the summer.



Collapsed Lissatotan Bridge



Completed Lissatotan Bridge

Low Cost Safety Improvement Works

Junction improvement works to facilitate increased sightlines were carried out during 2023 at Morenane, Croom.



Refurbished Lissatotan Bridge



Morenane Junction, Croom

Active Travel

Six Towns and Villages across Adare- Rathkeale Municipal District have benefitted from €0.915m of investment in Active Travel measures. With funding from the National Transport Authority, Limerick City and County Council has delivered a range of improvements for Pedestrians;

Adare Pedestrian Linkage and Upgrades

Adare Riverbank

Widening, upgrading and reconstruction of Riverbank Macadam Walkway

Ballysteen

Upgrade and widening of existing path adjacent to Church and National School to facilitate Pedestrian movements. Extension of new path at either end to improve connectivity to recently restored Community Centre at Eastern end and to Old Post Office/ Amenity Area at western end.

Askeaton

Ballycullen Road

New Footpath for approximately 250m, public lighting, drainage, accommodation works including utility relocation within 60km/h speed limit. Macadam reinstatement at footpath/ road edge also required.

These works will result in improved pedestrian connectivity to the town centre from the south western periphery where there are existing dwellings within the speed limit.

Fedamore

Refurbish and widen existing footpaths and increase height segregation from pavement for approximately 500m of footpath. A short infill section of new footpath was also provided.

Rathkeale

Refurbish and widen where possible footpaths along Church Street/Castlematrix R523 to connect town centre housing in the area with Slí na Sláinte Walking Route/Limerick Greenway.

Croom

Upgrade and widen existing paths in very poor condition from Main Street Roundabout to Roundabout on new Distributor Road. The works result in connectivity in a safe manner from town centre, main street, north eastwards towards the Secondary School and Hospital.



Adare Riverbank Macadam Works and Fencing



Ballysteen New Footpath



Ballycullen Road Askeaton



Castlematrix Rathkeale



Fedamore Footpath Improvement Scheme



Junction tightening St. Senan's Terrace Croom

Bus Shelters

A number of new Bus Shelters were constructed by the Active Travel team during 2023 in the Adare-Rathkeale Municipal District at Rathkeale, Askeaton and on N21 in Croagh.



New Bus Shelter Askeaton



New Bus Shelter N21 Croagh

Climate Adaption and Resilience Works

€380,000 was allocated in 2023 for two projects in Adare-Rathkeale District under Climate Adaption and Resilience fund, targeting preventative measures such as drainage works to mitigate road flooding. Drainage works were carried out at Kilmacow, Kilfinny. A new precast concrete culvert and stone wall stabilization works were carried out at low Road Ballingarry.



Ballingarry Low Road Culvert and Stone Wall Stabilisation

Treaty of Askeaton

A fantastic commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Treaty of Askeaton, the very first treaty ever signed between an Irish political figure and France was held at Askeaton Desmond Castle, organised by Askeaton Civic Trust on 25 June.



Castle The Battlements Askeaton Castle



Banqueting Hall Askeaton Castle



Treaty of Askeaton Commemoration June 2023

Irish Rail

Adare Railway Bridge on Mague River

In September, Limerick City and County Council facilitated the temporary closure of the L1423 Station Road with appropriate diversions in order that the Adare River Mague Metal Bridge be lifted off site and refurbished. This triple span Railway Metal Bridge, which is a Protected Structure, was built circa 1856 over the River Mague to the northwest of Adare.



Adare Rail Bridge Lift



Adare Railway Bridge on Mague River

Vegetation Clearance Limerick Foynes Railway

Work started during 2023 on reopening the 164-year-old Foynes-Limerick rail line as a freight service. Clearing of vegetation commenced along the 42km track, and major construction work on the line began which will see the old track removed, the installation of new rail track and sleepers, upgrading road infrastructure at level crossings, rehabilitating bridges and culverts and the renewal of lineside fencing. The line itself which serves Patrickswell, Adare, Askeaton and Foynes originally opened in 1858 as a passenger line, but closed in 1963. While freight services continued to 2001, the old line fell into disrepair and has remained inactive for over 20 years.

During 2023, over 42km of new rail track arrived at Foynes port as part of the infrastructure to begin work on the project. It is anticipated it will take two years to complete this first phase, estimated to cost €64m. Phase two will see the provision of a signalling system for the route, CCTV level crossings, trains communications systems and track connections and upgrades with work due to be completed by 2025.

Iarnród Éireann has said this significant upgrade of the line will facilitate rail freight services but will not preclude the possibility of passenger services being reintroduced on the line in the future but this would require further infrastructure upgrades and funding.



700tonne Crane Lift

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CAPPAMORE-KILMALLOCK

In 2023, investment, including additional grants, of almost €18m (with over €16m on the Roads works scheme) secured by the Municipal District throughout the year for works associated with Climate Adaption, OPW Minor Drainage Works, Community Improvement Schemes (CIS), Local Improvement Schemes (LIS), Outdoor Recreation Improvement Schemes (ORIS) and TII Geo App.

Cappamore-Kilmallock has been very successful in getting funding approved across the Municipal District in 2023.



GMA Knockainey Surfacing works



Mobility aid grant Stairlift



Banqueting Hall Askeaton Castle



Ballylanders Active Travel Scheme Works

Grant type	Amount
CLAR approvals (Kilteely Church Car Park)	€31,012.00
Climate Adaption (two schemes – Dromkeen and Geeragh)	€200,000.00
Community Involvement Scheme (eight schemes)	€104,500.00
Local Improvement Scheme (seven schemes)	€457,960.00
Transport Infrastructure Ireland Geo App (2 schemes)	€60,000.00
NTA Bus shelters	€135,000.00
NTA Pedestrian Crossing and Junction improvements	€70,000.00
LEADER Rural Development Programme five projects	€90,036.80
Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)	
Main SICAP budget	€497,823.00
Ukrainian budget	€76,344.00
Total budget (These budgets are for services in social inclusion delivered by Ballyhoura Development in east Limerick and are not delivered as grants to communities)	€574,167.00
Community Enhancement Programme (35 groups)	€116,479.11

Arts and Culture Grant Funding allocated to the region in 2023

Arts Act	€3,805
Festival and Events Grants	€32,200
Limerick Creative Ireland	€2,000



Pinkers cross Low cost safety scheme.



Low cost safety scheme R506 Murroe



CIS Scheme L1528 Kilbeheny

Service Operations Directorate - Roads

Expenditure on maintenance and improvement works on roads in 2023 was financed by way of Government Grants and the Councils own resources.

In addition to the additional funding secured throughout the year, road expenditure programmes during 2023 also included:

Road Works Scheme	
Work Category	
Restoration Improvement (RI) -Road Reconstruction	€3,486,888
Restoration Maintenance (RM) –Surface Dressing	€564,703
Supplementary Restoration Maintenance (SRM – Surface Dressing)	€442,750
Drainage Grant	€200,000
General Maintenance (GM)	€1,096,268
Tar Patching (TP)	€558,285
Low Cost Safety Improvement Works (LCSI)	€145,000
General Municipal Allocation (GMA)	€295,000
Bridge Rehabilitation	€380,000
Sustainable Travel Measures Grant (Active Travel)	€915,000
Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience works	€200,000
Former National Roads Rehabilitation Works	€184,250
Development Fund Municipal Allocation	€50,000
CLÁR	€31,012
M20 Limerick to Cork	€5,000,000
N20 Rourke's Cross	€500,000
N24 Beary's Cross	€2,000,000
Total Defined Spending	€16,299,156

Examples of Capital Road work projects undertaken in 2023 include:

- General Municipal Allocation Capital works including: Public lighting works, Hospital; Surfacing works, Knockaine; Footpath in Forest View, Kilfinane
- Active Travel scheme including footpath works in Ballylanders and Galbally
- CLÁR including Killeely Church Car Park

Service Operations Directorate – Housing

Housing Maintenance

- The Housing Maintenance crew is responsible for the maintenance of 843 houses within the Municipal District, which is 15.37% of the overall Council housing stock
- The District had a pre-letting budget of €173,661.00 for minor works to vacant properties prior to letting in 2023 and €383,165.82 was spent on response maintenance requests from existing tenants
- The crew received 1,437 service requests in 2023.

Housing Grants

Private House Grants

In relation to the ongoing House Adaptation grants available to private home owners, six Mobility Aid Grants were paid, totalling €23,455; 44 Housing Adaptation Grants for People with a Disability were issued totalling €387,031.70 and 64 Housing Adaptation for Older Person Grants were issued totalling €288,725.98.

Disabled Persons Grant

Eight Disabled Person Grants were completed for Local Authority tenants totalling €55,860.73

Housing Capital

- SHIP Construction: 30 including Glenview Drive, Hospital and Cuan Mhuire, Bruree
- SHIP Renewal: six including Oakley Lawn, Caherconlish; Fairgreen Terrace, Bruff; Mullaly Lawn, Cappamore; St. Munchin's Terrace, Bruree
- Turnkeys: Two including Maypole Crescent, Knocklong
- CAS/LA Acquisition: 11

Municipal District Meetings

The Cappamore-Kilmallock Municipal District held 11 District Meetings, one Annual Meeting and one Budgetary Planning meeting in 2023. 17 workshops/briefings and four Joint Policing Committee meetings were also held. A Municipal District Reception was held on 7 December to recognise the achievements of six local groups/individuals. Three Deputations were made to the Elected Members in 2023.

Sugar CRM cases

Cases Created		Cases Closed	
Total cases 2023	3934	Total cases 2023	3151
Reps	931	Reps	728
Public	3003	Public	2423
Department	Total Cases	Public Cases	
Roads Maintenance	1756	1397	
Housing Maintenance	1437	1392	
Housing Support Services	565	126	
Public Lighting	101	52	

Other

Attendance at the unveiling of the plaque to James Bourchier from Bruff, who played a significant role in the political history of Bulgaria, and about whom Mr. Martin O'Brien has published a biography.

Attendance at a tour of the proposed accommodation for Ukrainian refugees in Cappamore.



Housing for Older Persons New windows

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST

Roads, Traffic and Cleansing

Expenditure on maintenance and improvement works on roads in 2023 were financed by way of Government grants and the Council's own resources. The Newcastle West roads crew maintains 24% of the county's roads.

Road expenditure programmes during 2023 included:

- Road surface dressing of 40km of roadway to the value of €808,143
- Road reconstruction works of 32km to the value of €2,950,000
- Road overlays at Monagea village, Dromcollogher, Athea and Abbeyfeale
- Bridge rehabilitation works at L1327 Rathornan bridge, Abbeyfeale and Barbers Bridge, Tournafulla
- Low cost safety improvement works at R524/L1336/L1337 Buckleys cross
- Footpath upgrade works at the villages of Ardagh, Abbeyfeale, Mountcollins, Athea, Feenagh and Kilmeedy to value of €1,400,000 approximately
- Major drainage improvements at Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West, Monagea, Knockaderry and Kilmeedy completed to the value of €300,000
- Winter Maintenance Service operational from October – April annually
- General road maintenance and Road safety measures carried out as required during year
- Local Improvement Schemes - four schemes completed to the value of €128,000
- Community involvement schemes – one scheme completed to a value of €70,000
- Further improvements were carried out to the Top Yard, Newcastle West and Doonakenna Depots. New canteen and drying room facilities were installed during 2023, while an upgrade of Coolyroe depot is planned for 2024.

The total expenditure on road related projects managed and implemented through the Municipal District during 2023 including the above was €7,300,000 approximately.

Housing Directorate – LA Housing Construction and Maintenance

The Housing Maintenance crew for the Municipal District is responsible for the maintenance of 665 houses within the District, which is 12% of the overall Council housing stock. The District had a pre-letting budget of €51,724.06 for minor works to vacant properties prior to letting in 2023 and €363,775.15 was spent on response maintenance requests from existing tenants.

The crew received 1,365 service requests in 2023.

Housing Directorate – Housing Support Services – Housing Grant Scheme

76 under the Housing Adaptation Grants for People with a Disability were approved in 2023 at a cost of €608,437.23. Ten applications under the Mobility Aids Grants were approved at a cost of €38,719.53. 142 applications under the Housing Aid for Older People were approved at a cost of €665,748.77.

