

**CHUIG GACH BALL DEN CHOMHAIRLE**  
**DRAFT BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING**  
**31ST DECEMBER, 2014**

**To: The Mayor and each Member of Galway County Council**

**Re: Draft Budget for financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.**

**Submitted in accordance with Section 103, Local Government Act 2001**

Dear Member,

I enclose, for your consideration, the Draft Budget for 2014, together with a report detailing the main provisions outlined therein. A summary report from the Directors of Service in respect of activities of their respective functional areas is also enclosed. In addition, I attach a report setting out the principal achievements of the Council over the period 2009-2014, in line with the Corporate Plan adopted by the Council for its Term of Office in 2009. It sets out the many projects brought forward during that period, despite the harsh economic conditions that existed and the limited human and financial resources which were available.

In accordance with the statutory requirement the Draft Budget was considered at meetings of the Corporate Policy Group held on 18<sup>th</sup> November, and the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

The Council is required to:

Adopt the Draft Budget, with or without amendment, and

Determine, in accordance with the Budget so adopted, the annual rate on the valuation to be levied. The Council is required to complete the statutory process within a period of 21 days. This allows, for the adjournment, if necessary of the statutory meeting which is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013, provided the process is completed by 5<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

## **Context of Budgetary preparation**

Local Government is entering a period of profound change, having regard to the publication of the recently announced reform proposals. Minister Hogan has stated that '**Putting People First**' incorporates 'the most fundamental set of changes in local government in the history of the state from regional and county level through to the municipal level of governance.' The document proposed that 'Local Government will lead economic, social and community development locally. It will be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level, deliver efficient and good value services, and represent citizens and communities, as effectively and accountably as possible'.

The Bill includes four key themes:

### **(1) Structures**

The Bill introduces a new model of municipal governance within counties, with the establishment of new municipal districts which replace the existing town Councils. Elected members will decide relevant matters at district level and collectively they will form the plenary County Council. There will be a unified county-wide administration, with no duplication of functions between district and county levels. The eight regional authorities and two regional assemblies will be replaced by three regional assemblies, with new strategic functions.

### **Galway County Council Actions arising 2014**

The establishment of the Municipal Districts will be instigated following the local elections in May 2014.

The winding up of the West Regional Authority will take place following the local elections.

The Town Councils of Ballinsloe, Tuam and Loughrea will be replaced by the Municipal Districts.

### **(2) Funding, Accountability and Governance**

Local services administered by local authorities are funded through the new local property tax. This financial responsibility is intended to underpin local democratic decision-making. A new independently chaired National Oversight and Audit Commission for Local Government will be established with external evaluation

expertise. The proposals include provision for the replacement of the position of County Manager with a Chief Executive and the strengthening of the reserved functions of elected members.

#### **Galway County Council Actions arising 2014**

Compliance with the requirements in the legislation

#### **(3) Economic Development and Job Creation**

The Council will have an enhanced role in economic development and enterprise support, with a dedicated Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development. A Local Economic Strategy will be prepared and adopted as part of the County Development Plan. The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) will be integrated with the Business support unit to create a one stop shop for business. It is hoped that this innovation will be introduced in March 2014.

In addition the Council will establish a new local community development committee (LCDC), for planning and oversight of local and community development programmes. This will ensure better alignment of the Local Government and Local Development systems. Galway County Council is a front-runner for the establishment of the LCDC and it is hoped that the first meeting will take place early in the new year. In addition, in 2014, a new Local and Community Plan will be prepared by the LCDC identifying priority areas of activity for the next five years.

#### **Galway County Council Actions arising 2014**

Establishment of the Local Enterprise Office(LEO)

Establishment of the Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee

Preparation of the Economic Strategy for the County

Establishment of the Local Community Development Committee(LCDC)

Preparation of a Local and Community Development Plan through the LCDC

Given the enhanced role of Local Authorities in the Economic Development area, the council also proposes a number of initiatives in 2014, of which the following are a sample:

Roll out of the Gateway Labour Activation Scheme

Continued Support for the Job-Bridge Scheme

The preparation of a feasibility study for the site at Carnmore, following completion of the proposed acquisition jointly with the City Council.

Support for the development of Pearses Cottage

Seek funding from Failte Ireland for the commencement of the Conamara Greenway proposal.

Work with Failte Ireland on advancing the Wild Atlantic Way in Galway.

Advance economic infrastructure proposals in the county including the City Outer Bypass and the M17/M18 PPP proposal.

Continue to harness the potential of the local food and craft sector through the 'Made in Galway' brand.

Review the 'MeetWest' initiative to determine the approach required for 2014.

Progress the new County Development Plan which will set the framework for development for the years ahead.

The designation of a specific staff member to advance applications for funding under relevant E.U. funding programmes.

Assist as required in the roll out by the DCENR of the Next Generation Broadband Scheme.

#### **(4) Delivering Services Efficiently**

The Reform proposals envisage the introduction of Service Level Agreements (SLA) between Government Departments and Local Authorities for the delivery of services on an agency basis. It is intended that Service Plans will be approved by Council in respect of each programme which the Council delivers.

There will be a continued emphasis on the achievement of efficiency savings in line with the recommendations of the Local Government Efficiency Review. This will include the development of Shared Services across Local Authorities and a Work Force Planning process to drive staffing and organizational rationalisation. The embargo on recruitment remains in place, except where specific sanction is received to fill a vacancy arising. The Council is losing ten staff under the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.

#### **Galway County Council Actions arising 2014**

The Council is actively pursuing energy efficiency, with the assistance of the Tipperary Energy Agency,

The Council will continue to comply with revised national public procurement mandatory arrangements and will work with Regional partners to ensure value for money is achieved.

The Council will introduce work practices and process improvements to ensure best value in service delivery.

The Council is co-operating with national initiatives in relation to the role out of sectoral Shared Services initiatives.

The Council has implemented the initiatives arising from the Croke Park and Haddington Road agreements, including the reduction in pay, deferral of increments, longer working hours, reduced annual leave and reduced sick leave entitlements.

The Reform proposals present many opportunities for Local Government, particularly through the enhancement of the leadership role of the Council in the Economic and Community Development arenas. This widening of the scope of local Authority activity is a significant shift in emphasis and will be an exciting challenge. The recognition being afforded to Local Government as the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level is very welcome and reinforces the Councils position as the only democratically elected institution outside of the Oireachtas, charged with responsibility for the delivery of efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and communities, as effectively and accountably as possible.

### **Uisce Éireann / Irish Water**

In addition to the reform proposals in 'Putting People First' the other most significant influence on the preparation of the Budget 2014 is the establishment of the new national Utility, Uisce Éireann / Irish Water, and the proposed transfer of functions from Local Authorities to the new Utility.

The Water Services (No. 2) Bill 2013 is the second legislative milestone for the reform of water services provision giving effect to the commitments in the Programme for Government. Uisce Éireann / Irish Water was established under the Water Services Act 2013, as a subsidiary of Bord Gáis Éireann. The 2013 Act provided Irish Water with certain water services functions relating to the installation of water meters in domestic properties. The Water Services (no. 2) Bill 2013 provides for the transfer of water services functions which are set out in the Water Services Act 2007 from the county and city councils to Irish Water, with the exception of functions relating to domestic wastewater treatment systems and Rural Water Services which will remain with the local authorities.

The Bill sets out the arrangements for the transfer of property of the water services authorities, relevant to and required for the delivery of water services, to Irish Water. It also provides for the transfer of certain water services liabilities to Irish Water. The Bill provides for the making of agreements between Irish Water and each local authority for the delivery of water services. An agreement has been reached between the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Irish Water and the local authorities that the first service level agreements will cover a period of 12 years i.e. until 2025. The Bill provides Irish Water with the power to charge customers who are in receipt of water services and Irish Water will be required to prepare a water charges plan in this regard. The Commission for Energy Regulation will be responsible for the approval of water charges plans to be prepared by Irish Water. The Commission will also be responsible for the approval of codes of practice to be prepared by Irish Water relating to standards of customer service, including the resolution of any disputes between Irish Water and its customers.

Currently work is on-going on the finalization of the proposed SLA between the Council and Irish Water, in respect of the services we will provide on Irish Water's behalf. It is

imperative that the Council is reimbursed for the direct costs and associated overhead costs associated with the functions to be performed on behalf of Irish Water. The draft budget is prepared on the basis that the provision of water services by the Council, on behalf of Irish Water, is cost neutral to the Council.

It is also imperative, in addition to the transfer of water services assets to Irish Water, that the associated liabilities e.g. loan charges are also transferred. In addition, I believe that the role of the Council as planning authority, must be protected and decisions of Council must inform decisions in relation to the provision of future water services infrastructure to support the implementation of local planning policies.

The Council looks forward to developing a collaborative working arrangement with Irish Water, building on the knowledge and expertise within the Council to ensure the delivery of quality water services for many years to come.

### **Other changes impacting on the Budget**

A number of other items are impacting on the budget 2014.

These include:

- Transfer of the Driver Licensing function to the RSA.
- The winding up of the West Regional Authority, with resultant return of staff seconded to that Authority.
- The establishment of the Local Enterprise Office and associated Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Ireland for the delivery of supports to small business.
- The Local Election process 2014.
- The implementation of Keeping Communities Safe: Fire Service Reform proposal
- The introduction of Local Property Tax payable on Local authority rented housing stock.
- Loss of ten staff under the voluntary severance arrangement.
- Increased working hours for some staff under the Haddington Road agreement.

### **2013 Achievements**

During 2013, the Council continued to maintain the services in the County having regard to the available resources. The Council has worked to maximise value for money in the delivery of services, while prioritising legal compliance obligations in the context of reduced resources

Savings have been achieved through revised procurement arrangements. A continued focus on energy efficiency is also yielding savings. The Council is co-operating with initiatives at national level to explore the Business Case for Local Authorities sharing services in some areas. This was a key recommendation of the Local Government

Efficiency Review. Costs have been reduced in the facilities management area. The council is endeavouring to improve Customer service through greater use of on-line services.

Major progress continues in the improvement of water services infrastructure in the county. Many long-awaited sewerage schemes such as Clifden, Oughterard, Claregalway and Miltown, Kinvara and Athenry are being progressed with a number of projects commenced in 2013. The assistance and co-operation of the Department of the Environment in this regard is greatly appreciated. Significant improvement has also been made in the operation and maintenance of schemes since the completion of the Remedial Action List. Galway County Council is responsible for the operation of 35 Public Water Supplies (PWS) serving a population of 132,270. The published EPA Report indicated that microbiological compliance in Galway County Public Water Schemes was 100% in both 2010 and 2011. Chemical compliance levels increased from 99.0% in 2010 to 99.6% in 2011. This performance is a testament to the endeavours of all staff in the water services area.

The year 2013 saw progress in the Roads area with many schemes being progressed under the pavement and minor improvements scheme. The completion of the local road pavement condition survey provides useful information on the condition of roads throughout the County and will help to inform future work programmes.

#### **Roads funding**

While the level of resources available for road maintenance and improvement falls short of that which would be desirable, the Council will continue to adapt in an effort to make the best use of allocations. The table below sets out the position in relation to funding in recent years.