Also seven Council properties within the Municipal District had works completed on them for persons with a disability at a cost of €59,067.33

Support Services Directorate – Motor Taxation

The Motor Taxation Section had a total of 13,948 routine transactions during 2023 generating an income of €2,356,677.

Support Services Directorate – Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services

The customer services initiative and the use of Sugar CRM system continued during 2023. All queries and service requests received at the office were logged on this system by the Municipal District staff.

Under the Special Projects General Municipal Allocation, Newcastle West District Councillors approved funding for 51 projects within the District.

National and Regional SSC – Water Services

Uisce Éireann is the organisation with overall responsibility for water and waste water matters throughout Ireland. The water services crew at Newcastle West acts as an agent for Uisce Éireann and on their behalf operates and maintains a large number of water schemes throughout the County.

Roads, Traffic and Cleansing – Machinery Yard

The Machinery Yard at Newcastle West and Park Road depot continues to play a central role in the Council's Roadworks programmes. The Winter Maintenance programmes are operated from the depots at Atlas Avenue, Doonakenna, Kinard and Kilmallock. All bitumen used in the county is distributed through the Municipal District depots and Council vehicles are maintained by the Machinery Yard. The upgrading of the Council fleet of vehicles continued during 2023.

Newcastle West Municipal District Projects

- **Active Travel Programme National Transport Authority**
Projects at Abbeyfeale, Ardagh, Athea, Mountcollins, Feenagh and Kilmeedy benefitted from funding under this scheme in 2023 with the projects being processed. Two new pedestrian crossings were installed outside the National schools at Feenagh and Monagea villages

- **Regional Athletics Hub Newcastle West**

The Limerick Regional Athletics hub was completed in the spring of 2023 and an official opening took place on the 14 September this state-of-the-art athletics hub, officially opened by An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar T.D., represents a significant investment in the region's sporting infrastructure. With a total project cost of approximately €4.2 million, this ambitious endeavour has been made possible through the dedication and collaboration of multiple stakeholders.

This facility contains the following:

- Athletics track to International World Athletics Standard
- Floodlights for the track and a fully lit walking path on the track perimeter
- Field sports such as shot putt, discuss, hammer, javelin, long jump, high jump and pole vault.



Regional Athletics Hub Newcastle West

MID-WEST NATIONAL ROAD DESIGN OFFICE

The Mid-West National Road Design Office (MWNRDO) is a regional road design office working on behalf of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) (formerly the National Roads Authority (NRA)), and Local Authorities, including counties Limerick, Tipperary, and Clare.

The Office is responsible for the design of new roads and road improvement schemes, bridge management, safety assessments, for the national primary and secondary road network on behalf of TII and the Local Authorities.

Major Road Schemes

Foynes to Limerick Road (including Adare Bypass)

This proposed road is 35km in length, and when completed will connect the core port of Foynes to the motorway network near Limerick city. The road is comprised of the construction of approximately 15.6km of dual carriageway from Foynes to Rathkeale (with approximately 1.9km of single carriageway road between Ballyclogh and Askeaton) along with the construction of approximately 17.5km of motorway from Rathkeale to the existing motorway

network at Attyflin. A Service Area is to be provided at Foynes and the proposed motorway will also provide a bypass of Adare village.

Notices to Treat have been served on the landowners and Compensation Claims are currently being received and assessed.

The process of formally taking possession of the lands required for the Scheme commenced in early November.

The Mid-West National Road Design Office prepared and tendered a number of advance/enabling works contracts for civil works, utilities diversions, fencing, hedge clearance, ground and archaeological investigations. Various tenders for environmental surveys were also prepared and tendered during this period.

A number of enabling works contracts commenced on site in October with the contracts for hedge clearance and fencing for the proposed motorway between Attyflin and Rathkeale being the most notable.

Tenders for other enabling works contracts were advertised during November which included tenders for archaeological investigations across the entire extent of the Scheme along with fencing and hedge clearance contracts for the remaining sections of the project (those not part of the Attyflin to Rathkeale contracts).

Work on the detailed design of, among other significant elements, the roads and bridges comprising the project and the preparation of the corresponding main works construction contracts were also recommenced in October and this work is continuing.

On the 21 November, Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan, T.D., announced the Government's approval to advance the construction of the Adare Bypass. The Bypass is one element of the overall project.

N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project

Limerick City and County Council published the Transport Solution for the N/M20 Cork to Limerick Project in March 2022, and subsequently published a project update in February 2023. The transport solution is not limited to consideration of a single mode of transport but is based upon a holistic, multi modal view to improving connectivity, safety, and economic links between the cities of Cork and Limerick, and ultimately Galway.

The N/M20 transport solution will significantly enhance safety and journey time reliability for all transport users, improve the health and wellbeing of the bypassed communities, support regional and local economic growth, and implement transport decarbonisation measures from the government's Climate Action Plan.

Limerick City and County Council in partnership with Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Department of Transport are progressing Phase 3 Design and Environmental Evaluation. A project update was published on the 27 November to inform and consult with the public and stakeholders on the following elements:

- Reducing the width of the mainline corridor from 500m to 200m. A further reduction identifying the proposed fence line will take place over the next 12 months.
- Identifying the location of junctions, link roads, side roads and active travel corridors.
- Expanded provision of Active Travel infrastructure for walking and cycling from 80km to 100km, enhancing the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- Provision of Transport Hubs to facilitate interchange to public transport services, car sharing, active travel, and on-route EV charging facilities.
- Provision of a Freight Hub to provide HGV parking, welfare, and en-route EV charging facilities.
- Developing further opportunities to enhance Public Transport and encourage transfer to bus and rail.
- Developing best practice for environmental, biodiversity and carbon management.



Graphic - proposed N/M20 mainline cross section with active travel.

During 2023 the following surveys and investigations were carried out within the study area:

- Site Investigation including trial pits, boreholes, dynamic probes, geophysical surveys, and groundwater monitoring.
- Archaeological Geophysical Survey to establish the extent and features of known and potential archaeological features along with locating any unknown archaeological sites.
- Topographical Survey including watercourse surveys, using traditional survey techniques, mobile mapping, and UAV data capture.
- Transport Survey including automatic traffic counts, junction turning surveys, car park surveys, pedestrian and cycle surveys.

The project team continues to welcome feedback from property owners, communities, businesses and other stakeholders. Further project updates will be published in Quarter 2 (draft design) and Quarter 4 2024 (final design and fence line). Further information available at www.corklimerick.ie

N21 Abbeyfeale and N21 Newcastle West Road Schemes

Limerick City and County Council in consultation with TII continued to progress planning of the N21 Abbeyfeale Road Scheme and the N21 Newcastle West Road Scheme. The Design and Environmental Evaluation stage of the scheme (Phase 3) continued in 2023. This involved further development of the scheme, including design of the road, identifying the land take required, junction design, landowner and stakeholder engagement and the preparation of an environmental impact assessment. In order to inform the design process, the project team continued to undertake a range of engineering and environmental site surveys.



N21 Abbeyfeale Road Scheme - Preferred Route Option



N21 Newcastle West Road Scheme - Preferred Route Option

Road Improvement/ Re-alignment

N20 O'Rourke's Cross Road Improvement Scheme

A new roundabout-controlled junction is to be constructed necessitating alterations to the existing junction layout and the construction of new N20 approaches to the junction and the alteration of the existing R518 approaches to the junction at N20 O'Rourke's Cross. An Bord Pleanála confirmed the compulsory purchase order (CPO) to acquire the land necessary for the road development and a judicial review application by a landowner on the scheme followed in July 2021. The judicial review hearing was held in October 2023 and was conceded by An Bord Pleanála and the Judge agreed to remit the Compulsory Purchase Order Application to An Bord Pleanála to the point prior to the holding of the Oral Hearing, so another Oral Hearing will be held into the compulsory purchase order in due course by An Bord Pleanála. After this new Oral Hearing, the An Bord Pleanála inspector will then prepare a report and recommendation which will be considered by the board of An Bord Pleanála, who will ultimately make the decision as to whether to approve or not the Compulsory Purchase Order application.

N24 Beary's Cross Road Improvement Scheme

The Council completed the construction of a new roundabout-controlled junction on the N24 at Beary's Cross in February 2023. The road works scheme comprises:

- a new roundabout-controlled junction
- alteration to the existing junction layout
- construction of a new regional road R513 approach to the junction
- alteration of the existing N24 approaches to the junction.
- accommodation works and associated site works.



Construction works at N24 Beary's Cross Road Improvement Scheme

N69 Mungret and Boland's Cross Road Safety Improvement Scheme

This road safety scheme is located along the N69 and its environs between Boland's Cross junction (N69/L1403) and the junction of Moore's Road and the N69 (N69/L1438).

The scheme comprises the realignment of Boland's Cross, junction improvements at Mungret Cross, modified traffic layout and road realignment in the vicinity of Mungret Cross, provision of pedestrian and cyclist facilities and pavement works. The Council completed a Part 8 planning process in 2023 and detailed design of the scheme was continued in 2023.

Road Safety Audits

The MWNDRDO continued to undertake road safety audits on behalf of local authorities in the region during 2023. The road safety audit is undertaken to identify potential safety issues within a scheme design or construction as they could affect road users.

Pavement Rehabilitation Works

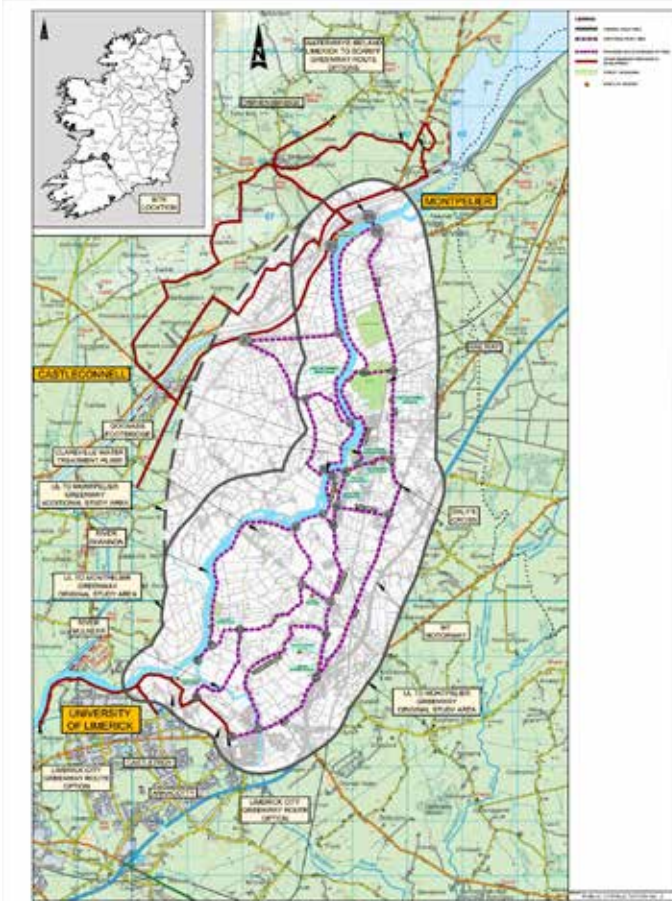
N69 Hegarty's Cross to Askeaton Phase 2

The scheme is approximately 5.0 km in length and provides for road reconstruction, drainage improvements, pavement surfacing, traffic signage, road markings and associated works. Construction works were undertaken by Roadstone Ltd. The works commenced on site in July and were completed in August 2023.

Greenway Projects

UL to Montpelier Greenway

Two public consultations were held during the year on this scheme. The first public consultation was in relation to the proposed study area and was held earlier in the year in April and May. The second is currently coming to a close and centered around a network of proposed route corridor options across the region. The design team will continue with their assessment of the various route corridor options to identify a preferred route corridor with the intention of having a third public consultation in 2024 on the preferred route corridor.



Drawing from Public Consultation No. 2 showing the route corridor options

Rathkeale to Limerick Greenway

Following Irish Rail announcement to reopen the Limerick to Foynes railway line to freight, engagement has been taking place with Irish Rail to examine the possibility of co-locating a Greenway within an operational railway, all within the existing railway corridor. This process is ongoing.



Vegetation clearance on old railway corridor

Limerick to Cahir (Limerick to Oola)

The Phase 0 stage of this scheme has been completed and approval has been granted from TII to progress to the next phases. Following discussions with TII and the design team of the Cahir to Limerick Junction Road scheme, it was decided to truncate the Greenway scheme at Oola and allow active travel measures to Cahir to be delivered as part of the Cahir to Limerick Junction and Oola road scheme. A tender competition will be held in early 2024 to appoint technical advisors to progress the Limerick to Oola Greenway project between Phases 1 and 4.

Patrickswell to Charleville

Following a successful tender competition during the year, consultants were appointed to progress the scheme between Phase 1 and Phase 4, from concept and feasibility, through option selection, design and the statutory process.

Other MWNRDO Projects in the Region

N19 Shannon Airport Access Road Improvement Scheme

During 2023, the Mid-West National Road Design Office continued to assist Clare County Council with the progression of the planning and design for the N19 Shannon Airport Access Road Improvement Scheme. The section of the N19 being progressed in this project, is located between Drumgeely roundabout and Knockbeagh Point roundabout on approach to Shannon International Airport. The proposed scheme is approximately 2.2km in length.

A Design update for the road and active travel components of the Preferred Option was published in March.

The Design and Environmental Evaluation stage of the scheme (Phase 3) continued throughout 2023. This involves further development of the scheme, including design of the road and active travel components, identifying the land take required, junction design and the preparation of the environmental impact assessment report. The project team continues to engage with stakeholders and landowners to inform the design process.

N24 Cahir to Limerick Junction Project

During 2023, the Mid-West National Road Design Office continued to assist Tipperary County Council with the progression of the planning and design for the N24 Cahir to Limerick Junction Project. The section of the N24 being progressed in this project, is located between the M8 motorway, north of Cahir in Co. Tipperary to west of Brooks Bridge in Co. Limerick. Tipperary County Council is the lead authority for the scheme.

A reduced 100m corridor for the road component of the preferred transport solution for the scheme was presented to the elected representatives of Tipperary and Limerick in January and subsequently went on public display.

The Design and Environmental Evaluation stage of the scheme (Phase 3) continued throughout 2023. This involves further development of the scheme, including design of the active travel, demand management and road components of the Preferred Transport Solution, identifying the land take required and the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report. The project team continues to undertake a range of engineering and environmental site surveys in addition to stakeholder and landowner engagement in order to inform the design process.

Pavement Schemes

During 2023, the Mid-West National Road Design Office assisted Tipperary County Council with the completion of the N74 Golden to Knockroe Pavement Scheme. This scheme involved pavement resurfacing and strengthening, including associated ancillary works, on approximately 2.5km section of the N74.

Structures

The Structures Unit is responsible for procuring/ arranging/ organising the maintenance and reconstruction of National Road structures in Munster, in order that they remain functional, safe and visually acceptable. Some works undertaken were;

- Planning and conducting bridge and structure inspections for a new task order
- Preparing, reviewing and approving bridge and structure inspection and assessment reports
- Ranking and optimising/prioritising bridges and structures in need of repair, strengthening or replacement; for Task Orders
- Preparing budgets for approval of TII and monitoring expenditure
- Managing consultants and other council staff carrying out bridge works
- Preparing, reviewing and approving tender documents for bridge and structure repairs and then monitoring repair works and routine maintenance
- Maintaining EIRSPAN database
- Managing third party works to bridges and retaining walls
- Liaison with statutory bodies
- Managing the TII Munster Term Maintenance Contract

Below is a small snapshot of some of the schemes currently underway.

Term Maintenance Contract – Munster

The Task Order involves the annual inspection and undertaking of routine maintenance works to all bridges across all counties in the Munster Region over a four year period. Each of these bridges requires four routine inspections at the start of each year. Data from the inspections is entered into the database.



Completed fish pass work at Glenbeigh.

One significant piece of work was a landslip of the N70 near Glenbeigh, Co. Kerry. There were a number of hurdles such as landowners, Eir equipment, ESB equipment to move as well as Ecology issues due to the need to divert the river and construct a fish pass.

Task Order 326: Kerry and Cork Bridges Vehicle Restraint System (VRS) and Expansion Joint Contract

Atkins are the technical consultants and they have produced designs; the works contract was completed by Cumnor. The works to the bridges in Kerry consisted of the provision of fully compliant VRS at each of the 10 bridges where feasible and for Atkins to develop non-compliant VRS layouts with the appropriate departures from standards, based on the physical layout at each bridge, taking the existing constraints into account. The works to the five bridges in Cork consisted of the replacement/ remedial works to the expansion joints, resurfacing works and for the replacement of seals to joints.

One of the works involved expansion joint replacement of Eamon De Valera and Michael Collins bridges in Cork City Centre.



Installation of the type 6 joint

Task Order 340: Gleensk Embankment in County Kerry.

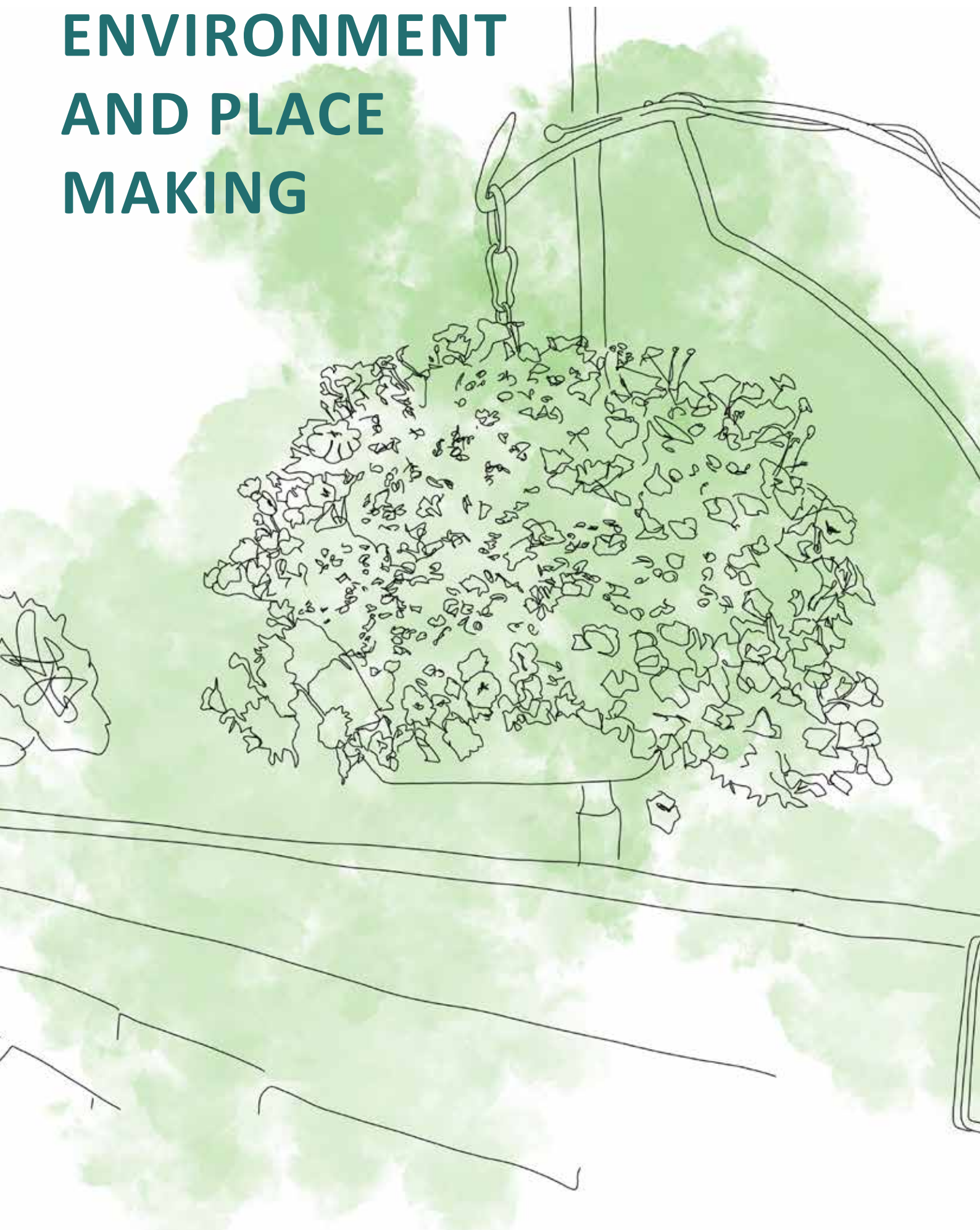
Cracking was observed in the surfacing which led us to believe that the slope was moving. The geotechnical and geophysical investigation showed that the slope was moving and there were large voids under the road. A design was undertaken to prevent the slope from moving further using a contiguous pile wall. The construction is currently ongoing and will be completed in early 2024.

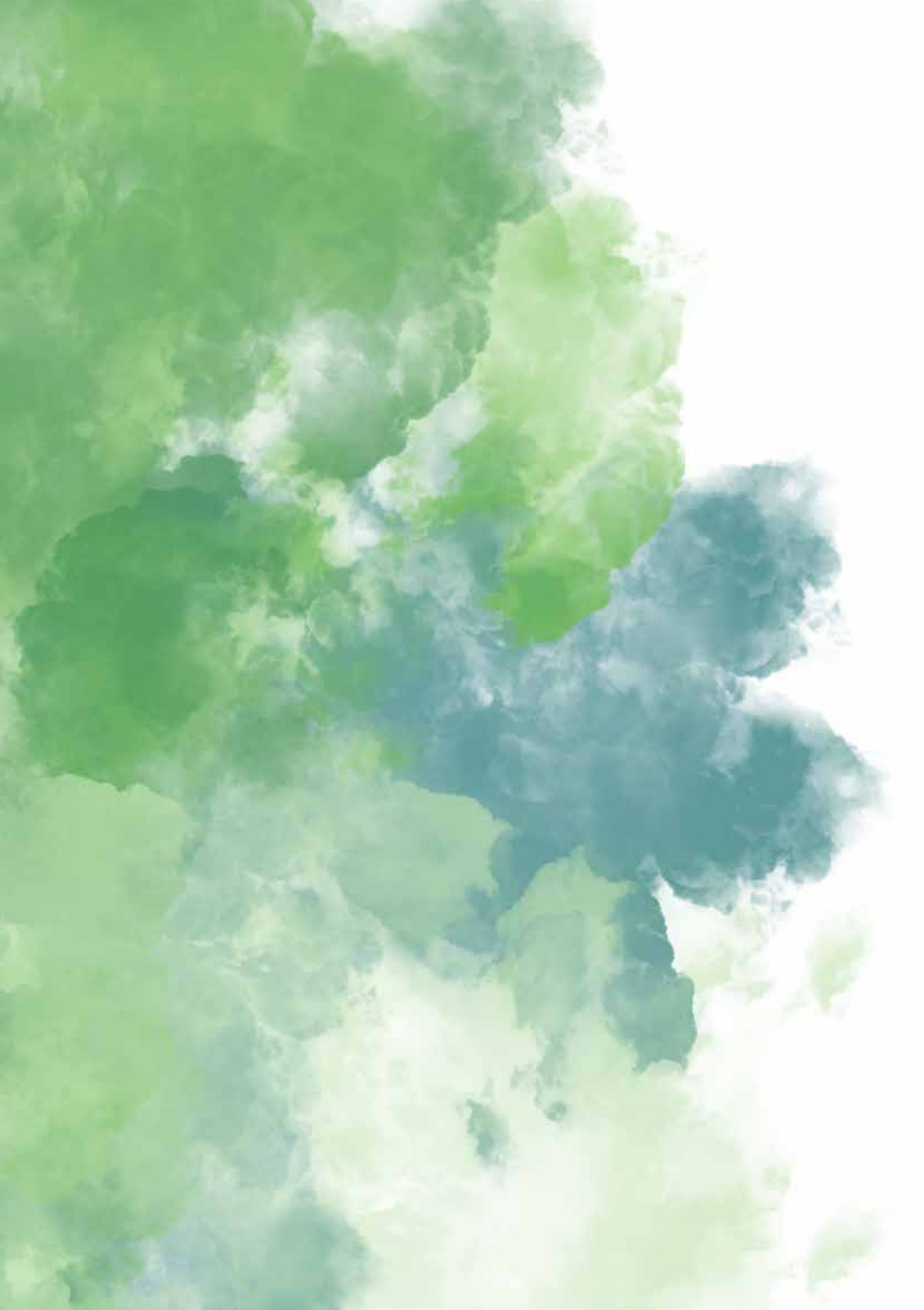


Works at Gleensk Embankment



PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE MAKING





The Planning, Environment and Place-Making Directorate leads in the fields of forward planning, public realm, heritage, development management, place making, environmental strategy, protection and enforcement, recreation and amenity and climate change. The Directorate is developing a comprehensive approach to place making including urban innovation and public realm, delivery of capital projects including roads, streets and buildings.