	<b>Roads Grant Funding</b> €m	<b>Council's own contribution</b> €m
2008	38.90	5.12
2009	35.39	4.09
2010	23.65	3.02
2011	21.80	2.71
2012	20.80	2.60
2013	18.40	2.50
% reduction from 2008 to 2013	53%	51%

The decision of the European Court of Justice in relation to the Galway City Outer Bypass was very disappointing. However, the Council with the assistance of the NRA has recruited consultants to commence work on a new proposal for the scheme which is vital to the future economic and social development of Galway county and city. Progress on the N59 Moycullen bypass is also welcome. A decision from An Bord Pleanala is awaited in relation to proposed upgrade works to the N59 from Oughterard to Maam Cross. It is hoped that early 2014 will see the commencement of the M17/M18.

Progress continues in addressing the issue of flooding throughout the County, in association with the Office of Public Works. In particular the preparation of a planning application for the Dunkellin river has been a key priority and it is intended to submit a proposal to An Bord Pleanala for approval in the coming months.

### **Community and Enterprise**

The year 2013 was particularly busy for the Community and Enterprise Unit. The MeetWest initiative had another successful year and was acknowledged as the best Economic Partnership in the Local Government LAMA awards 2013. Numerous events supporting entrepreneurship were held throughout the County in association with the County and City Enterprise Board. The success of the 'Made in Galway' initiative is evident from the level of participation by local food and craft producers and also from its success in winning the Chambers Ireland 'Excellence in Local Government Award 2013 for services to business. The partnership arrangement with the Local Development sector for the appointment of a food development officer is very welcome.

The Year of the Gathering was a great success throughout county Galway, with over 100 events taking place. The communities proved their capacity to respond to this initiative, with support from Galway County Council. Many communities achieved national recognition in the Tidy Towns Awards and also the All- Ireland Pride of Place Awards. Perhaps the most prestigious achievement is that of Inis Oirr - the winner of the most Livable Community in the world in its population category and also the Healthy Lifestyle Award. The efforts of the communities throughout the County are to be commended and supported for ensuring the County is a great place in which to live.



## **Budget 2014**

Galway County Council is conscious of the difficulties being experienced by residents of the County, businesses and communities during this period of economic turmoil and is committed to ensuring the cost effective delivery of services, within the current financial constraints. This has informed the proposals for expenditure contained in the draft budget and the decision not to increase commercial rates at this time.

Galway County Council provides essential services and spends significant resources throughout the County. The 2014 Budget represents a valuable injection of funds to the County.

The draft budget for 2014 envisages expenditure of €122 million which equates to a reduction of 4% on the budget adopted for 2013. This represents a significant further reduction in the resources available to the Council following on from the reductions since 2008. The draft budget reduction is also impacted by the establishment of Irish Water who will be taking over responsibility for the procurement function associated with water services, with the council providing the headcount only into the future. The draft budget is prepared on the basis of a cost neutral delivery of the water services function under the SLA with Irish Water.

**TABLE 1: BUDGETARY TREND 2008 – 2013**

2008 - Adopted Budget	€160 M
2009 - Adjusted Budget	€146 M
2010 - Adopted Budget(note: €3m of this sum is due to an adjustment in accounting treatment)	€149 M
2011 - Adopted Budget	€144 M
2012 – Adopted Budget	€136 M
2012 - Adopted Budget adjusted for the Reduction in Local Government Fund	€135M
2013 - Adopted Budget	€127M
2014 – Draft budget	€122M

In line with previous approaches, the budget includes a figure for road grants based on the original 2013 allocation as the 2014 allocation has not yet been received.

Key influences in the preparation of the Draft Budget.

**(1) Local Government Fund**

The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government has not yet informed us what the provisional General-Purpose Grant allocation from the Local Government Fund is for Galway County Council for the year 2014. It is anticipated that the allocation will be adjusted for the funding transferred to Irish Water to fund the SLA. In addition it is also anticipated that the Local Government Fund will include the replacement of the NPPR income which is no longer available to the Council. The draft budget is prepared on the assumption that the allocation of the Local Government Fund, together with the Irish Water allocation will equal the allocation received for 2013 that is €27,400,744. This is supplemented by the pension deduction from Staff of Galway county council which is estimated at €2,125,000, giving a combined figure of €29,525,744. In preparing the draft budget I have estimated that the contribution to Irish Water from the Local Government Fund will be in the order of €17m, and that adjusting for the NPPR and pension levy income the Grant for Galway County Council will amount to €14.4M.

**(2) Trends in Local Government Fund allocation is as follows: -**

	<i>Allocation</i>	<i>% Reduction</i>
2008	€40.60m	
2009	€36.88m	9%
2010	€36.09m	2%
2011	€32.84m	9%
2012	€30.45m	7%
2012(revised)	€29.67m	3%
2013(LGF plus pension deduction)	€29.47m	3%
2014 (to include Irish Water and NPPR)	€29.52	0%

### Expenditure proposals

The following tables set out the expenditure and income breakdown proposed for 2014:

Expenditure by Programme Group	2013 Budget	2013 Estimated Outturn	2014 Draft Budget
		€	€
Housing and Building	11,041,804	10,410,073	11,022,540
Road Transportation & Safety	35,296,671	35,515,759	33,613,908
Water Services	25,806,028	25,892,889	27,241,980
Development Management	7,202,261	7,019,822	7,065,184
Environmental Services	17,142,539	16,985,847	16,878,683
Recreation & Amenity	8,013,997	7,981,244	7,996,675
Agriculture, Education Health & Welfare	11,871,773	9,821,342	8,395,796
Miscellaneous Services	10,241,600	10,066,366	9,862,347
<b>Total</b>	<b>126,616,673</b>	<b>123,693,342</b>	<b>122,077,113</b>

In the Draft Budget, the estimated Revenue Income anticipated is as follows: -

Estimated Revenue Income	2013		2014	
	€	%	€	%
Local Government Fund	27,400,744	22	12,251,819	10
Pension Related Deduction	2,075,000	1.5	2,125,000	2
NPPR	2,150,000	1.5	145,000	0
State Grants & Subsidies	43,026,874	34	37,307,005	31
Non-Domestic Water Charges	3,230,000	3	23,620,428	19
Local Determined Income	31,396,813	25	30,841,840	25
Other Income	17,337,240	13	15,786,021	13
	<b>126,616,673</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>122,077,113</b>	<b>100</b>

## Expenditure Adjustments

I attach hereunder a table setting out the principal variances between the Budget for 2013 and 2014.

Service	Service Description	2014	2013	Change
		€	€	€
B03 & B04	Regional & Local Roads	26,601,168	28,080,602	(1,479,434)
Division C	Water Services	27,241,980	25,806,028	1,435,952
D02	Development Management	2,131,479	2,562,640	(431,161)
G05	Educational Support Services	5,438,840	9,346,807	(3,907,967)
	Subtotal of above	61,413,467	65,796,077	(4,382,610)
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>122,077,113</b>	<b>126,616,673</b>	<b>(4,539,560)</b>

Many of the costs incurred by the Council are non-discretionary costs in that they must be spent on particular services, for example, loan charges, statutory demands, pensions, materials etc. The scope for reduction in costs and expenditure is therefore limited to discretionary items.

Unfortunately, due to the limited funds available, I have been unable to make provision in the draft budget for any contingencies which might arise in 2014, for example costs arising from severe weather events or other unexpected incidents.

The reduction in service's B03 and B04 Regional and Local roads arises largely due to no allocation for specific road grants anticipated in 2014 together with a reduction in the Council's contribution to local roads. The increase in division C arises largely due to increased operating costs of plants that have been upgraded under the remedial action programme, however this increased cost is expected to be funded by Irish Water under the SLA agreement. The reduction in service D02 Development Management arises largely due to staff retirements who have not been replaced in addition to a reallocation of staff resources to other services.

The reduction in service G05, Educational support services, is as a result of student grants having moved to a new central processing agency SUSI and what we are in effect providing for are those students who commenced studies prior to 2012 completing their studies. It is anticipated that by 2016 Galway County Council will no longer have an involvement in the processing of Higher education grants. This expenditure is 100% recoupable from the Department of Education.

Galway County Council has a strong tradition of supporting the various voluntary and community activities throughout the County across the range of services e.g. Golden Mile and other heritage activities, festivals and arts activities, economic and tourism activities. This area of expenditure supports significant voluntary efforts in communities throughout the County I acknowledge the support of the elected members in this regard. The draft budget includes provision to continue to support Community activity through the work of the staff of the Community, Enterprise and Economic Development section and Heritage section and by the retention of grants largely at the level agreed in the adopted budget for 2013. I have in addition provided funding for the new proposed LEO and the program of works to be undertaken by the new local community development committee (LCDC).

### **Capital Investment in Infrastructure**

Amongst the main priorities identified in the Capital Programme for 2013-2015 are:

Progressing the Gort to Tuam PPP with a view to the project going ahead within the next few years. Work has commenced on the preparation of a revised planning application for the Galway City Outer Bypass (N6). It is also intended to progress some relatively low cost targeted improvements on the National Secondary network where safety is an issue and in tourist areas, in particular the N59.

The Council will provide support through our capital office to Irish Water in respect of water services investment.

There will be continuing investment in flood defence and mitigation, with support from the OPW, in particular the progression of the Dunkellin Scheme.

The Council will continue to work with Failte Ireland on the development of the tourism product including the Oughterard to Clifden Greenway and the Wild Atlantic Way Orientation plan.

The Council will advance the Ballinasloe library project and welcomes the recent allocation of € 200,000 from the Department of the Environment for the project.

The Council will continue to progress energy efficiency of the social housing stock, limited local authority housing output and the increased use of Voluntary housing agencies.

## **Conclusion**

The preparation of the Draft Annual Budget for 2014 has been challenging, in the context of changing responsibilities and the establishment of Irish Water. I believe that the proposed Draft Budget will allow Galway County Council to deliver the optimum level of core services in 2014, having regard to available resources. However, there is no provision for contingencies included. The proposed gross expenditure of €122M together with the capital programme spend estimated at €40m, represents a very considerable investment of monies in the development of the County and the delivery of services throughout the County.

I wish to thank the elected members for their co-operation and support during 2013. I wish to record my appreciation to the Mayor, Cllr. Liam Carroll, and the former Mayor Cllr. Tom Welby for their commitment to the special responsibilities of the office of Mayor and their courtesy and co-operation in doing the business of the Council. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the Corporate Policy Group in the discussion on the draft budget.

I also want to thank the staff of the Council for their dedication and flexibility during 2013. They have proven themselves to be committed public servants who are anxious to maintain service provision at the highest level possible.

I wish to thank the Council's Directors of Service and their staff for their rigorous examination of budget items for 2014 to identify areas for efficiency improvement and cost saving. In particular, I want to acknowledge the work of Mr. Ger Mullarkey, Mr. Michael McGovern, Ms Bernadette O'Connor, Ms. Caitriona Lusby and the staff in the Finance Unit. The preparation of the Draft Budget this year has been onerous and I thank all involved in delivering the draft budget.