The Directorate is responsible for policy and strategy in these areas and supports and administers the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and the Economic, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

The Directorate comprises of the following Departments:

1. Forward Planning and Public Realm
2. Development Management and Place-Making
3. Environment and Climate Action (incl. Veterinary Services, Parks and Burial Grounds)
4. CFRAM Flood Relief Schemes
5. Support Directorate for the Limerick Twenty Thirty DAC

FORWARD PLANNING AND PUBLIC REALM

A revised organisation structure was put in place in Quarter 2 2023, consolidating the Public Realm and Heritage teams within the Forward Planning unit. The team is responsible for the preparation of plans to enable the medium to long term development of the City and County. These include the Development Plan, Local Area Plans, Public Realm plans and Masterplans. Responsibility of co-ordinating the heritage, conservation, archaeology functions, public realm and participating in the work of the Atlantic Economic Corridor also lies with this section. It also maps and compiles data in respect of development to inform policy and decision-making at local and national level. Through the Forward Planning unit, the Council also inputs into various regional and national spatial and economic strategies.

Forward Planning

The adoption of the first consolidated Limerick Development Plan in June 2022 paved the way for the 2023 work programme. A key piece of work in the Forward Planning unit this year was the adoption and review of several Local Area Plans (LAPs) to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy of the Limerick Development Plan. Plans adopted included Castleconnell, Caherconlish, Abbeyfeale and Newcastle West Local Area Plans. Work also progressed on the preparation of new plans for both Adare and Patrickswell. In addition, the first variation of the Limerick Development Plan in relation to substandard roads policy was adopted. The team's engagement with young people through these plans received recognition at the Irish Planning Institute Awards and also the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards.

The monitoring of development activity, vacancy and population trends and Central Statistics Office (CSO) results also formed much of the strategic work carried out by Forward Planning. This work assisted with the publication of the first monitoring report on the Limerick Development Plan. Ongoing policy advice for a number of strategic projects and submissions were made on a number of national policy guidance documents.

With the introduction of the Residential Zoned Land Tax, the section carried out surveys and analysis prior to publishing maps setting out lands that are considered liable under the tax initiative.



Newcastle West Local Area Plan – Consultation



Irish Planning Institute Awards 2023

Public Realm

Initiated in 2023, the Limerick City Public Realm Plan project has progressed through various stages, which include data collection, an online survey to engage citizens and gain insights into the future of Limerick's public spaces, an examination of survey feedback, and the facilitation of additional consultation events. At present, the project has advanced to the pre-draft report phase, where it is gathering additional input from stakeholders, honing its vision, and shaping public realm typologies that will be incorporated into the final document. The Limerick City Public Realm Plan is on track for completion in the second quarter of 2024.

Similarly, the Adare Public Realm Plan was developed and incorporated into the Local Area Plan. These documents complement each other, contributing to the consideration of opportunity sites and the future projects action list for Adare. These documents underwent public consultation in Quarter 3 2023, and it is expected that the draft Local Area Plan will be finalised in early 2024.

Additionally, the Kings Island Walled Town Spatial Framework is under development. It will serve as a blueprint for the potential transformation of this strategically significant area in Limerick City over time. The spatial framework will outline the role of the public realm, including key urban spaces, pedestrian-friendly connections, and streetscape enhancements, with a particular focus on Nicholas Street. This plan will guide and stimulate future investments in the area and is set to be completed in 2024.

Heritage, Conservation and Archaeology

The Heritage Section works across the council providing support and advice on heritage, ecology, conservation and archaeology.

The Heritage Officer works with local communities to provide important support in their bids for heritage grants such as those for the heritage council community grants scheme. Advice on other heritage issues is also provided.

In relation to Archaeology the Council successfully applied for Irish Walled Towns Funding under the Capital Grant for the Kilmallock Town Walls and in total €73,000 was received with the Local Authority providing match funding and project management.

In partnership with Kilmallock Tourism Development Ltd. a very enjoyable week of activities was delivered during Heritage Week.

In relation to the Limerick City Walls a third season of works was carried out in the Johnsgate/Grattan Court area of Irishtown and a grant of €70,000 was received for works to complete the stretch between New Road and Old Clare Street. Part of works will consolidate the base of Cogan's Tower and lay a pathway up along the outside of the wall to facilitate access and maintenance. It is hoped to also carry out works to the top of the clay bank subject to Ministerial Consent, again to facilitate access and maintenance.

Under the Community Monuments Funds two Local Authority graveyard projects in Ballynoe, Bruree and Galbally were advanced during 2023. Under Stream 2 for advance works, a Conservation and Management Plan for Ballingarry Tower House was completed under the direction of Ballingarry Development Association.

Conservation of our built heritage assets includes restoration and reconstruction works, as well as the sensitive care and maintenance of original fabric and materials. Such interventions not only provide high quality homes and work spaces but also contribute enormously to the character and intrinsic value of places. During the course of 2023, 24 Built Heritage Investment Scheme Projects were completed with overall payments amounting to €264,323 made to the Protected Structures property owners. A number of Historic Structure Fund Projects were also completed contributing to the maintenance of our built heritage.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND PLACE-MAKING

Development Management

The Development Management section is responsible for the evaluation of planning applications received across the county.

A total of 1,514 planning applications were received in the year to 30 November 2023, an increase of 17% on the same period in 2022. Refusals formed 5% of decisions, down from 8% in 2022.

The Development Management section received two applications for Large-Scale Residential Developments in the year to 30 November 2023 and decided on one other Large-Scale Residential Development. Development Management provided one opinion for a Strategic Housing Development in 2023.

A number of significant planning applications were granted in 2023. The table below contains a sample of these developments.

Planning Reference Number	Description of Development
22/1216	Kearock Investments Limited The construction of a Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) scheme consisting of 26 no. apartments with a total of 202 no. student bed spaces at Old Dublin Road, Rhebogue, Limerick City.
22/410	Croom Lodge Nursing Home and Village Limited The construction of a three storey 91 No. bed nursing home at Skagh, Croom, Co. Limerick.
23/152	Eli Lilly Kinsale Limited Development consisting of modifications and alterations to previously permitted Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing Campus (Planning Register Reference Number 22/190), IDA Business and Technology Park, Raheen, Limerick.
23/7002	Rockspring Developments Limited A residential development comprising 96 no. units at Baunacloka, Raheen, Co. Limerick.
22/817	Riverpoint Construction Limited The construction of 86 residential units at Clonconane, between Old Cratloe Road (L3102) and Pass Road, Meelick.
22/840	Kasbeem Limited The construction of a residential development of 93 no. residential units including access from Station Road at Churchtown, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.
22/990	Dwellings Developments Adare Limited The construction of 74 no. residential units at Rathkeale Road, Adare, Co. Limerick.
22/959	Riverpoint Construction Limited The construction of 98 residential units at Clonconane, between Old Cratloe Road (L3102) and Pass (Meelick) Road, Limerick.
22/950	Lidl Ireland GmbH A development of a single storey discount food store; a single-storey café building; a three storey building comprising of six commercial units at ground floor area to accommodate Shop use (Class 1) or Office/Professional/Financial Services use (Class 2) or Office use (Class 3) or Medical use (Class 8) (gross floor area 625 sq.m). First and second floors consist of office floor space including circulation space with entrance at ground floor (gross floor area 1,545 sq.m); a 6 no. storey building comprising 4 no. commercial units at ground floor to accommodate Shop use (Class 1) or Office/Professional/Financial Services use (Class 2) or Office use (Class 3) or Medical use (Class 8) (gross floor area of 786 sq.m). The upper five floors comprise 38 no. apartments, with entrance at ground floor, (gross floor area of 3,900 sq.m), as follows: (a) 10 no 1-bedroom apartments, (b) 26 no 2-bedroom apartments, (c) 2 no 3-bedroom apartments at Towlerton, Ballysimon, Limerick.
23/102	Kirkland Investments Limited The construction of a five-storey Medical Building at Towlerton, Ballysimon Limerick.
22/1318	Michael Joyce Builder Ltd A development comprising 51 no. residential units, (and all associated site development works and landscape works) at Ballyveloge, Patrickswell, Co. Limerick.
23/60011	Shannon Foynes Port Company Construction of three covered industrial type warehouse units with associated external storage, parking and circulation areas, upgrade of existing site services and all ancillary works associated with the site development at Durnish, Internal Port Road, Shannon Foynes Port, Co. Limerick.
23/60609	Analog Devices 10 year planning permission for development for the regeneration of a building and site at Raheen Business Park.

Development Contributions

Circular Letter PL04/2023 advised of a new package of housing support measures as announced by the Government on 25 April 2023, which included a measure of a temporary time limited exemption from development contributions in respect of residential development.

The waiver will apply, for a period of one year, to all permitted residential development that commences between 25 April, 2023 and 24 April, 2024 and must be completed not later than 31 December, 2025.

Monies received to the end of November 2023 in accordance with Development Contribution Scheme totalled €3,764,571. Monies received represent an increase of 4% in comparison with the same period in 2022.

Online Planning

Online Planning is an online portal developed by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) through which planning applications can be made and applicants will be kept updated on the progress of their application. The portal went live in Limerick City and County Council on 15 December, 2022. There has been a considerable take up of this service by applicants/agents, with 59% of planning applications received by the end of November 2023 being received via the online portal.

The portal also allows for applications for local authority own development (Part 8 developments) to be submitted and managed online. Planning Section, in conjunction with our colleagues in Active Travel and Housing, piloted two Part 8 applications on the portal in late 2023. It is intended to use the portal for all Part 8 applications from 2024 onward.

Section 179A Planning

The Planning and Development and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 2022 (No. 47 of 2022) and the Planning and Development (Section 179A) Regulations 2023 (SI No. 101/2023) insert a new section 179A providing an exemption for local authorities from the 'Part 8' local authority "own development" approval process and specifies exempted development status for the provision of specified forms of housing developments on designated State lands. Developments advanced under this measure must satisfy certain criteria, and must be commenced by no later than 31 December, 2024. One scheme was commenced under this measure in 2023.

Planning Enforcement

The Planning Section is responsible for the regulation of unauthorised development, and the table below sets out the enforcement activity carried out to the end of November 2023.

	2023	% increase /decrease on 2022
Complaints Received	602	+ 38.4
Warning Letters Issued	264	-2.9
Enforcement Notices Issued	129	-14.6
Prosecutions Initiated	39	+25.8

A new Enforcement Records Management System was procured in 2023 and will be fully operational in early 2024.

Taking in Charge of Housing Estates

Significant progress was made in 2023 on the taking in charge of housing estates. Five estates were taken in charge, and the intention of the Council to take an additional three estates in charge was advertised before year end.

Licensing

Fees for the placement of tables and chairs on public roads / footpaths were once again waived in 2023. Nevertheless, the requirement to license street furniture remains. In 2023, the Council issued 115 Licenses under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). 257 Casual Trading licenses were issued in 2023.

Three licenses for large-scale events issued in 2023 – St. Patrick's Day Festival, Riverfest and the Dermot Kennedy concerts.

Place-Making

Place-Making and Public Realm is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, proactive delivery and management of urban and town-centre areas with the intention of creating quality places, buildings and public space that promote physical, economic and environmental sustainability as well as social inclusion. The current work of the team includes high profile projects, Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) projects Pedestrian Bridges and Waterfront Infrastructure Works and Arthur's Quay Framework Plan as part of the World Class Waterfront Project and the Georgian Houses Demo Projects, Limerick Urban Centre O'Connell Street Revitalisation Project, Laneways and Street Projects, Limerick Wayfinding Signage and Orientation Project phase 1.

World Class Waterfront Project - Pedestrian Bridges and Waterfront Infrastructural Works

This project proposes the revitalisation of the City Quays as the main entertainment and leisure destination for Limerick City. By creating a 'World Class Waterfront' it is envisaged that Limerick will become a more active and vibrant urban centre which is attractive as a location of choice in which to live, invest, work and visit. Through collaboration with the OPW the design and development of the waterfront is to be progressed in conjunction with the Flood Relief Scheme for the City Centre area to create a more pedestrian friendly and aesthetically pleasing environment that will maximise the amenity potential of the waterfront in Limerick City.

Funding for the delivery of this project will come from a number of sources including; Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Urban Regeneration Development Fund, National Transport Authority, Department of Transport Tourism and Sport and the Office of Public Works. Preparation of a Preliminary Business Case for the Project progressed in 2023.

Arthur's Quay Framework Plan

The Framework Plan will set out the guidelines for a comprehensive, plan-led and place-based approach to the redevelopment of the Arthur's Quay area of the city centre. During 2023 a public engagement strategy was put in place which included an online survey, and in-person public engagement events. The Arthur's Quay Framework Plan will inform the Preliminary Business Case for the Pedestrian Bridges and Waterfront Infrastructure Works World Class Waterfront project. The design team and Limerick City and County Council presented the project overview and analysis and invited feedback from the public through conversation, surveys, interactive plans and written postcards.

The culmination of the feedback received from these events has gone on to inform the ongoing design proposals for the framework plan.



Arthur's Quay Framework Plan - In person public engagement event



Arthur's Quay Framework Plan – Public Engagement

Honan's Quay Meanwhile Use

A temporary road closure was put in place for the summer months at Honan's Quay to allow use of this space for recreational activities, promoting the area as a key riverside site in Limerick City to be enjoyed by all. The positioning of the mobile urban forest and two new table tennis tables encouraged the public to use this area for recreation and leisure.

Limerick City and County Council held a series of events "Free Family Fun Days – Summer at Honan's Quay" to activate and pilot this meanwhile use. Activities organised included Insta Bingo, Free Children's Art Workshops, Street Games, Ice-cream Stand, Face Painting, Archery, Stilt Walkers and Circus Performers. A varied music programme provided entertainment for the public on the "Fun Days".



Honan's Quay Meanwhile Use Project August 2023



Honan's Quay Meanwhile Use Project – Summer at Honan's Quay 2023



Limerick Wayfinding's Signage and Orientation Project – 3D Image

The project includes the removal of 45 existing pedestrian wayfinding and information signs and the installation of 70 new pedestrian wayfinding and orientation signs comprising 18 Map Totems, 19 Route Markers and 33 Finger Posts and all associated site works. The development will take place at numerous locations throughout Limerick City.

The Part 8 Planning Report was approved by the Elected Members of the Metropolitan Districts of Limerick City and County Council in November 2023. Tenders have been received from Signage Contractors to progress implementation of this project.



Decluttering Signage Programme – Sign Removal Before

Limerick Wayfinding Signage and Orientation Project

The key objective of this project is the delivery of contemporary, clear and legible signage to improve the wayfinding to, through and across the city. This will enhance the visitor experience in the city, and it will improve visual accessibility for all who visit Limerick City. Innovative pedestrian signage is a key objective of this project; incorporating the Limerick Brand into all signs designed. The Project is being progressed in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland under the Destination Towns Scheme and is being part funded by Fáilte Ireland.

De-Cluttering

A de-cluttering project to remove obsolete and redundant signs from Limerick's City Streets was completed in 2023 following a comprehensive survey of all signage and consultation with stakeholders. The success of this project in 2023 has provided a blueprint/model on how we assess existing street signage in Limerick, and it is expected that more street signage de-cluttering will be carried out in 2024.



Decluttering Signage Programme – Sign Removal After

Living Georgian City Programme

Living Georgian City Programme is one strand of a programme of initiatives aimed at the regeneration of the city core, which are being supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) for the Living Limerick City Centre Initiative URDF projects. A historic city centre revitalization process is being piloted in Limerick's Georgian Neighbourhood with a view to possible replication in other neighbourhoods and towns in Limerick and elsewhere in Ireland. The key element of the programme is Housing Demonstration projects for two key sites at 58 O'Connell Street and 33/34 Thomas Street, Limerick to provide residential accommodation in the City Centre. In 2023, Part 8 Planning approval was granted. The Building Control Authority has granted Fire Safety Certificates and Disability Access Certificates in 2023, and the council are now advancing to the detailed design and construction stage of the Housing Demonstration projects. The objective for this project is to provide exemplars of best practice in adaptive reuse of historic buildings.



Housing Demonstration Project 58 O'Connell Street



Housing Demonstration Project 33/34 Thomas Street

Mungret Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) Stage 2

This scheme involves the construction of 1,610 metres of new road, with footpaths, cycle path, bus stops, bus priority at junction, new roundabout, refurbishment of existing roundabout, water mains, foul sewer, surface water sewer, ducting, electrical vehicle chargers, public lighting and fencing progressed well during 2023. The project is ninety-five per cent complete and will open up land for housing development circa 1,800 homes and access to new secondary school currently under construction. The scheme is funded by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the National Transport Authority. The Council was successful in securing increased funding of €8.7m, including VAT during 2023 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to advance the Mungret LIHAF Scheme.

Mungret Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) Stage 3

This scheme involves the leg from the Mungret Stage 2 road to the Patrickswell Road R526. Preliminary design was undertaken for Stage 3 road during 2023.



Mungret LIHAF Scheme Stage 2

Abbeyfeale Public Realm Scheme

Limerick City and County Council in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and National Transport Authority (NTA) are progressing the Abbeyfeale Public Realm Scheme. This scheme will improve road safety for all users, improve traffic flow through the town and will provide a comfortable environment within the town centre.

An Advance Works contract for demolition of O’Riordan’s Pub and construction of boundary walls was undertaken in 2023. A consultation process with the local community on the use and layout of The Square was carried out. The Council has advanced to the detailed design and tender documents for Phase 1 of main contract - Killarney Road and Grove Crescent car park.



Abbeyfeale Advanced Works

Limerick Urban Centre Revitalisation O’Connell Street (LUCROC)

The O’Connell Street Revitalisation project is being co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF), the National Transport Authority, and Limerick City and County Council. The ERDF co-funding of €4m was awarded by the Southern Regional Assembly and was provided under the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-20.

The aim of the project is to breathe new life into O’Connell Street for pedestrians and residents and add more visually appealing public realm befitting its status as Limerick’s main street. Phase 1 of the project focused on the area of O’Connell Street from the end of Patrick Street to below the junction with Cecil Street and was completed in 2023 (including the junctions and tie-ins on side streets).

The O’Connell Street revitalisation project has created a backdrop to more positive engagement with the city through much-reduced traffic volumes, greater cyclist and bus accessibility, wider and improved footpaths, reduction in urban clutter, increased landscaping and urban trees, and is generally contributing to a more pleasant environment for those who currently live and work in the city centre.



Limerick Urban Centre Revitalisation O’Connell Street



Christmas on O’Connell Street

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

The Environment and Climate Action Department was formed in early 2023 incorporating the Environment Portion of the Planning and Environment Department and the new Climate Action Section which was formed from the Urban Innovation Department. The Department provides the services of Environment Regulation, Environment Strategy, Parks and Cemeteries, Domestic Waste and Litter, Energy Management, Climate Action, and Veterinary Services.

2023 has been a period of transition with new posts filled at Senior Engineer, Climate Action Coordinator, and Community Climate Action Officer. The role of Climate Action Officer is to be advertised in the New Year and a new Biodiversity Officer is to be appointed also early 2024. A new Limerick Clare Energy Agency Manager was appointed this year. Discussions are underway to transition this role to Regional Energy Manager, to maximize potential grants from the SEAI. Work force planning is also taking place in Parks and Cemeteries with changes to its structure proposed in the New Year.

Environment Strategy

Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy

Limerick City and County Council finalised their Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) Strategy for the City and Environs in the second quarter of 2023 and presented it to the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee and placed on the Council's website. The overarching aim of the Strategy is to guide the planning and management of a network of multifunctional green and blue spaces, helping drive the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. The strategy identifies 10 high level priority actions which the plan aims to achieve. These objectives, while specific to the City and environs, are relevant to any village or town in the County and can be incorporated and promoted as appropriate. One of the main elements of the BGI strategy is the development of the Limerick Blue Green Ring encircling the City and work on this vision will progress throughout 2024.

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 was published in July 2022 and it is envisaged that it will likely be adopted before the end of 2024. The emphasis for the WFD team in 2024 will be on carrying out investigative assessments to identify specific pressures on waterbodies which are deemed at risk of not meeting their status objectives under the WFD. The team will also have a protective role under the WFD and will aim to ensure that waterbodies which currently are at "good status" do not deteriorate. The team will work with sectoral interests to resolve any pressures identified which are impacting on water quality. Furthermore, the WFD team will actively support the Local Authority Water Programme (LAWPRO) and work with it to achieve the ambition set out in the WFD. The WFD Team will also actively engage with the planning of river enhancement works and will liaise with other state agencies and community groups to ensure these plans are delivered.

In 2023, Environment Strategy produced a booklet, Building Resilience into your Farming System. This booklet brings together in one place articles and information relevant to the farming sector and their interaction with the environment and nature. The booklet will be distributed to farmers at the time of a farm inspection and has also been placed on the Council website.

Noise Action Planning

The Noise Action Plan for the City and County looks at noise from major roads. There is also a strong emphasis in the plan on identifying potential solutions in areas where noise is currently deemed excessive. This has entailed developing in-house noise monitoring and modelling capabilities. Three cost-benefit assessments have been prepared for noise hotspots in Limerick to assess the benefit to health by the implementation of intervention measures along major roads versus the cost of implementing them. Progress of the development of the fourth noise action plan is well underway with a draft plan to be completed in early 2024. The Council will continue to work with community interests and citizen scientists to identify potential quiet areas using the Hush City smart phone app.

Air Quality

During 2023 the Council continued to monitor air quality in the City and data was made available to the public. The data from these monitors is used to identify air quality issues in the City and will support the development of policies to improve air quality where it is deemed less than satisfactory. During 2023, a further six combined air and noise monitors have been installed in the city in partnership with active travel. These monitors will inform active travel development and will allow tracking of air quality improvements and noise reductions due to Active Travel initiatives.

Non-Native Invasive Species

During 2023, the Council continued with the development of the Council's strategy for dealing with non-native invasive species. The Smart Phone application for reporting Invasive Plants is now available and more than 1,500 occurrences of invasive species in the City and County have been reported via the app. Further promotion will be carried out to encourage people to use the app and this data will be shared with National Biodiversity Data Centre. The control programme of Giant Hogweed on the River Loobagh has been operating for five years now. The Hogweed is now well under control in this area and a less intensive work program will be required going forward. Depending on suitable funding, it is hoped to extend this program further along the catchment in 2024.

Biodiversity

Limerick City and County Council actively encourages compliance with the requirements of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (2021-2025). There are extensive areas of late mowed grass and meadow lands promoted in and around the city. The increased biodiversity is clearly visible with an abundance of grass and flower species visible in grass and park land that is left unmown. Limerick City and County Council is in the process of recruiting a Biodiversity Officer funded by The Heritage Council who will promote biodiversity actions throughout the City and County. Environment Strategy was successful in an Urbact call in June for a BiodiverCity project in partnership with nine other cities throughout Europe.

The BiodiverCity network will work on community-based approach to valorise, measure and account biodiversity and related ecosystems, enabling communities to plan nature-based solutions.

Westfields Management Plan

During 2023, a management plan and Natura Impact Assessment was completed for the Westfields Wetlands located on the north side of the City. These wetlands are an important ecological and biodiverse habitat located in an urban environment. The plan focuses on the protection of the area for future generations while sustainably developing the amenity value of the wetlands.

Environmental Awareness

There is continual delivery of environmental initiatives in line with national policy, the Southern Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021, the Council's Litter Management Plan and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These initiatives include the An Taisce Green Schools programme, Team Limerick Clean Up, Picker Pals Initiative for primary schools, hosting a Food Waste Recycling stand at the Cappamore Show, a Sustainability Tent at the Limerick Show and events for National UN SDG Week, together with a variety of environmental initiatives to increase environmental awareness. It is important to secure behavioural change in waste management and prevention, resource efficiency and litter and to encourage the circular economy and the embrace of circular living.