The year 2014 will undoubtedly bring new challenges for Galway County Council, with the implementation of the major new reform proposals, but I am confident that with support of the Members, Management team, and colleagues we will provide valuable services in 2014 to meet the critical needs of the citizens and adapt flexibly to the changes required.

I recommend the Draft Budget to you for adoption.

*Yours sincerely,*

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**Martina Moloney,**  
**County Manager**

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE  
CORPORATE PLAN 2010 - 2014 IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 134 OF  
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001**

## **Significant Achievements 2009 / 2013**

### **Corporate and Cultural Affairs**

- Tuam Regional Offices completed and opened to the public in May 2009 with official opening on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2010.
- Official Opening of Loughrea Regional Office was held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.
- New Mobile Library launched 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010.
- Refurbishment and automation of Gort Library completed in 2009.
- Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award for Best Public Library Service 2010 & 2011.
- Roundstone Library relocated to the Community Centre in centre of the village in May 2011, it was re-shelved with the stock extended and improved and officially opened on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012.
- Spiddal Library Renovated and officially opened on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012
- RFID – (Radio Frequency Identification) introduced into Westside Library – self service system of issuing and returning books in December 2011.
- An extensive range of customer services initiatives were introduced including a text service, enhancement of the website [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie), upgrade of the telephone system in County Hall, the development and launch of a range of apps, a dedicated customer services email, availing of social media to extend the range of communication channels to include facebook and twitter and the introduction of fixyourstreet for reporting service requests.
- The introduction of the County Mayor's Awards in 2011 and the hosting of same on an annual basis thereafter to recognise community and voluntary effort by individuals, groups and communities across the county.
- The twinning of Clifden & Coyoacan, Mexico City in 2012.
- Under the Recreation and Amenity Framework €2m was allocated to 12 groups to develop community-based all weather pitches including facilities at Belclare/Sylane, Headford, Oranmore, Clonfert, Skehana, Oughterard, Kinvarra, Gort and Portumna. Funding was also made available to groups to develop walking routes and trails and works were carried out at Dunmore, Moylough, Portumna, Carrabane, and Kilchreest/Castledaly. Under the Passive Recreation Area funds were allocated and works were carried out in Glinsk and Aughrim.
- Under Recreation and Amenity Framework, two All-Weather Multi-Games Facilities were completed in Barna and Clifden in 2010. Aughrim Recreation Park and Carrabane Forest Trail also completed. Co-funding provided for completion of Town Trails in Loughrea and Tuam.
- Assistance provided to playgrounds in Ballygar, Lettermullen, An Cheathrú Rua, Dunmore, Kilconly, Leenane, Moylough, Ballyconneely, Craughwell, Indreabhán and Headford, Lackagh, Gort, Labane/Ardrahan and Ahascragh through direct funding and provision of insurance.



- The continued development and improvement of Rinville Park, Oranmore to include the provision of Interpretative Signage on the Bio-Diversity and Built Heritage in the Park, the development of educational packs and the enhancement of services through the granting of a seasonal concession for light refreshments.
- Enhanced disabled access provided at Tuam Leisure Centre – Low Energy Automatic Swing Doors at the main entrance along with improved accessible parking facilities in 2011.
- Construction of two All Weather Pitches in Tuam 2013.

### **Environment, Veterinary & Water Services Unit**

- The following schemes were completed:
  - Dunmore Kilkerrin and Leenane S.S.
  - Roundstone Water
  - Loughrea R.W.S.S. extension to Craughwell
  - Headford S.S.
  - Barna Sewerage
  - Dunmore Sewerage DBO
  - Kilkerrin Sewerage DBO
  - Leenane Sewerage DBO
- Phases 1 and 2 of the Water Conservation programme brought to a conclusion with a total budget provided by the DoEH&LG for this phase of €5.84 m involving the extension of district metering and further leak detection and repair.
- Rural Water Programme (Group Water Supply Schemes) EWS 2& 3 with expenditure of €14.5m in 2010.
- DBO Bundle No. project completed which saw the rationalisation of 44 schemes into 16 state of the art water treatment plants with the official launch of the schemes in June 2012.
- The Remedial Action Programme came to a conclusion in 2012 and the contract involved the upgrading and future proofing of the Council's water treatment plants to ensure quality of supply into the future. The contract was for some €14m, involved multiple sites and multiple consultants.
- New reservoir in Tonabrucky came to construction in 2012 – double the water storage capacity serving the suburbs of Knocknacarra right out to Barna and across to Moycullen.

### **Housing & Emergency Services**

- An Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme commenced in 2009 and continued to operate to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock.
- The Rental Accommodation Scheme was rolled out on a phased basis, with 455 Rent Supplement Recipients transferred and 301 contracts entered into with private landlords in 2010 alone.
- Anti Social Behaviour Strategy adopted in 2010 & 2013

- Tenancy and Estate Management Unit established within the Housing Unit in 2011.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Unit established in 2012 to deal with ASB complaints. Special sub-committee of the Joint Policing Committee established to examine the use of CCTV in housing estates.

### **Planning and Sustainable Development**

- Members adopted the Craughwell Local Area Plan 2009-2015 on the 7th September 2009.
- The Core Strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 and the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's) was adopted in July 2011, and was included as a variation to the Galway County Development Plan 2011.
- The Galway County Wind Energy Strategy was adopted in September 2011.
- The Tuam Local Area Plan 2011-2017 was adopted in February 2011.
- The new legislation for Quarries under the Planning & Development Act 2010 came into effect on 15th November 2011 and was advertised in December inviting submissions by 10th January 2012.
- The Athenry Local Area Plan 2012-2018 was adopted in June 2012.
- The Loughrea Local Area Plan 2012-2018 was adopted in September 2012.
- The Oranmore Local Area Plan 2012 -2018 was adopted in September 2012.
- The Bearna Local Area Plan 2007-2017 was adopted in December 2012.
- The Local Area Plan review process for the towns of Maigh Cuillinn and Gort, and the Amendments to the Gaeltacht and Clifden Local Area Plans was commenced in 2012 to ensure that the objectives of the Local Area Plans are consistent with the objectives of the Core Strategy.
- Work continued in 2012 on the County Galway Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment screening.
- An Industrial and Engineering Heritage Audit for Oranmore and Tuam Electoral Areas and an Ecclesiastical Heritage Trail for Connemara were advanced.

### **Community, Enterprise and Economic Development**

- The Council established BRU in 2009 – this is a Business Response Unit providing a point of contact for businesses to co-ordinate engagement between the Local Authority and the business community.
- As part of delivery its economic strategy the Council secured €1.4 million from BMW Regional Assembly ERDF Gateways and Hubs Fund for projects in Tuam.

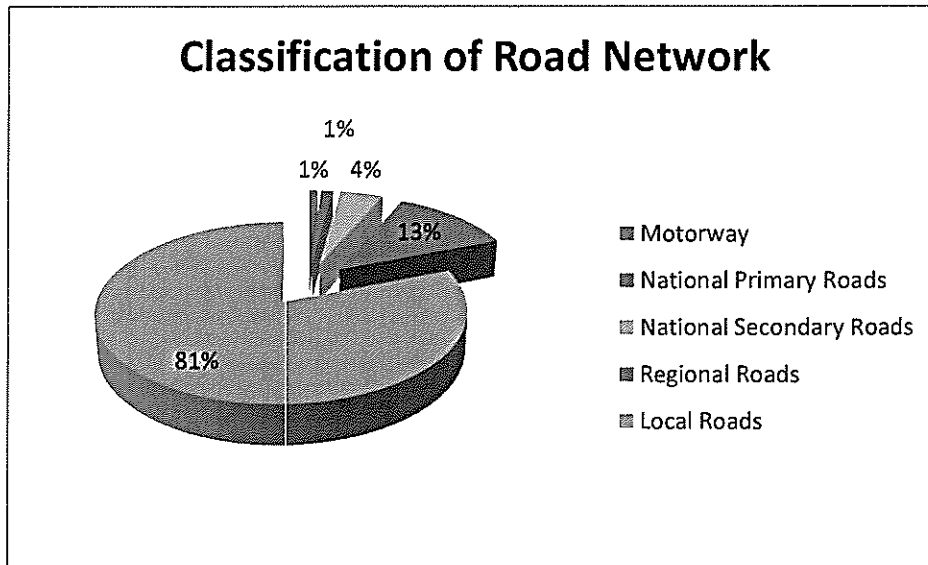
- Staff worked with '3' to assist in the rollout and promotion of the National Broadband Scheme.
- The development of three Historical Trails in Loughrea, Tuam and Clifden in partnership with Galway East Tourism, Town Councils and Fáilte Ireland.
- A new 32 km on road cycle loops linking Clifden, Cleggan, Ballyconneely and Roundstone was completed and promoted internationally with Discover Ireland.
- Significant investment in Community and Voluntary projects under the Community Grants Scheme to include financial assistance for the Arts, Heritage, Social Inclusion, Economic Development and Community/Voluntary Projects. Supported the development of the Hymn Way in the east of the County.
- Supported the successful participation and progression of towns and villages in various competitions including the Tidy Towns & Pride of Place, with notable success and advancement noted during the period 2009 -2012.
- The employment of RAPID Co-ordinators for Tuam & Ballinasloe to provide ongoing advisory project management services to agencies and communities.
- Developed the MeetWest business networking event for the West Region undertaken in partnership with local authorities and enterprise boards in Galway Mayo and Roscommon which was recognised in the 2013 LAMA Awards for Best Economic Partnership.
- Supported the development of "Screen West" a web site and marketing initiative to make it easy for filmmakers to come to the West to make productions – [www.screenwest.ie](http://www.screenwest.ie)
- Supported the establishment of the Galway Film Partnership and in partnership with the Galway Film Centre host a "film locations event" to attract more film shoots to the County.

## **Roads & Transportation, Marine and General Services**

- M6 Galway to Ballinasloe Motorway (PPP Scheme) was official opened on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009. The Official opening of the M6 Ballinasloe – Athlone was performed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009. The opening of the M6 Galway – Athlone and M6 Galway – East Ballinasloe Motorway marked the completion of the first Inter Urban Routes in the Country and provided the County with an essential element of transport infrastructure that will serve to underpin the balanced development and sustainable growth of the County and wider Region.
- The severe flooding experienced in November/December 2009 impacting on an area of approximately 1,350 sq miles (850,000 acres) presented a significant challenge on many levels for the local authority which was met with an appropriate, timely, professional and integrated response.