Parks

There are 22 parks and amenities throughout the City and County that require management and maintenance on an annual basis. The maintenance regime of the parks and green spaces is changing to take account of areas for increased biodiversity through changes in mowing regime and allocating areas for wildlife. Planting is pollinator friendly, in order to comply with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, where Limerick City and County Council is a signatory. Educational opportunities for nearby school children will be provided in a number of the parks with the provision of information of different tree species and information on wildlife and planting. The Council continues to provide grass cutting and tree pruning services to the City and County. There are significant demands by the public through Sugar CRM IT system for maintenance to trees.

There are also opportunities for events in the majority of the Parks and this was continued in 2023. The Parks are also being promoted for outdoor exercise classes and this continued in 2023. Parks can provide multi functions for its users, recreation, education, social gathering and physical activity.

Adare Park and Adare Sensory Garden

A public information evening was held in the Village Hall in Adare on the preliminary design for the Sensory Garden. The purpose of the information evening was to seek input and feedback on the preliminary design for the project. The resurfacing of the internal walkways in Adare Park was completed, which included the installation of ducting in respect of future funding for the installation of lighting for the access to the Sensory Garden.



Parks and Recreation Castletroy Park event

Demesne Parklands

A public information evening was held on the proposed masterplan of the Demesne parklands in Newcastle West and feedback sought from the local community and businesses in the town to be incorporated into the finalisation of the masterplan. The purpose of the masterplan is to maximise the potential of this amenity for recreational and associated benefits for the town.

Lisheen Park Green, Patrickswell

Lisheen Park Green in Patrickswell is an underutilised green space that could be used for recreation and sporting activities. A masterplan was prepared for the green that included recreational facilities for all in the community and a public consultation held to seek feedback from the community.



Demesne Parklands- Photo of consultation

Baggott Estate

A masterplan was prepared for the Baggott Estate and presented to Limerick City West members for feedback on the plan. The masterplan provides for natural play, walkways, biodiversity and Dog Park. A Woodland Management Plan has also been prepared for Baggott Estate. It provides a framework including timelines for managing the woodland over the next number of years.

EU URBACT 4 - Green Place

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme that promotes integrated sustainable urban development. It comprises of an Action Planning Network of 10 European partners. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges.

Limerick is one of ten partner cities in the URBACT Green Place Project who will collaborate on urban regeneration plans in respective specified areas. The objective of the Green Place project is the urban regeneration of forgotten places, changing urban spaces that have lost their current functionality to be friendly to residents, the environment, and the city and to support and enhance the provision of quality green spaces in derelict urban settings.

The focus area for the project is the City Wall and proximity of green spaces to the City Wall. It includes the area of Johnsgate, St. Michael's cemetery and Watergate Flats. The project kicked off in Malmo, Sweden at the end of August and first meeting with the Lead Partner was held in Poland at the end of September. An URBACT Local group has been set up and comprises of a number of stakeholders including various departments in the Council, resident groups, Tidy Towns, Gardaí, Mary Immaculate College and Limerick Civic Trust to discuss issues and challenges for the project.

The output from the project is an Integrated Action Plan (IAP). It will be a policy instrument that will be used to respond in a concrete way to the specific challenge of dealing with the challenges associated with derelict areas in urban settings.

Go Green Routes – Castletroy Urban Greenway

GoGreenRoutes is a €10.5m EU-funded project sowing the seeds for increased nature-connectedness across Europe, Latin America and China. It focuses on physical activity, nature connection and nature-based solutions. Limerick City and County Council's target area is the Castletroy Urban Greenway.



URBACT4 Green Place - First Stakeholder meeting

Eight community workshops took place on co-creating and co-designing greening opportunities and enhancing biodiversity on the Castletroy Greenway. A Consortium meeting took place in Tallinn, Estonia, in September. Works on the greenway included the provision of a number of tree sculptures from trees that had to be felled due to Ash dieback. They display insects, mammals and birds that people can see along the Greenway. They are tactile, educational pieces that also promote environmental awareness for both school-goers and passers-by.

A community-led Bioblitz was held on the greenway with approximately 25 people attending and 200 species recorded. A bioblitz is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time. This data baseline can inform how, and in what way, the community and Limerick City and County Council can enhance existing biodiversity along the Greenway and invite more in.



Go Green Routes – Castletroy Urban Greenway-Tree sculptures



Go Green Routes – Castletroy Urban Greenway- Bioblitz

Playgrounds

There are 14 playgrounds located throughout the County which are managed by the Council and that require maintenance, identified through quarterly statutory inspections. The Council also maintains three skateboard parks at Newcastle West; Castletroy Park and Mount Kenneth, six adult exercise equipment units and six Multi Use Games Areas at Patrickswell; Cappamore; Hospital; Newcastle West; Abbeyfeale and Rathkeale.

Upgrade to People's Park Playground

The playground in People's Park was upgraded in 2023 and was officially opened by the Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Dan McSweeney. The project was funded by a combination of General Municipal Allocation (GMA) and funding provided by Limerick Sports Partnership. It is the first fully inclusive playground in Limerick city.



Upgrade to People's Park Playground Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Dan McSweeney; Pheilm Macken and Pat Quigley, Limerick Sports Partnership and Carmel Lynch, Limerick City and County Council.



People's Park Playground-Group Photo Group

Upgrade to O'Brien Park Playground

The playground in O'Brien Park was also upgraded in 2023 and was officially opened by the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell. Funding was provided from GMA, Limerick Sports Partnership and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.



People's Park Playground-Overall layout of playground

Natural Playgrounds

Natural playgrounds were provided in Kennedy Park, Corbally Baths and Mayorstone Park with trees felled from the Active Travel Project on the Mill Road and repurposed for play. Consultation was held with the community via MyPoint and the feedback was largely positive on this initiative.

Newcastle West Demesne Playground

The upgrade of the walkways surrounding the playground and connecting to the Multi-Use-Games-Area were completed to connect the play facilities together.

Bridges in Bloom and City Centre

Summer and winter bedding, flower tiers and hanging baskets "Bridges in Bloom" are provided at various locations to enhance the City. The Nursery at Corbally provides the flowers from plugs and work continues for a number of months until the June Bank Holiday weekend when the tiers and baskets are distributed throughout the City.

In 2023, flower tiers and planters were provided at the entrance and along the canal walkway to improve the visual appearance at this location. Flower baskets and tiers were also provided on High Street to enhance the area for filming by a German film crew and on Wickham Street as requested by business owners. New planters were provided outside the International Rugby Museum and were in place for the opening of the Museum and new planting was also provided on O'Connell Street.



Upgrade to O'Brien Park Playground-Photo with Elected Members



Natural Playgrounds - Photo of Corbally Baths

Cemeteries

Burial Ground Services

The burial ground strategy identified the requirement for an extension to Askeaton and Ballylanders burial grounds. The extension to Ballylanders burial ground was completed in 2023 and construction of the extension to Askeaton burial ground commenced in 2023 with completion due in early 2024. The burial ground strategy also identified a need for a Muslim burial ground. Patrickswell burial ground was identified as the preferred location, and the burial ground area was completed in 2023. The strategy identified a need for a new burial ground to serve the Ballysimon District Electoral Division in the Metropolitan District, Adare in the Adare Rathkeale District and Murroe/Cappamore in the Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock. Desktop studies have been progressed to identify sites in the three areas with the intention of carrying out site suitability testing in 2024.

The burial ground strategy outlined that provision be made in the lifetime of the strategy for sites to be identified for a future extension to the burial ground in Newcastle West. A site adjacent to Calvary burial ground in Newcastle West was secured and contracts signed with

the landowner in 2023.

Columbarium Walls

A Columbarium Wall Garden design was prepared for both Mount Saint Lawrence and Kilmurry burial grounds and both projects will progress into 2024. These projects will prolong the capacity in both of these burial grounds. The burial ground strategy highlighted the increase in cremations in the Metropolitan District, largely attributable to the proximity of the Shannon Crematorium. Cremation plots have been made available in Mount Saint Lawrence burial ground.

Mount Saint Oliver Boundary Wall

A new boundary wall and railing on the Old Cork Roadside of Mount Saint Oliver Cemetery was tendered in 2023 and construction has commenced on site.

Maintenance of Existing Burial Grounds

Limerick City and County Council manages approximately 255 burial grounds, of which 62 have burial plots available for sale. An annual maintenance work programme is prepared each year that identifies priority works in the various burial grounds for each of the districts. This programme generally covers items such as repair of boundary walls, upgrade of existing paths, drainage, and tree surgery. Day to day maintenance such as litter picking and grass mowing is carried out in association with local maintenance committees assisted by community employment by TÚS or Rural Social Scheme (RSS) programmes delivered by the Local Development Companies or by SOLAS trainees, or, in the case of Limerick City, Limerick Civic Trust. Limerick City and County Council provides assistance to these 115 maintenance committees for the maintenance of 191 burial grounds, who each receive an annual grant of €450. Funding has also been sought to carry out non-invasive site assessment works in ancient cemeteries within the four operational areas to determine if additional capacity for new burial plots can be established in order to extend the longevity of these cemeteries.



Bridges in Bloom

Environmental Enforcement

(Air, Noise, Water/Wastewater, Public Health, Litter and Waste)

The following have been completed by the Domestic Waste and Litter team, Commercial Waste Team and the Air Noise and Water team.

Cases received	3,051
Cases resolved	3,001
CRM Inspections	4,153
Fines	225
Prosecutions Initiated	84
Household surveys	1,417
Warning letters	797
Notices	197
Directions	76
Fixed Penalty Notices (Litter fines/Presentation of Waste and Waste Collection Permit holders)	225

Environment Regulation

Waste Infrastructure

The infrastructure managed by this Department includes two closed landfill sites which are currently being managed under licenses issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). One is located at Long pavement in the City area and the other at Gortadroma near Shanagolden.

Based on figures available for the first eleven months of the year, the landfill gas at Gortadroma was used to generate almost three MW (megawatts) of electricity generating an approximate net income of €135,000 in 2023. In addition, there are 26 historic landfill sites in Limerick, i.e. closed former landfills that were operated by the Council before licensing existed.

Civic Amenity Sites

Limerick City and County Council also provide access to the public for three Civic Amenity sites at Mungret, Newcastle West and Kilmallock. These sites are managed by a private contractor on our behalf and they provide a facility to the public to dispose of various types of recyclable materials. Our civic amenity sites play a crucial role in managing waste in a responsible and environmentally sustainable manner, helping to minimize the negative impacts of waste disposal on the environment and public health.

Waste Regulation

Waste facilities and waste collectors in Limerick are regulated under the Waste Management Act and associated Regulations. Some authorisations are granted by other bodies but enforced by Limerick City and County Council.

As at the end of 2023, the Council monitored/enforced its 21 current Certificates of Registration and 39 Waste Facility Permits. It also has responsibility for enforcement/monitoring of 76 Authorised Waste Collectors. All authorisations need to be monitored to check compliance with their statutory obligations.

Air Noise and Water Team

The Air Noise and Water Team is responsible for the implementation of environmental legislation aimed at protecting and improving water quality and air quality and preventing or alleviating noise and other nuisances including the following;

- Air Quality

Significant efforts continued in 2023 to raise awareness of the Solid Fuels Regulations and the ban on marketing, selling, distributing or burning smoky fuels within the restricted area. Awareness campaigns were undertaken using posters and social media. Staff carried out inspections of fuel retailers and wholesalers. Limerick City and County Council lead a sampling project consisting of six local authorities where coal and timber products were taken to an accredited laboratory in the UK to be tested for Sulphur content. Further enforcement action will follow on from this project.

- Noise

The Department continues to respond to complaints alleging noise nuisance. During the year, a number of surveys were undertaken in the vicinity of industrial and commercial outlets following which there was positive engagement with all parties concerned.

- Water Quality

Specific areas of activity related to water quality in 2023 included implementing the programmes of measures under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), particularly in relation to agriculture, unsewered industries and septic tanks. The Council completed 18 septic tank inspections assigned to it under the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s National Inspection Plan.

- Septic Tank Inspections

The national programme of septic tank inspections continued in 2023 as follows:

Total Inspections	18
Compliant	6
Non-compliant	11
Registered	13
Un-registered	5

- **Discharge Licensing to Waters**

The Council is responsible for licensing discharges of trade and sewage effluent to waters from unsewered industries. There are currently 37 such licences in place which cover a range of facilities including hotels, nursing homes, quarries and industrial premises. All of these licences have been screened to ensure that the conditions attached to them are compatible with the achievement of the Council's water quality obligations

Environmental Inspections undertaken prior to issue/refusal of planning permission amounted to in excess of 1,000.