- The co-ordination and delivery of a substantial work programme, aimed at identifying and delivering economically feasible solutions to reduce the potential for future flooding including minor works and scheme flood relief schemes for the River Clare, South Galway and the Dunkellin.
- The severe cold weather experienced in 2009/2010 also presented a significant challenge necessitating the allocation of significant resources towards winter maintenance across the National, Regional & Local Road Network in order to ensure that all national routes and strategic regional and local roads remained passable and to maintain access for medical and welfare support staff.
- The contract for the N59 Derrylea Realignment in the amount of €4,468,866.15 was signed with Wills Bros Ltd. on the 19th March 2009. The project consisting of the realignment of approx 3.9 km of the N59 as a Pilot Scheme was the first project in the Country to incorporate the proposed new design standard for low-flow rural roads and was official opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010.
- The development of Cill Rónáin Harbour was completed in 2012 at an estimated total cost of approx €40 million representing the highest ever spend on island infrastructure in the history of the state. The development was awarded “Best Engineering Project of the Year 2012” by Engineers of Ireland.
- The official opening of the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2010
- Under the Smarter Travel initiative, work was undertaken in Loughrea, Tuam and Athenry to introduce traffic calming measures and improve walking and cycling routes for pedestrians along school routes and within town centres.
- The construction of 3 salt barns in Gort, Loughrea and Tuam was completed and were used for the storage of salt in advance of the Winter of 2011.
- Substantial sections of the Athenry Northern Relief Road were completed.
- The statutory approvals process, design and CPO were advanced for the N59 Moycullen Bypass.
- The realignment of the N17 at Castletown was completed in 2012.
- Construction progressed on the Oranmore Station at Garraun in partnership with Irish Rail to advance the development of the Oranmore Rail Station to include parking facilities and was completed and opened during 2013.

## ROADS, TRANSPORTATION, MARINE AND GENERAL SERVICES UNIT



The Road Grants for 2014 will be announced in February/March 2014 but it is anticipated that there will be a reduction of approximately 15% in the grant allocations for Regional and Local Roads from the Department of Transport. It is unlikely that there will be an increase in funding from the National Roads Authority for road maintenance and for pavement and minor improvement schemes.

In 2013 we continued to implement the centralization of administrative and technical staff in the Electoral Area Offices throughout the County to ensure a consistent and better quality of service. Reorganisation of the duties of staff has been part of this process to, to ensure sufficient cover for annual leave, sick leave or any other absences. The level of customer service in these area offices has remained at a high level, due to this reorganisation, despite staff levels continuing to drop in 2013.

2014 will be another challenging year with further reductions in staff levels due to retirements and staff taking up vacancies in other organisations. Due to an anticipated decrease in funding for Local Roads from the Council's own resources in 2014 there will be a reduction in funding available for local road repairs and resurfacing works. This will undoubtedly increase the length of the Local Road resurfacing programme cycle, which will have a detrimental effect on the road network in the County.

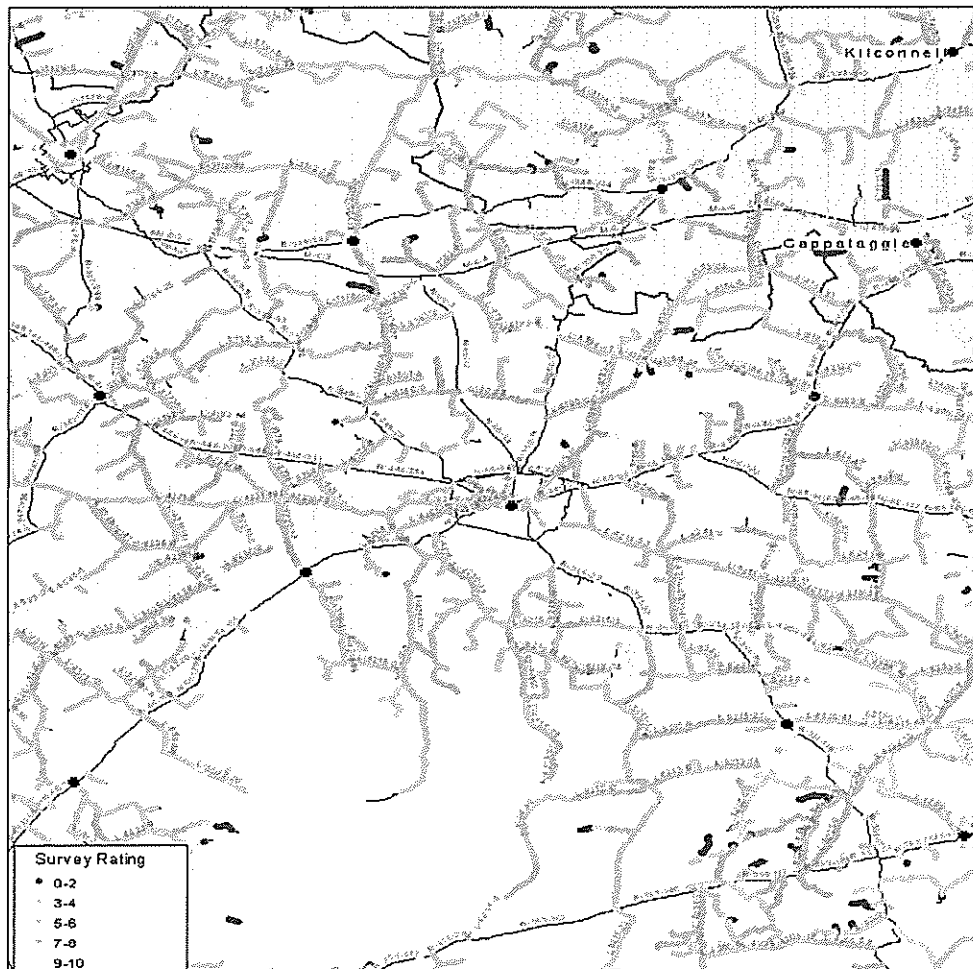
Funding allocations will continue to be made on a road length and classification basis which will ensure minimum disruption in the transition from electoral areas to municipal districts.

### **Local Road Condition Survey**

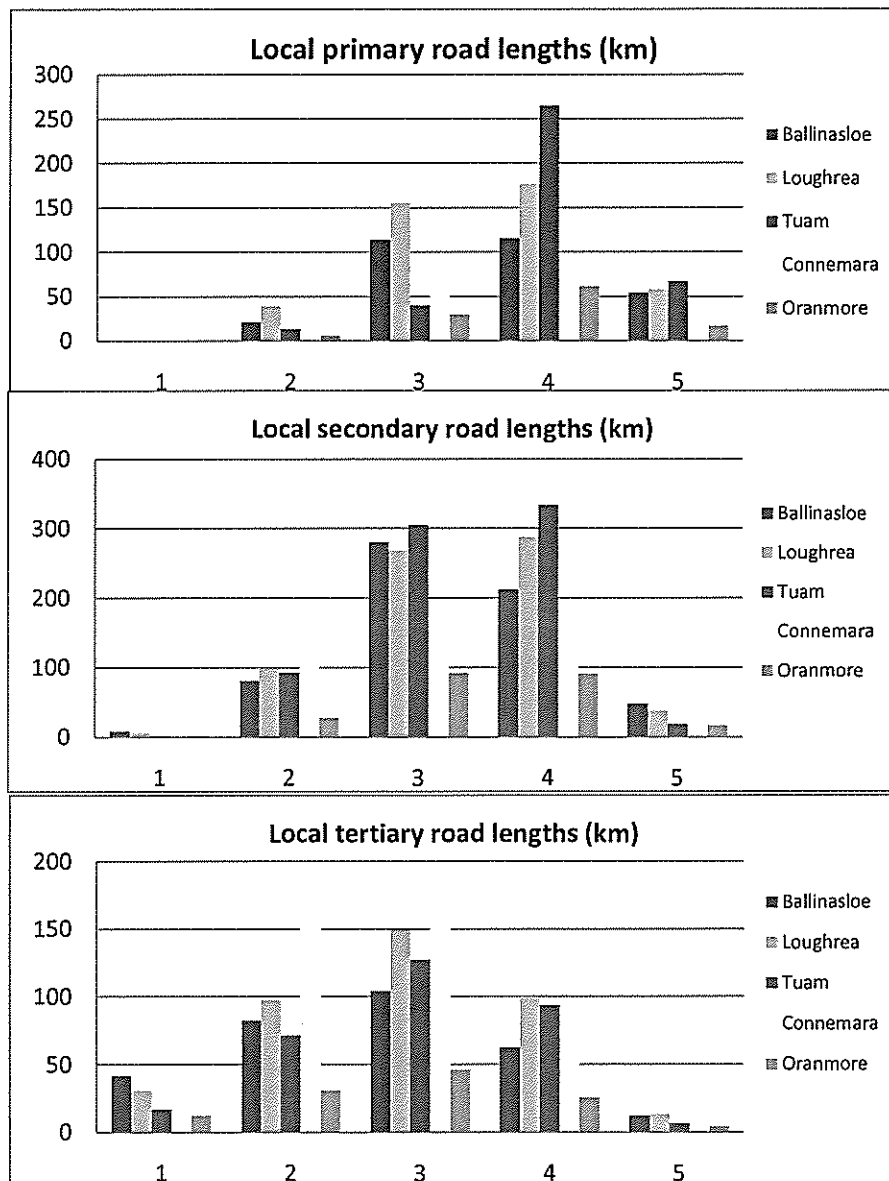
A visual and digital survey was carried out on the Local Road network by Galway County Council and was completed in late November 2012. The work was carried out by a team of Intern Staff recruited for the purpose. Quality control for the project was carried out by RMS, an external company involved in road maintenance and the work was supervised by Roads staff.

The project will benefit the management of the network and was also used to provide an updated inventory of the network. A sample of the visual output is shown below. Each segment of the road has been assessed and a grading applied. The location is mapped using GPS and automatically logged. The road condition is graded from 1 to 10 with 10 being the best condition.

The routes shown red below have a rating of 2 or less. The majority of these routes are Local Tertiary. Local Primary and Secondary routes shown red will be targeted as a priority.



The local roads condition survey was presented to the members and the findings are shown in the tables below. The general road conditions are comparable across the county. This indicates the model of allocating funding per road length/road class is a reasonable method.



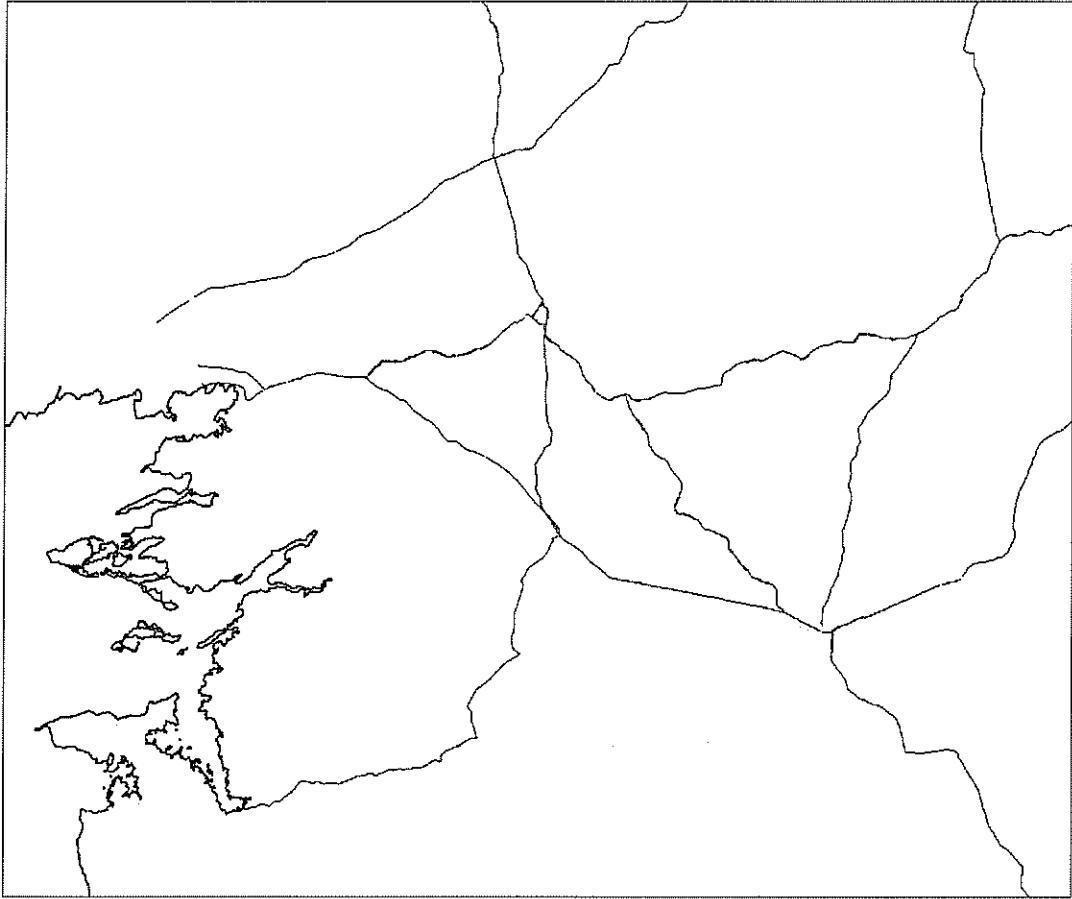
*The scale of 1 to 10 has been shortened to 1 to 5 for better visual effect. Roads of 3 and above are in acceptable condition.*

### **Regional Route Condition Survey**

The results of the survey carried out by the DOT/NRA on regional routes in County Galway are used as a tool to assist in setting out priorities for the Road Restoration and Reconstruction Programme. The results of the survey indicate which sections of road require surface upgrades; these amount to approximately 10% of the network. The baseline figures highlight a need to examine and improve skid resistance over approximately 8.5% of the regional network.

The map below is a visual indicator of where skid resistance is low and roughness is high. This type of data is very valuable in determining areas of concern and in fine tuning programmes to maximize the effectiveness of scarce resources. Other factors outside the physical attributes of the road also contribute such as traffic volumes, accident history, regional importance etc.





## National Roads

### *Indicative activities in 2013*

- Funding was provided in 2013 to facilitate the continued advancement and delivery of the Major Inter Urban Routes element of the National Development Plan 2007 – 2013. The following major projects are managed by the National Roads Design Office and the costs associated with this programme are recouped in full from the National Roads Authority:

National Road No.	Route Section
M6	Athlone / Ballinasloe
M6	Galway / Ballinasloe
M17/M18	Gort / Tuam
M18	Gort / Crusheen
N6	Galway City Outer Bypass
N59	Moycullen Bypass
N17	Tuam to Claremorris
N59	Clifden Oughterard

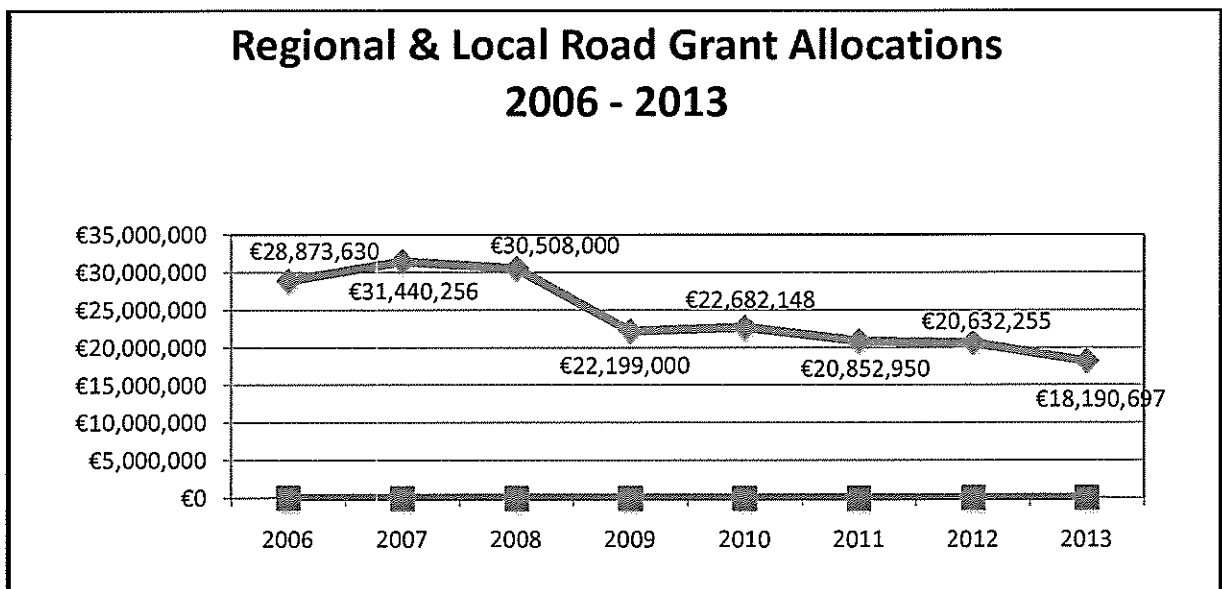
- The M6 and M18 Gort Crusheen Schemes are open to traffic with all outstanding works planned on being completed in 2014.
- The M17/M18 Scheme tender and financing process is progressing and it is a stated commitment of the NRA to proceed with the scheme.
- The N17 Tuam to Claremorris has been completed to CPO stage, but this CPO will not be published, no funding has been provided.
- Confirmation of approval for the CPO for N59 Moycullen Bypass have been received from An Bord Pleanala. Notice to Treat and Notice of Entry have been served and it is planned to commence construction on the online section mid 2014.
- An allocation was made available for the Galway City Outer Bypass in 2013. The appointment of lead consultants for the advancement of a new scheme through the planning process is scheduled for December 2013. Publication of the new scheme is programmed for 2015.
- Phase 1 of Maam Cross to Oughterard oral hearing has been held, we are now awaiting a decision from An Bord Pleanala.
- Phase 2 Clifden to Maam Cross work is ongoing with a targeted date of Qtr 2 2014 for completion of EIS, NIS and CPO documentation.
- The annual resurfacing and maintenance programme for National routes was undertaken in accordance with the budget for maintenance works notified by the National Roads Authority.

- A programme of Pavement & Minor Improvement Works was undertaken on the National Primary & National Secondary Road Network as follows:

**Proposals for 2014:**

- It is hoped that construction of the M17/M18 Gort to North of Tuam PPP Scheme will commence in 2014.
- The National Roads Design Office shall continue to advance other projects within the limits of available funding.
- The annual resurfacing and maintenance programme incorporating ordinary maintenance, annual resurfacing, winter maintenance, bridge maintenance and traffic route lighting maintenance will be undertaken within the limits of available funding from the National Roads Authority.
- In addition, a full programme of Pavement and Minor Improvement Works will be undertaken on the National Primary and National Secondary Road Network in the context of the 2014 grant allocations from the National Roads Authority.

**Regional & Local Roads**



**Indicative Activities in 2013:**

- The initial grant allocated for regional and local roads of € 18,190,697 which was a reduction of €2,441,558, or 11% on the 2012 allocation.

Improvement Works	€ 14,182,892
Maintenance Works	€ 4,007,805

The grant allocation can be classified under the following broad headings:

<b>Grant Category</b>	<b>2013</b>
Improvement Grant 2013	€8,130,572
Restoration Maintenance Grant	€3,479,050
Discretionary Maintenance Grant	€3,764,820
Specific Improvement Grants	€1,250,000
Low Cost Safety Improvement Grants	€122,500
Regional Roads Signposting Grant	€25,000
Regional & Local Road Winter Maintenance	€528,755
Strategic Regional & Local Roads (SNNR) Grant	€800,000
Training	€90,000
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>€18,190,697</b>

- The following roads were allocated funding under the Specific Improvement Grant Scheme during 2013:

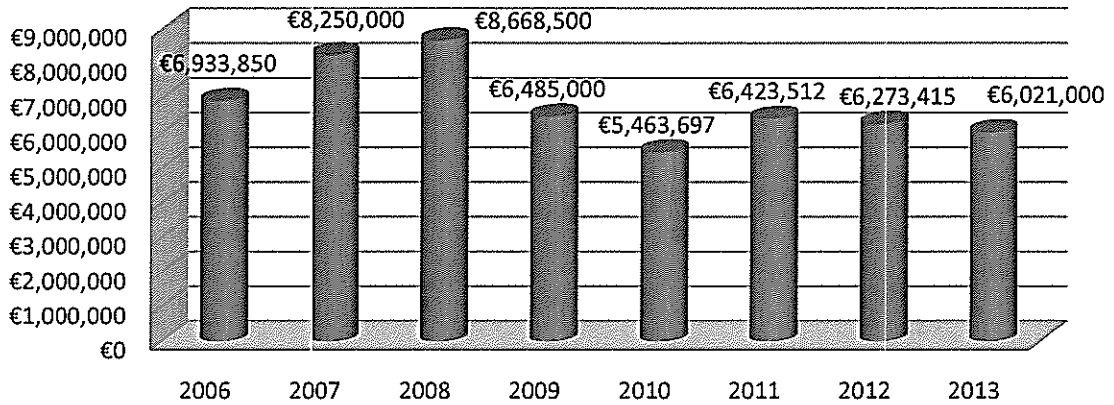
LP4101 Oranhill to Rinville	R333 Castlehackett
R341 Ballyconneely	R347 Cemetery Cross Roads

- The following projects, were funded under the Strategic Regional & Local Roads Grant Scheme:
  - Connemara Access Road (R336 Bearnna to Ros an Mhíl)
  - Baile Chláir Relief Road (Design Stage only)
  - Athenry Northern Relief Road (Sections 1 – 5 Under Construction)
  - Galway City Western Route

- A sum of €800,000 was allocated from the 2013 Improvement Grant for the Regional & Local Road Bridge Improvement Programme to facilitate works to the following bridges:

DG L63226 WINDFIELD OLD BRIDGE 2013	DG L4222 KILCHREEST BRIDGE 1 2013
DG R363 BALLYFORAN BRIDGE 2013	DG R352 BALLYSHRULE BRIDGE 2013
DG L7259 KILLIAN-LISCUILL BRIDGE 2013	DG R352 ROSTURRA 2 BRIDGE 2013
DG L7445 NEW INN BRIDGE 2 2013	DG L8759 DERRADDA SOUTH BRIDGE 2013
DG L7204 CLOONCURREEN BRIDGE 2013	DG L2208 GORTNALOURA BRIDGE 2013
DG L6351 CLOONSHIVNA BRIDGE 2013	DG L6403 CLOONADARRAGH BRIDGE 2013
DG L4308 LISSANISKA BRIDGE 2013	DG L6232 BALLABBERT BRIDGE 2013
DG L4301 BELVIEW BRIDGE 2013	DG L7303 CLOONKEEN BRIDGE 2 2013
DG L8704LLURGAN LITTLE BRIDGE 2 2013	DG L6362 GORTEENFADDA BRIDGE 2013
DG R336 CRUMLIN BRIDGE 2013	DG L2114 CAHERGAL BRIDGE 2013
DG L51364 TAWNAGHMORE BRIDGE 2013	DG L2121 NINEACRES BRIDGE 2013
DG L1201 FORMWEEL 3 BRIDGE 2013	DG L6177 CASTLECREEVY BRIDGE 2013
DG L5327 FARRAVAUN BRIDGE 2013	DG R348 PALMERSTOWN BRIDGE 2013
DG L4515 DOONALLY WEST BRIDGE 2013	DG L3102 CREGMORE BRIDGE 2013
DG L4515 FARNAUN BRIDGE GORT 2013	DG L3111 CAHERTUBER BRIDGE 2013
DG L8522 BALLYNAHOWNA BRIDGE 2013	DG L4101 BALLYNAMANAGH BRIDGE 2013
DG L8515 BALLARDIGGAN BRIDGE 2013	DG L8106 KILCAIMIN BRIDGE 2013
DG L8514 KILCRIMPLE BRIDGE 2013	DG L7113 KINISKA BRIDGE 2013
DG L4219 DEERPARK BRIDGE 2013	

## COUNCIL FUNDING OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROADS 2006 -2013



The sum provided from the Council's resources in 2013 was **€6,121,000** to include provision for public lighting. The Local Roads General Maintenance allocation of **€2,300,000** provided a unit allocation of **€411** per km.