Litter Management

Domestic Waste and Litter

The Domestic Waste and Litter Team includes five Environmental Control Officers supported by an administrative unit. In 2023, the team continued to take all practical measures to the prevention, control and correct disposal of litter. Working in close collaboration with the Roads Cleansing Team and the Environmental Awareness Officer, staff endeavour to enforce the law under the Litter and Waste Acts and encourage community participation in preventing and overcoming litter pollution. The team also carry out household and commercial waste management surveys to determine the refuse collection arrangements of domestic units and businesses and where appropriate take enforcement action in cases of non-compliance.

- Over 1,210 cases were recorded during the year and Enforcement staff undertook 4,944 inspections
- 198 on-the-spot fines were issued for litter / presentation of waste offences
- The total amount of income from on-the-spot fines was in excess of €10,898.00
- 46 cases were referred for legal proceedings under the Litter Pollution / Waste Management Acts

In 2023, the Domestic Waste and Litter Team carried out eighteen large scale clean up jobs in the City and County funded under Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authority (WERLA) Anti-Dumping Initiative 2023. The initiative supports projects that restore areas where there is persistent illegal dumping and provide funding to enhance enforcement surveillance. Sites in Cappamore, Galbally, Croom, Abbeyfeale, Galvone and Hyde Road were included in this year's programme.

A draft of the Litter Management Plan 2023- 2026 was prepared in 2023 and is now in a public consultation process and will be adopted by Council in 2024. The plan emphasises the Council's unwavering commitment to combat litter in the city and county and builds upon the successes of previous initiatives. It sets out the objectives, actions and challenges pertaining to the awareness, prevention, control and enforcement of litter management and emphasises the essential cooperation of the entire community to amplify awareness around the detrimental effects of Litter.

Climate Action

The Climate Action Section is responsible for

- The co-ordination of the Council's response to the Climate Action Emergency through the preparation of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan and the management of the Community Climate Action Programme
- The management of the Energy Management Team
- The coordination of the +CityxChange Horizon 2020 project and other funding initiatives

The Climate Action Section was formally established in 2023 with the recruitment of the Climate Action Coordinator and the Community Climate Action Officer. In the course of 2023, the section has:

- Prepared a draft local authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) which was put on public display in December 2023. This included the completion of a Baseline and Emissions Inventory for the entire county and the proposed decarbonisation zone as well as a Climate Adaptation Risk Assessment for the Council
- Completed and participated in a number of training programmes delivered by the Climate Action Regional Offices as part of building the capacity with the Council
- Launched the Community Climate Action Programme, which will provide in excess of €800,000 to communities across Limerick to implement local climate action initiatives. In support of this, a number of workshops and information sessions were held across the county and online

Energy Management

The Energy Management team (EMT) is responsible for the monitoring, reporting and oversight of initiatives to reduce overall energy consumption across the Council. The EMT is managed by an Energy Engineer with the support of the Limerick Clare Energy Agency. Over the course of 2023 the EMT has:

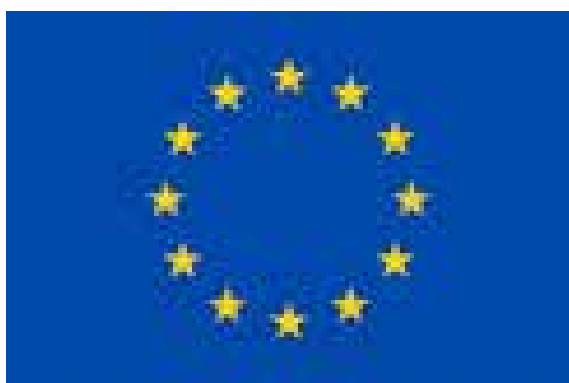
- Met on a quarterly basis to review progress on reducing overall energy consumption in accordance with the national target of a 50% reduction by 2030. This data is reported through the SEAI Monitoring and Reporting portal
- Completed an energy audit in accordance with ISO50001
- Commenced the compilation of a building register of all energy consuming buildings in the Council
- Identified possible projects suitable for "Pathfinder" funding from the SEAI
- Contributed to the preparation of the LACAP

+CITYXCHANGE

Limerick is one of two EU 'lighthouse' cities selected for a major climate-change pilot programme that will give a lead to the rest of Europe on how to dramatically reduce the carbon footprint of urban areas. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 824260. The overall aim is to trial new kinds of technology and community solutions to turn Limerick into a positive energy city – a city that produces more energy than it consumes. It hopes to influence citizen behaviour around energy in order to meet the challenge of moving to a low carbon sustainable future. The project was formally completed in October.



+CITYXCHANGE



EU LOGO

Open Innovation Call 3 – Social Innovation in Energy Collaboration

Open Innovation Calls are an opportunity to test out new ideas, prototypes, and services, with support from +CityxChange partners. Ideas are tested in real life settings for a set period of time and we welcome interest from citizens, makers, creatives, start-ups, businesses, non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and other stakeholders.



Cityxchange Turbine



Cityxchange River turbine and members of the GKinetic Team with the Mayor of the City and County of Limerick, Councillor Gerald Mitchell at Launch of Turbine

Open Call 3 – Social Innovation in Energy Collaboration sought to support projects that explored social and other innovations to enable energy collaboration. The Open Call looked for ideas that facilitate collaboration to reduce the amount of energy used, e.g., by promoting collaborative approaches to energy retrofits or grant schemes; and increase the renewable energy generated by residents, businesses, and others in the city, e.g., through working together on the development of local renewable energy projects. Three projects were supported in the areas of community energy and sustainable transport.

Citizen Innovation Lab

The Citizen Innovation Lab (CIL) is located in the UL City Centre Campus building in Sarsfield Street in partnership with UL.



Open Innovation Call 3 Project, Cycle Bus's E-Cargo Bike Project



Open Innovation Call 3 Projects, St. Michael's Rowing Club
Power Electrification Project



Sensors being installed by the SmartLabs Team

Technical Support Instrument (TSI)

The TSI programme is an EU initiative that provides direct support to public bodies. Limerick City and County Council with the Office of Public Works (OPW) secured funding for the procurement of expert advice to support the establishment of a sustainable investment fund to accelerate the deep energy retrofitting of the historic building stock in the city centre initially and across the county thereafter. The procurement of this advice was completed by DG REFORM in late 2022 and the work commenced on the project in mid-2023 and will take 18 months to complete.

Creative Climate Action – Síolta Glasa

Funded by Creative Ireland Síolta Glasa is a Citizen Innovation Lab collaboration between Limerick City and County Council (Arts office and Climate Action), University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College, Ballyhoura Development, and mentors Javi Buron Garcia and Dr. Veronica Santorum. The project will support community-creative partnerships to build capacity around decarbonisation in Limerick city and county. The project was launched in December 2023 and will continue for 18 months.

Veterinary

Control of Dogs

Veterinary Services is tasked with enforcing the Control of Dogs Act 1986 and related Regulations. There was a significant increase in the number of dogs seized in Limerick during 2023 (207 dogs) in comparison to 2022 (137 dogs). The Council employs two dog wardens and a kennel assistant that run the Dog Shelter located at the Civic Amenity Site at Mungret.

New regulations came into force on 9 November 2023 increasing the amounts payable for fixed payment notices. Fixed payment notices are payable for offences under various parts of the Act and are usually issued by the dog wardens. The 2023 Regulations increased the fines from €100.00 to between €150.00 and €300.00, varying across seven stated offences, including a dog owner not keeping their dog under effective control, or a dog not wearing a muzzle where appropriate.

Other Funding Initiatives

Smart Buildings Lab

Limerick City and County Council in partnership with UL, Integrated Environmental Solutions Research and Development (IES R&D) and The Convex Lens commenced a project supported by SEAI to create a smart buildings lab. The project has seen a range of sensors deployed in over 60 buildings in the city centre measuring a range of issues including energy use, temperature, humidity etc. The outputs of the research will provide a better understanding of the performance of the building stock in the city and provide an evidence base for the development of future initiatives to support the refurbishment of the historic building stock.



Citizens Innovation Lab - in use by Smart City
education programme for students

Following the report of the Cross-Government Working Group on Control of Dogs a number of wide-ranging recommendations were made to improve dog control in Ireland, including, improvements to dog control infrastructure and equipment in local authority dog facilities. On foot of these recommendations the Department of Rural and Community Development provided once off capital funding to the Council through the Dog Support Initiative to improve dog control infrastructure and equipment.

Key Dog Control outputs during 2023;

- The Dog Control Team dealt with 406 SugarCRM cases/complaints during 2023
- 207 dogs were processed in the Dog Shelter during the year. 125 of these were re-homed, 13 were reclaimed and 67 were euthanized. 2 dogs remain in the Shelter
- The Dog Wardens carried out a planned programme of inspections of each of the 29 Dog Breeding Establishments registered with Limerick City and County Council based on a risk assessment. 29 inspections were undertaken in the year.
- 8,851 dog licences issued in 2023.

Control of Horses

The Horse Control Team continues to work in cooperation with other Council departments, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and An Garda Síochána in enforcing the relevant horse control legislation.

Key Control of Horse outputs during 2023;

- The Horse Control Team dealt with 136 cases during 2023
- 101 horses were processed in the Horse Pound during the year. 75 of these were re-homed, 21 were reclaimed by their owners, two were euthanized on welfare grounds and three remain in the Pound at year end

Food Safety

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has a service contract in place with the Council for the provision of official controls on food safety. Following a consultation process it has now been decided that the official control service and relevant veterinary staff will transfer from local authorities to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), with the discussions on the detailed implementation of the transfer to begin early in 2024.

Key Food Safety outputs during 2023;

- Official veterinary controls were carried out at six abattoirs, 11 small meat-manufacturing premises and one registered food business
- A Veterinary Inspector inspected all animals intended for slaughter for human consumption before and after slaughter, in accordance with food safety legislation

- Veterinary Inspections carried out a structured programme of sampling of meat producing premises as part of the National Residue Control Programme and the National Microbiological Control Programme

CFRAM (CATCHMENT FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT)

CFRAM Programme – Flood Relief Schemes (FRS)

During 2023, the CFRAM team progressed the development of the following five important flood relief schemes within Limerick and its Environs. The Office of Public Works are the funding authority for the CFRAM Flood Relief Schemes. The objective of each of the flood relief schemes is to provide an appropriate, viable, sustainable, and cost effective scheme for affected areas to reduce the risk of flooding to existing property;

- Castleconnell Flood Relief Scheme – A 3rd Public Participation Event was held in late 2023 to present the preferred option for flood relief within Castleconnell village. Following this, the Options report will be shortly finalised and published online via the scheme project website (<https://www.castleconnellfrs.ie/>) with a view to submitting for planning consent to An Bord Pleanála in early 2024. The planning design was advanced in 2023 with additional site investigation works planned to commence early in 2024 to inform the detailed design of the scheme. In the past year, hydrology and hydraulic reports have been completed to confirm flood extents to the scheme area. Extensive stakeholder engagement with key stakeholders and landowners has been undertaken in 2023 in order to develop the preferred option
- Adare Flood Relief Scheme – In November 2023, a 2nd Public Consultation Event was held to present the emerging, technically viable flood relief options for Adare in the Dunraven Arms Hotel. Public and stakeholder opinion was sought and encouraged in developing the preferred solution for Adare. As part of this event, feedback is currently being compiled which will inform further stages of the design options election process with a view to selecting a preferred option by mid-2024. Following this, a further public participation event will be held to display the preferred option to the public and stakeholders. It is anticipated that subject to identification of a viable, cost effective preferred solution, the preferred scheme will be submitted for planning consent later in 2024. Throughout 2023, ongoing survey works were undertaken to inform the constraints of the project and extensive stakeholder consultation is underway. Further information is available via www.adarefrs.ie.