The sum of **€2,300,000** was allocated as follows:

(1)	Ballinasloe Area Local Roads Maintenance	<b>€ 519,041</b>
(2)	Conamara Area Local Roads Maintenance	<b>€ 456,482</b>
(3)	Loughrea Area Local Roads Maintenance	<b>€ 592,083</b>
(4)	Oranmore Area Local Roads Maintenance	<b>€ 151,171</b>
(5)	Tuam Area Local Roads Maintenance	<b>€ 581,223</b>

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Unit will prepare the 2014 Roads Programme in the context of available funding from the National Roads Authority, Department of Transport and the Council's own resources. The Programme will be presented to the Council for their approval in early 2014.
- The distribution of the Local Roads Budget 2014 will be presented to Council for approval in the context of the 2014 Roads Programme. The level of discretion that will be available to Council in the allocation of funding in 2014 for Regional and Local Roads will be restricted by the requirements of the Memorandum on Grants for Regional & Local Roads as issued by the National Roads Authority.

## Marine Works

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

#### **Strategic Piers and Harbours:**

- The marine programme for developing Strategic Harbours is now complete, except for Inis Oírr Harbour, which is awaiting funding. Given the current financial situation it is unlikely that funding will be made available in 2014 for this project.

#### **Small Piers and Harbours**

- An allocation of €42,000 was received from An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta for necessary works on Cé Inis Oírr. Matching funding of €14,000 has been provided for these works, giving a total budget of €56,000.

#### **Fishery Harbours and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme**

- The Council carried out an extensive programme of safety and improvement works which was 75% funded by Department of Agriculture and the Marine.

Cé Sruthan, An Cheathrú Rua	Construct new quay wall, install access ladders. Construct stairwell, install safety railing and mooring rings	€150,000
Cé Glinsk, Carna	Construct access ladders, construct rehabilitation works to existing slipway	€150,000
Cé Annaghvane, Leitirmór	Construct new quay wall, install access ladders, construct stairwell, install safety railing and mooring rings	€150,000
Cé Inis Oírr, Árainn	Construct rehabilitation works to existing slipway	€150,000

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Progress the introduction of Harbour Bye-Laws for Caladh Mór, Inishbofin and Cleggan.
- To carry out further safety and improvement works at piers in County Galway, works depending on the funding made available by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

- Deliver the annual maintenance programme for Yacht Moorings and Piers & Harbours under the remit of Galway County Council.
- Maintain and develop the navigational aids on the coast line of County Galway.
- Develop marine leisure facilities.

## Coastal Protection

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- The Council will continue to submit proposals to the Office of Public Works for funding to facilitate Coastal Protection Work4. No funding was received from the OPW in 2013 for Coastal Protection Works.

## Arterial Drainage

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Council discharged its statutory responsibility for the maintenance of certain drainage works in the County through the Roads and Transportation Unit and the Council's Regional and Area Offices. The Council has charge of twelve Drainage Districts and there are two Districts in the charge of Joint Drainage Committees with Roscommon and Clare County Councils.

### Drainage Districts:

Ahascragh	Annagh	Boley
Dunkellin (Gort)	Dunkellin (Athenry)	Dunkellin (Loughrea)
Kellysgrove	Kilchreest	Lavally
Meelick Pollshask	Mountbellew	Oranhill

### Joint Drainage Districts:

River Fergus Joint Drainage Committee  
River Suck Joint Drainage Committee

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- The Unit will undertake a programme of maintenance on the drainage works under the remit of the Council during 2014 with a budget of **€150,000**.
- The Unit will continue to play an active role in the Joint Drainage Committees for the River Fergus and River Suck.
- All available sources of revenue will be utilised to undertake remedial and improvement works on the drainage districts under the remit of the Council.



## Flood Mitigation Works & Studies

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Joint Flood Working Group comprising representatives from Galway County Council and the Office of Public Works met regularly during 2013 to identify and progress works aimed at reducing the risk of future flooding.
- From 2010 to date a total of 155 Minor Works Flood Alleviation Schemes were examined with a view to determining whether an economically feasible solution to reduce the potential for future flooding existed. 104 schemes have been approved to date, 43 schemes were refused by the OPW and 8 schemes are still under consideration by the OPW.
- Approximately 95% of all the schemes approved by the OPW have been completed from 2010 to date.
- A Joint Steering Group comprised of representatives of Galway County Council and the Office of Public Works continued to meet during 2012 to progress works on the Dunkellin River & Aggard Stream Flood Relief Scheme and the Clare River (Claregalway) Flood Relief Scheme.
- The preferred engineering scheme for the Clare River (Claregalway) Flood Relief Scheme has been finalized and the Environmental Impact Statement for this scheme has been completed. The Minister for the OPW officially announced the commencement of the Public Exhibition of the scheme on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012 in Claregalway. The scheme was exhibited for 4 weeks and all observations were considered and included in the scheme as appropriate. The OPW hope to commence works on site in Spring-Summer.
- Galway County Council has continued working in partnership with the OPW on the Western and Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management studies during 2012. Draft Flood Maps are due to be completed in February 2014.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- The Council will continue to lead the work of the Joint Flood Working Group as an appropriate and effective means of advancing studies, flood mitigation works and flood relief schemes.
- The Environmental Impact Study for the Dunkellin River & Aggard Stream Flood Relief Scheme will be finalised in early 2014 and submitted to An Bord Pleanála for approval.
- Outstanding works on all existing minor flood mitigation projects will be completed by early 2014 and Galway Co Co will liaise with the OPW with regard to minor works schemes that are under consideration with the aim of securing funding for these schemes.

- Applications for funding for any further schemes identified as offering appropriate potential to reduce the risk of future flooding will be advanced for submission to the OPW.
- The Joint Steering Group will continue to work on progressing the Dunkellin River & Aggard Stream Flood Relief Scheme and the Clare River (Claregalway) Flood Relief Scheme.
- Galway County Council will continue working in partnership with the OPW on the Western and Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies during 2014.

## Smarter Travel & Sustainable Mobility

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- Continued to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of existing pay parking systems in Tuam, Clifden, Loughrea, Athenry and Gort.
- Completed the Draft Walking and Cycling Strategy for the County and presented it to the Roads S.P.C.
- Completed construction of the Garraun Rail Station and car park for Oranmore in a joint project with Iarnród Éireann.
- Progressed Smarter Travel Plans in Loughrea and Oranmore.
- Continued preparation of the Walking and Cycling Strategies for the Active Travel Towns of Gort, Athenry, Ballinasloe, Tuam and Clifden and presented plans to the area committees for final adoption.
- Acquired the planning application for a section of the Greenway from Clifden to Oughterard.
- Prepared and submitted application to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for sections of the National Cycle Network.
- Prepared and submitted application to Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for measures under Active Travel Town Schemes.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Continue to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of existing pay parking systems in Athenry, Clifden, Gort, Loughrea, and Tuam.
- Complete the Walking and Cycling Strategies for the Active Travel towns of Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Gort and Tuam.
- Progress Smarter Travel Plans in Athenry, Gort, Loughrea, Oranmore, and Tuam.
- Progress commencement of works on the section of the Connemara Greenway from Clifden to Oughterard.
- Progress development of the section of the Connemara Greenway from Oughterard to Galway.
- Under take measures in Tuam as part of the active travel towns proposals.

## Road Safety

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Road Safety Together Committee held meetings and continued its active role in the promotion of road safety.
- Road safety initiatives undertaken by the Council during 2013 included:
  - Promotion of the Drive for Life Programme for Post primary schools.
  - Support for the Cycling Safety Training Programme in national schools
  - Support for the operation of the Junior School Warden Scheme and competition held with 4 schools on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013 in Mountbellew.
  - In May, 2013, a High Visibility Vests Campaign took place and vests were distributed to libraries in the county, free of charge.
  - During 2013, high visibility vests, armbands and road safety awareness leaflets were distributed, free of charge, to schools and the general public.
  - During 2013, road safety awareness messages appeared in 'Aon Scéal', the Council's staff magazine, in order to continue raising road safety awareness to its staff members and also messages were sent to local press aimed at the general public.

### *Safety Improvement Works and Measures:*

- An allocation of €122,500 was provided by the Department of Transport to enable low cost safety improvement works to be carried out on the following regional and local roads:
  - R347 Castletaylor, Gort
  - R461 Scarriff Road, Gort
  - R446 Curragh Crossroads, Ballinasloe
  - R446 Meadowcourt Junction, Loughrea
  - R364 Annaghmore West, Ballinasloe
  - LP4510 Shessy Cross, Gort
  - LP3103 Rafterys Cross, Oranmore
- The National Roads Authority provided funding of €140,000 for Safety Measures on the following National Primary & Secondary roads:
  - N59 Gortacleva Improvement Scheme
  - N65 Portumna Pedestrian Crossing
- The Unit continued to implement Road Works Speed Limits, in consultation with the Gardaí and the National Roads Authority, as deemed necessary to facilitate the delivery of the Council's various Works Programmes.

***Public Lighting:***

- A sum of €732,000 was provided in the 2013 Budget to fund the cost of the public lighting programme including the maintenance/energy costs.
- In addition the National Roads Authority provided funding of €197,000 for National Primary and Secondary Route Lighting

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Publish the Road Safety Plan 2014 – 2016 which the Road Safety Together Committee will actively promote.
- Promote the expansion of the Junior School Warden scheme in conjunction with An Garda Síochána.
- Provide financial support for the operation of the Cycling Safety Training Programme (Primary Schools) and the Drive for Life Programme (Post Primary Schools).
- Deliver a Road Safety initiative for Post Primary Schools.
- Organise events during Irish Road Safety Week
- Continue to provide free reflective material/ armbands to schools, community groups and the general public.
- The Council will continue to deliver a programme of low cost safety improvement works on Regional and Local Roads and programme of safety measures on the National Primary & Secondary Network within the available funding provided by the National Roads Authority.
- Implementation of Road Works Speed Limits as necessary to facilitate the delivery of the 2013 Roads Programme and other work programmes.