- **Limerick City and Environs – Ongoing works to confirm flood risk assessment as part of Stage 1 during 2023.** It is expected that hydraulics and hydrology elements of the scheme will be confirmed in early 2024 which will facilitate establishment of proposed flood defence levels for the scheme. During 2023, an extensive site investigation contract was completed to assess the condition of existing flood embankments throughout the large scheme area. This will inform potential flood defence options for providing protection to large areas of property within the Limerick City and Environs area which also covers parts of County Clare. This has involved ongoing regular liaison with colleagues within Clare County Council. Further significant site investigation contracts are planned for 2024 to focus on areas within the city centre alongside existing quays and other areas where flood defences may be required. A number of environmental and ecological surveys were completed in 2023 (including invasive species treatment etc.) to inform environmental assessment of potential future flood defence options. Further information is available via the scheme website via <https://www.floodinfo.ie/frs/en/limerick/home>.
- **Athea Flood Relief Scheme – Hydraulics and hydrology reports were finalised in 2023.** The project team worked towards developing a preferred option which is expected to be put on public display in early 2024.
- **King’s Island Flood Relief Scheme – The scheme progressed through detailed design and tender preparation.** The Council received approval from the Office of Public Works in December 2023 to tender the scheme for construction. A Lime mortar trials contract and additional site investigations to quay walls were undertaken in 2023. Following completion and checking of the tender documents it is expected that the scheme will advance to tender in early 2024.

LIMERICK 2030 DAC

Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC



Limerick 2030 Opera Site

Opera Square

Opera Square in Limerick City Centre will be transformational for the City and region. The project is well underway, with the first contract, the ‘Demolition and Enabling Works’ completed in 2022. In January 2023, upon entering a Joint Venture with the Irish Strategic Infrastructure Fund (ISIF), Limerick Twenty Thirty (LTT) awarded John Sisk and Sons a contract for the site-wide basement and One Opera Square building.

Works are progressing very well onsite, with the basement pile wall fully completed, capping beam installation at 90% and 70% of excavations works undertaken to date. 2023 commenced with the first Piling Rig being mobilised to site and first excavation works commenced in February. This increased to three Piling Rigs in April and by late August Formation level was reached with excavation of One Opera Square. The first tower crane was erected onsite in September, and standing at 42.4 meters, is one of the largest luffing cranes in the country. Quarter 3 saw drainage installation for One Opera Square, and significant concrete pours with a Basement Slab pour of over 350m³ in October. A second tower crane was erected in November showing significant progress on site and a large basement slab pour of 900m³ took place on 14 November. The basement slab for One Opera Square will be complete by year end with a 600m³ pour scheduled in December.

Looking forward to 2024, the basement works for the full site will be completed with significant progress on the six-storey One Opera Square building. Contracts for the 14-storey landmark building, New City Library and Granary upgrade will also be tendered with works scheduled to commence in the second half of the year. The Opera Square development is funded thanks to commitments from Ireland Strategic Investment fund (ISIF), European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank. LTT is also engaging with other investors on the remaining elements of the development.

Opera Square will be developed over a six-year period and on completion, the development will be capable of employing over 3,000 people across a 450,000 square foot campus. Following in the footsteps of the Gardens International development, Opera Square will again set the highest bar in terms of sustainability and architectural standing, with the project being developed to LEED Platinum, WELL Platinum and Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) standards.

The design will be entirely complementary to and protect existing Georgian architecture. Specialist conservation works commenced in 2021 to stabilise sixteen buildings of architectural heritage on the site, and this painstaking and delicate work is still ongoing.

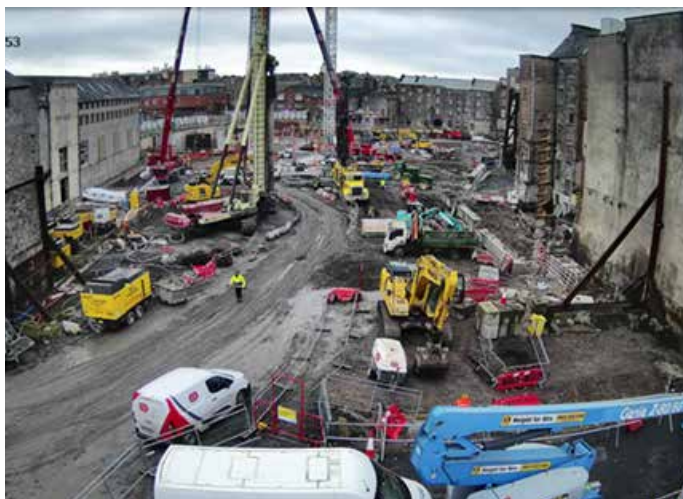
A day-time employment hub, the Central Plaza will transform into a bustling night-time destination complete with restaurants, bars and open entertainment spaces. Opera Square will not just be a modern cutting-edge development for leading national and international companies and organisations, it will be transformational for Limerick City, deliver significant employment opportunities and act as a catalyst for other major City Centre investment to follow.



Opera Square Basement Construction



Opera Square Tower Crane No.2 Installation



Opera Square - Bank Place View South



Opera Square Basement Slab – Concrete Pour

Cleeves Riverside Quarter

2023 saw the completion and communication of the Masterplan for Cleeves Riverside Quarter (CRQ). Following a series of public and private consultation events in Quarter 1, the Masterplan was published, outlining LTT's vision for the 10-acre brownfield site in Limerick's City Centre on the northern banks of the River Shannon. CRQ will embrace modern international sustainability goals through embracing the 'One Planet Living' concept, with the Masterplan setting out the vision for a mixed-use development comprising much needed city centre residential accommodation, along with education, workspace, and cultural amenities. The development will also introduce a destination for locals and visitors to enjoy a new riverside public realm and bring this stunning location back into everyday city centre use.

In October LTT was delighted to instruct the Design Team to commence the next exciting stage of the development, preparation of the planning application, with a target submission in mid 2024. In parallel with development of planning, LTT is engaging with a number of development partners and investors in order to secure funding for the delivery of this strategic site.



Cleeves Riverside Quarter Public Realm Artists Impression

2023 saw use of CRQ for the Shoebox Appeal, Scare Factory and Fossett's Circus among others giving the location useful purpose while works on the Masterplan and planning applications are ongoing behind the scenes. The famous Cleeves Chimney was also lit up in support of Limerick in the All-Ireland, Limerick Pride Festival, St. Patrick's Day celebrations, and Christmas Festivities.

Mungret Park

During 2023, following resolution of a judicial review, LTT worked with the Design Team on the Mungret residential scheme. An updated application for 250 units, together with a crèche and community centre will be submitted through a Section 179A process. On receipt of planning permission, the Land Development Agency will deliver the scheme, with construction due to commence in Quarter 2 2024. Located less than ten minutes from the City Centre, the site will significantly boost Limerick's residential market, supplementing other private and public developments elsewhere in the city.

Other Projects

Elsewhere, LTT is providing project management services to Limerick City and County Council on the expression of interest project, which comprises three sites, namely Speakers Corner; New Road, Thomondgate and Ballygrennan, Coonagh.

Earlier in 2023, Speakers Corner, located adjacent to the People's Park, was successful in receiving permission through a Part 8 planning application for 36 new residential

units, concluding LTT's work on the scheme. It is expected that 2024 will see commencement of delivery of the development.

Planning was also received at New Road, Thomondgate for 47 new residential units through a traditional planning application, together with a biodiversity park. Again, this concluded LTT's work on the scheme and barring any planning appeals, development is expected to begin in 2024.

At Ballygrennan, Coonagh, a 7.56-hectare, Greenfield site will be developed by a consortium of Cluid, Whitebox and UPMC. They have completed designs and are shortly due to submit an application to the Council's Planning Department to deliver 120 residential units, together with an ambulatory care hospital and healthcare facility.

LTT have also assisted the Council in the refurbishment of Askeaton Swimming Pool and the tendering of operators for both Askeaton and Grove Island swimming pools.



Ballygrennan Computer-generated imagery (CGI)

APPENDICES

CONFERENCES/SEMINARS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023

CONFERENCES/SEMINARS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023

Date	Title	Venue	No.
6th – 8th Jan	Seminar organised by Celtic Conferences entitled: 'The Finance Act 2022'	The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth	3
3rd – 6th Feb	Seminar organised by Celtic Conferences entitled: 'Modular Housing in Ireland'	The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth	1
5th – 6th Apr	Seminar organised by the Suck Valley Way. entitled : 'The Suck Valley Way Conference, 2023'	Gleesons Townhouse, Market Square, Co. Roscommon	2
13th – 15th Oct	Seminar organised by Celtic Conferences entitled: 'A Practical Guide to Budget 2024'	The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth.	3
20th – 22nd Oct	Seminar organised by Celtic Conferences entitled: 'The First Home Scheme – Helping Homeowners get onto the Property Ladder'	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork	2
12th Nov	Seminar organised by eventbrite entitled: 'Salmon Watch Ireland - Conference' about salmon conservation emergency	Castle Oaks Hotel, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick.	1
24th – 26th Nov	Seminar organised by Celtic Conferences entitled: 'Modular Housing in Ireland'	McKevitt's Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth.	9
1st – 3rd Dec	Seminar organised by Celtic Conferences entitled 'Irish Social Welfare System'	O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.	2

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL (SIFC)

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL (SIFC)

Introduction

I, Pat Daly, Chief Executive of Limerick City and County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Head of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Limerick City and County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents *fairly the financial position* of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the local authority under which they purport to have been carried out. The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Limerick City & County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines Limerick City & County Council's overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2023.

The *Statement of Comprehensive Income* represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of Limerick City & County Council.

The key sources of income for Limerick City & County Council are as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Goods & Services	210,521,608	209,245,034
Grants & Subsidies	616,645,310	610,647,095
Other Contributions from other local authorities	3,630,679	3,753,944
Rates	64,107,619	59,989,310
Local Property Tax	19,691,079	19,952,508

The following table depicts Revenue expenditure by Division extracted for 2023 compared to 2022:

Division	2023	2022
	€	€
A - Housing & Building excluding HAP	64,378,805	54,090,008
A - HAP Shared Service Centre	685,483,303	694,462,227
B - Road Transport & Safety	55,022,705	48,879,861
C - Water Services	14,684,160	14,817,118
D - Development Management	27,329,904	26,770,245
E - Environmental Services	37,886,038	36,311,077
F - Recreation & Amenity	17,346,961	15,744,379
G - Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	1,167,997	1,130,067
H - Miscellaneous Services	12,013,447	12,821,519
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	915,313,319	905,026,500

The revenue surplus for 2023 is €23,716. As a result the accumulated revenue surplus at the end of 2023 is increased to €956,037 compared to €932,321 at the end of 2022 which is depicted in the table below. The retention of cumulative surplus is a very positive reflection of the efforts of the elected members and staff to manage the financial situation of Limerick City & County Council, and is also reflective of the continuous efforts of the staff of Limerick City & County Council in achieving better value for money and increasing overall efficiencies, which is an important foundation for the year ahead in 2024.

	2023	2022
	€	€
Income	914,596,296	902,587,890
Expenditure	898,623,529	890,084,187
Transfers from/ (to) Capital/ Reserves	(15,949,051)	(12,479,260)
Exceptional Item	0	0
Surplus/(Deficit)	23,716	24,443
Prior Year Adjustment	0	0
Opening Revenue Reserve	932,321	907,878
Closing Revenue Reserve	956,037	932,321

The *Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)* represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
- Current and long term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets of Limerick City & County Council at the end of 2023 totals €3,639,660,589 and are as follows:

	2023	2022
	€	€
Fixed Assets	3,425,059,988	3,391,123,006
Work in Progress	186,975,279	125,635,878
Long Term debtors	159,451,892	113,893,773
Current Assets	195,487,536	204,562,682
Current Liabilities	111,920,376	77,028,522
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	83,567,160	127,534,160
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	215,393,730	200,143,334
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	3,639,660,589	3,558,043,482

A *Statement of Funds Flow* was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

System of Internal Financial Controls

As Chief Executive of Limerick City & County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Limerick City & County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Limerick City & County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that

assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial control environment

As Chief Executive of Limerick City & County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As Chief Executive of Limerick City & County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement compliance

Limerick City & County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Limerick City & County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Limerick City & County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Limerick City & County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- I. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- II. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- III. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- IV. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- V. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Limerick City & County Council.

Risk and control framework

Limerick City & County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.


A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2024.

Signed by:



Chief Executive

Dated:

18/04/2024

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

**TO FOLLOW ONCE APPROVED BY NOAC (JULY/SEPTEMBER) – 10 PAGES APPROXIMATELY