***Public Lighting:***

- An increased sum of €882,000 will be provided in the Budget for the 2014 Public Lighting Programme. This budget provides for the maintenance and energy costs associated with the existing public lighting network. The recently completed survey of the number of lights in the charge of the Council has highlighted discrepancies in the previous ESB list of lights. The outturn of the survey indicated an increase in the number of lights in charge of approximately 30%. This will undoubtedly lead to an increase in the energy costs of public lighting next year.

## Community Involvement Schemes

### Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme

#### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Council continued to actively promote the Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme as a means of harnessing community support for road works on suitable local roads. A total of **64** applications were received for the 2013 scheme, of which funding was provided for **15** schemes by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. A sum of **€168,588** was provided by the Department of with a matching amount provided in kind by the local Community, such as the provision of land, stone, fencing etc.

#### *Proposals for 2014:*

- The 2014 Draft Roads Programme will include provision of funding to facilitate the operation of the Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme. The Department has advised that the scheme is being reviewed and criteria for the scheme may change in 2014, details of which will be advertised when received in the New Year.

## Signage

#### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- A grant of **€25,000** was provided in 2013 by the National Roads Authority to facilitate the continuation of the Regional Roads Signposting Programme which began in 2003.
- Funding was provided from the General Local Road Maintenance allocation for the provision and renewal of signage on local roads.

#### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Funding will be requested from the NRA for the continuation of the renewal of signage under the Regional Roads Signposting Programme.
- Signage will continue to be maintained and renewed on all routes, dependent on the funding allocated.

## Working in Partnership

#### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- Galway County Council and the Office of Public Works worked together on the Joint Flood Working Group and the Steering Group for the Dunkellin & River

Clare Flood Relief Schemes to advance suitable projects and measures to minimise the potential for future flooding.

- Galway County Council worked with Galway City Council and the Galway Transportation Unit, in advancing a Walking and Cycling Strategy for Galway City and its environs, including Gort, Athenry, Ballinasloe, Tuam and Clifden.
- The Unit liaised with relevant stakeholders in advancing the preparation of the Winter Service Plan.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Unit will continue to take a lead role in working in partnership with Galway City Council and the Galway Transportation Unit in advancing transportation related projects of mutual benefit to Galway County & City.
- The Council will continue to work with the Office of Public Works and other relevant stakeholders to address flood related matters during 2013.
- The Council will continue to liaise with the National Transportation Authority to develop best practice for public roads in rural areas.

<b>Customer Service</b>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Unit made information available to the general public, in late 2013, on our Winter Service Plan for 2013/2014 at [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie). The information sets out how the Winter Service for ice and snow conditions will be provided for in County Galway.
- The Unit is making increased use of Twitter and Facebook as the appropriate instant social media to advise the public of temporary roadworks, including ongoing updates on timeframes for the works.
- The Unit continues to publish public notices on [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie) regarding planned, longer-term roadworks.
- The Unit continues to operate an On-Line Payment Facility to allow for the payment of Fixed Charge Notices (Parking Fines).
- Notices advising the general public on issues relating to the Roads Act, which affect them, such as hedge cutting, unauthorised advertising etc were made available on [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie).
- A person was nominated within the Unit to specifically deal with all Customer Services queries and complaints which are received through the many options set up to facilitate them - online comments system, Roads e-mail, Fixyourstreet. This has ensured that issues raised are dealt with in a timely, efficient manner.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Unit shall continue to make use of [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie) and other social media to advise and inform the public of Roads issues which affect them.

- The Unit will continue to train frontline staff on-the-job. This will ensure sufficient knowledge within the Unit, to enable it to continue to operate efficiently and effectively despite the reduction in staffing numbers.
- It is envisaged that the on-line payments system will be extended to other payments accepted within the Unit, such as road opening and scaffolding licences.
- The option to use an online signature system will be investigated and developed.

## **Corporate Support**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee considered a number of issues during 2013 including:
  - Policy on advertising on public roads
  - Noise Action Plan
  - Parking and Taxi Bye-Laws
  - Horse Drawn Carriage Bye-Laws

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Unit will actively support the role of the Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee in policy formation, with a view to completing policies on advertising on public roads and traffic calming in built up areas.
- The Unit will continue to work with the Members to ensure that the Area Committee/Municipal District system is an efficient and effective model for addressing operational issues.

## **CORPORATE, HOUSING & EMERGENCY SERVICES UNIT**

### **Library Development Programme**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Library usage continued to increase in 2013. The Library Service of Galway County Council is one of the most heavily used services in the Ireland despite the fact that Galway spends one of the lowest per capita on this service.
- Library Staff through innovation and local partnerships continued to ensure a vibrant and active service with many open free events in 2013. More than 600,000 visits will have been made to branch libraries across the County in 2013. This makes the Council's branch libraries the most visited public spaces in County Galway, reflecting a service and place with diversity is welcomed and encouraged.
- The services, activities and usage of the Public Libraries reflect the goals of the service to retain the trust the local community has in the Library as a quality and open public service. The Service is committed to providing access to books, educational tools and resources that are proving expensive for individuals and families in the economic down-turn. This service has suffered severely in 2013 with the cut in the Book Fund.
- Detailed design for Ballinasloe Library has progressed with overall scope of project having been extended to include the full fit-outs of the Chapel First Floor as an Exhibition Area and for the First & Second Floors of the Townhouses as Office/Meeting Room Accommodation. Agreement in principle given by Ballinasloe Town Council to fund the construction of the project. The projected project expenditure will be circa €4m.

#### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- There will be an ongoing implementation of the Library Service. Every endeavour will be made to keep Branch Libraries open and to upgrade the bookstock.
- There will be further expansion in computerisation of branch libraries and the use of technology to improve the Library service. Galway Library will endeavour to implement many of the proposals in the National Public Library Strategy 2013-2017.
- The Council will continue to advance the Ballinasloe Library Project. Oughterard Library will be developed as part of the Oughterard Courthouse Community Project.
- Plans will be made for the improvement of Library Services in Galway and this will include the expansion of Galway City library and will incorporate a new



Galway Library HQ which requires urgent accommodation for among other requirements has extensive Local History and Archive collections

- Tenders to be invited for the Ballinasloe Library Project with construction to commence.

## Legal Advisory Services

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Department provided legal services for all programme areas, including the purchase and sale of properties, conduct of litigation including District Court Prosecutions, Circuit and High Court Litigation, including Judicial Review. In particular, the Affordable Housing workload, District Court Litigation, Judicial Review and the completion of land acquisitions on inter-urban routes, were substantial areas of work.
- A system of annual meetings with all Units of the Council were held.
- The Case Management System, which facilitates the use of templates to create work flows for the efficient and cost effective delivery of legal services, is being applied to further work areas.
- Register of Lands:- We requested that the Property Registration Authority convert the Entries under our Omnibus Folios to separate Folios. This has been done (except for Omnibus Folio GY23906 – the Largest One which the PRA are in the process of converting) and we have linked the new Folios to our Register of Lands Database with the help of IT.
- Retention Schedule & File Classification System has been agreed.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Concentrate on providing advisory legal services and continue to provide legal services for all programme areas.
- The completion of Land Acquisition Registrations arising from compulsory acquisition on inter-urban routes continues to be a substantial area of work
- Complete the Register of Lands using the Spatial Data on Folio Maps with the co-operation of IT and reconcile records with the physical land bank.
- The Property Registration Authority are in the process of converting all entries under our largest Omnibus Folio (GY23906) to separate Folios – with the assistance of IT those new Folios will replace the existing Omnibus Folios/Entries already in the Register of Lands.
- Workflows for the Case Management System will continue to be rolled out, enhancing work delivery and capacity - availing of software assistance.
- Record Management – Commence listing and manage the non-current records in the Record Store. Sort, review and manage the old records held in the office in

accordance the Retention Schedule i.e Miscellaneous and Road Traffic Prosecutions.

- Continue registering all current records on Arlink when registration is completed and send the completed boxes to Oasis.
- Annual meetings will continue to be held with all Units of the Council.

## **Recreation, Amenity & Play Facilities/ Outdoor Leisure Operations & Water Safety**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Lifeguards were provided on a seasonal basis at 10 locations in the County including five Blue Flag Beaches and at six locations in the City as part of a Shared Service Agreement with Galway City Council.
- In line with ILSE recommendations, an additional lifeguard was provided during scheduled hours at all lifeguarded County beaches.
- Additional lifeguarding hours were approved during exceptional weather at City and County beaches during July and on recommendation of Water Safety Officer. There has been an estimated 47 additional hours for July at City and County Beaches.
- In accordance with commitments previously given under the Play Policy, assistance was provided to playgrounds through direct funding and provision of insurance during 2013 in Ahascragh, Fohenagh, Kilimordaly. To-date, a total of 55 playgrounds have been developed in the County under this policy.
- ROSPA Accredited Training on Playground Inspection was provided for Community Groups/Council Staff as required under the Irish Public Bodies/Council Insurance Scheme for Playgrounds.
- A Smoke Free Playgrounds Policy was formulated, adopted and launched. Under this initiative, signage which was based on the winning entry in a poster competition for primary schools and fully sponsored by a local signage company, was placed in Council owned playgrounds as follows: Palace Grounds, Tuam; Parkmore, Tuam; Ballygaddy Road/Belair Drive, Tuam; Neighbourhood Park & Play, Dublin Road, Tuam; Play Area at Tirboy Housing, Estate, Tuam; Gort Road, Loughrea; Garraibride, Dublin Road, Loughrea; Court Lane, Athenry; St. Joseph's Road, Portumna.
- National Play Day – Events held in Community Park adjacent to Aughrim Visitor Centre Sunday July 7<sup>th</sup>. Event part funded by Dept' of Youth and Children.
- 'Let's Play' – *A Guide to Playgrounds in County Galway' and Interactive Map of Playgrounds launched on National Play Day.* Further media promotion scheduled from August 9<sup>th</sup> – on social media and web-site to promote the guide

and interactive map of play facilities. Guide profiles over 50 Playgrounds in the County.

- An application for Outdoor Gym equipment for Rinville Park and Loughrea was approved by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. Tenders were received and equipment has been ordered
- A Concession for the provision of refreshments at Rinville Park during April to September was continued.
- Maintenance Programme for Palace Grounds, Tuam was implemented in association with Council sponsored CE Scheme.
- Administrative support and advisory services was provided to community groups – Clifden & District Development Association, Sliabh Aughty project to advance community recreation projects and access available funding.
- Maintenance Programme for Rinville Park continued to be delivered in partnership with local groups, and within the limits of available resources, in accordance with the Habitat Survey and Management Plan for the Park.
- Expressions of Interest invited to cut and retrieve haylage on lands in and adjacent to Rinville Park.
- Walkways through Rinville Park upgraded and resurfaced towards end of year.
- Tuam All Weather Pitches constructed and Tender process completed for appointment of Operator for the facility.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Installation of Outdoor Gym equipment at Rinville Park and Loughrea
- Implement Beach Lifeguard Programme on Seasonal Basis and progress works required under the ISLE Risk Assessments in line with resources.
- Continue administrative support and advisory services to community groups – Clifden & District Development Association, Sliabh Aughty project to advance community recreation projects and access available funding.
- Implement the Rinville Park Forest Management Plan to include small-scale felling of hazardous conifers and replanting with native trees and continue maintenance programme.
- Implement further promotion of the Park's Bio-Diversity & Events.
- Continue monitoring of usage of Local Authority Leisure Facilities in 2014, including Tuam Leisure Centre and progress further energy efficiency measures.
- Continue progress of the Playground Policy and engagement with Community Group for finalisation of outstanding commitments.

## Council Facilities for Local Economic & Community Benefit / Heritage/Interpretative Facilities Operations

### *Indicative Activities 2013:*

- An internal Historic Assets Committee was established in 2012 with representation from Planning, Conservation and Community & Enterprise continued to support Corporate Services in managing Historic Structures in its ownership and in liaising with communities to advance projects for re-use of some properties.
- Framework of Specialist Contractors put in place to undertake Small Conservation Works of less than €250k in consultation with the Conservation Officer.
- LEADER applications submitted for Loughrea Town Hall, ST. Mary's Athenry, Monivea Bell Tower and Loughrea Long Walk.
- Part 8 Planning was submitted and approved for the refurbishment of Loughrea Town Hall for use as a Local Heritage Centre and Business Start Up Unit
- Administrative and technical support services were provided to community group to advance leasing of Oughterard Courthouse
- Ministerial consent application completed for St. Mary's Athenry.
- The Battle of Aughrim Interpretative Centre managed by Galway County Council opened for extended hours from May to September 2013 and in the off season to facilitate additional School and Group Tours. New tourism marketing and promotion plan completed. The Centre provides maps and guides to the Battlefield as well as Guided Tours of the Centre. Approval for Centre Manager position and a new position of Part Time Graduate (Guide Training) gained.
- Aughrim Interpretative and Visitor Centre - GROW Aughrim Team was established. The aims of this internal working group are to: *Grow new business for the centre, Renew –focus of Centre on the Battle of Aughrim 1691 as its core authentic purpose Organise – develop clear policies, structure procedures on its management and development, Work in partnership with other bodies and community to develop the Centre.*
- A Tourism Marketing and Promotion Plan for the Centre was completed.
- €12k funding was approved under Local and Regional Museums Fund and Action Plan ongoing.
- Gathering Event was held at the Centre – July 12th-14th as part of Aughrim Military History Summer School.
- Meeting held with local hotels to agree promotion of Centre to visitors
- Aughrim registered as member of Irish Museums Association for first time.
- CCTV installed at Aughrim Centre.
- Funding was provided to Athenry Heritage Centre to support events and maintenance of the Facility.

- Oughterard Courthouse: Part 8 Planning Application – approved at June 24<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, for the re-use and internal re-development/extension of Courthouse.
- Town Hall Loughrea Part 8 Planning documentation completed.

***Indicative Proposals for 2014:***

- Implement agreed actions of Historic Assets Committee in line with resources to conserve, protect structures in Council ownership.
- Provide continued administrative and technical support to community groups to promote re-use of properties and access other Government funding, include concluding leasing of Oughterard Courthouse.
- Battle of Aughrim Interpretative Centre will complete new 'Flyer' on Centre – and distribution network agreed, provide Education Pack for Primary and Secondary Schools, New Trail Route - Map and Battlefield Trail brochure, Upgraded Signage to Centre and external to Centre, U Tube Channel Clip to be completed, Update Web-pages and Facebook page in use. Meeting with Battle of the Boyne Centre to be facilitated to commence discussion on national 'Battlefield Trail'. The Centre Manager will take part in Irish Museum Quality Standards Programme to be delivered in City Museum during September/early October. Complete draw-down of Grant. The Centre will continue to support community initiatives linked to the Culture & Heritage of the Battle of Aughrim.
- Support operation of Athenry Heritage Centre.
- Undertake essential repair works to stone masonry at base of spire at Gort Library
- Detailed design to be completed and tenders sought for the refurbishment of Loughrea Town Hall

<p><b>Community Warden Scheme</b></p>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- The Wardens continued to assist with the operation of pay parking and the implementation of traffic management plans in a number of towns across the County.
- Environmental Enforcement including the issuing of Litter fines and notices under the Waste Management and Water pollution Acts continued to be undertaken by the Warden Service.
- Dog Licensing inspection campaigns also continued throughout the year.
- The Wardens continued to implement the provisions of the Roads Act 1993, in relation to abandoned vehicles, with vehicles identified, reported and removed as necessary throughout the year.

- Litter Pollution/Derelict Sites Surveys were carried out, whilst regular inspections of Playgrounds, Parks, Local Authority Estates, Halting Sites, Piers, Beaches, Bottle banks etc. continued to be undertaken by the Wardens.
- Community Wardens continued to assist the Housing Section in implementing the Control of Horses Act 1996 among other duties.
- Updated operation arrangements of the CWS approved by management team in April 2013
- Community Wardens took part in Health & Safety, Lone Worker and ROSPA playground inspection training during 2013.
- Lone Working Devices were issued to the Community Wardens Service.
- Modification and repair works were carried out to Community Wardens Service Vans.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- This Unit will continue to co-ordinate the allocation of functions to the Community Warden Service
- Work will continue on assessing how the Service can best assist in meeting the objectives and business priorities of the organization.

<b>Disability Action Plan</b>
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***Indicative Activities 2013:***

- Continued delivery of the Disability Action Plan 2007-2015, within the limits of previously allocated funding.
- Improved access at City Library by completion of works on accessible sliding doors at the facility.
- Improved access at Áras an Chontae with replacement of accessible doors.
- Invitation issued to secondary schools for participation in the Enabling Access Across Generations Initiative.
- Attendance and participation at National Access Officers Network meetings and **National Access Seminar Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013**
- Agreed Accessible Actions for Implement in Galway Age Friendly County Strategy.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Continued implementation of the Disability Action Plan 2007-2015, within the limits of available funding, to include access improvement in towns, continuing investment in accessibility ICT improvement, ensuring implementation of the accessibility information policy, provision of audio and large print books and access improvements to buildings.
- Accessible Family Friendly Toilet Facilities to be provided in 2014

- Support implementation of the Customer Service Action Plan to continually improve access to services for persons with a disability and improved access at public counters in Áras an Chontae.

## Promoting the Irish Language

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Council continues to engage with An Roinn Ealaín, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta with a view to agreeing Scéim Teanga Údaráis Áitiúla Chontae na Gaillimhe 2013 – 2016.
- Irish courses, language awareness and language support material continued to be made available to staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe to enhance the provision of services through Irish.
- Irish course was made available to elected members in 2013.
- Information briefings were provided to all staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe regarding language duties, obligations and legislation.
- In March a detailed programme for Seachtain na Gaeilge was implemented including engaging staff with competitions, events and exhibitions.
- Song writing competitions as Gaeilge for national and secondary schools in the Conamara Gaeltacht (Stéibh 2013) was completed and CD recorded and launched.
- Tender process for the provision of Irish translation services for Galway County Council was completed.
- Reports compiled on [www.galway.ie/www.gaillimh.ie](http://www.galway.ie/www.gaillimh.ie) as regards equality of languages and website workshops held to outline requirements.
- New website content approval procedure implemented in association with Customer Services and IS.
- A proposal on improved operation of the Irish language phone service was drafted and proposed to Customer Services Officers Group and approved by Management Team.
- An Irish Language Intern was recruited under the Job Bridge scheme.
- The Council continued with its annual collaborative awareness project with County Galway VEC and Gaeilge Locha Riach in the promotion of Irish in East Galway.
- The Council continued to co-operate with An Coimisinéir Teanga, in dealing with issues raised by members of the public, regarding Irish language services and legislation.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Provide information briefings to all staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe regarding language duties, obligations and legislation.

- Continue to provide appropriate Irish courses, language awareness and language support material to staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe, to enhance the provision of services through Irish. Review operation of Irish language phone service.
- Review tender for provision of Irish translation services for Galway County Council.
- Implement proposal on Irish Language phone service.
- Review Councils Language planning strategy in East Galway and update and publish results of Athenry & Ballinasloe language surveys.
- Continue to operate web-site approval process in partnership with Customer Services and IS.
- Assist and encourage Gaeltacht communities to prepare language plans for their areas.
- Continue with the annual Irish Language Awareness initiative in East Galway, in collaboration with County Galway VEC and Gaeilge Locha Riach.

### **Facilities Management – Council Properties / Health & Safety**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Maintenance contracts for the maintenance of Lifts, Fire Alarm Systems, Emergency Lighting, Fire Extinguishers, Access Control, Intruder Alarms and CCTV were tendered and awarded for an initial 2 year contract with the option to extend for a further 2 years.
- A range of actions were delivered under the 2013 Safety Management Programme for Office Accommodation.
- Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) was completed for all Area Office, Fire Stations and city based libraries & office accommodation.
- 2 No. PAT units were procured and 8 no staff trained on its use so to allow in-house staff to undertake PAT testing. This will have a cost benefit to the organisation.
- A comprehensive testing programme of the electrical installations at Office and Library Accommodation commenced with the completion of County Hall, Ballybane Library, Loughrea Library & Regional Offices.
- The oil fired boilers in County Hall were replaced and switched over onto natural gas at the latter end of the year which should result in significant energy savings and costs for 2014 onwards. Photovoltaic Panels were also installed on the roof as part of this project will assist in reducing our electrical consumption. This project was part funded through the SEAI funding initiative Better Energy Communities.
- A combined heat and power plant (CHP) was installed at Tuam Leisure Centre and the fuel supply switched over onto Natural Gas towards the year end. This project will significantly reduce the energy consumption at the leisure centre



from 2014 onwards. This project was part funded through BMW Region NSS Gateways and Hubs European Regional Development Grants Scheme

- Design Team procured to further progress the reconfiguration of the Council Chamber to accommodate 39 elected members.
- Tenders invited for Management and Operation of Ballinasloe and Tuam Leisure Centres November 2013.

#### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Maintenance contracts will continue to be the subject of ongoing review to achieve reductions in costs where feasible.
- The Unit will continue to deliver actions in accordance with the Energy Management Action Plan, with a view to further reducing energy consumption.
- A Safety Management Programme for Office Accommodation will continue to be implemented in 2014.
- The PAT testing programme will continue to be rolled out.
- Testing of Electrical Installations will continue to be delivered with particular focus on larger library and office accommodation.
- Progress the reconfiguration of the Council Chamber before the convening meeting of the newly elected members.
- In partnership with the Environment Section, it is intended to complete the implementation of the 3 Bin Collection Service in Council offices in line with Food Waste Regulations.

### **Management of Records & Archives**

The Archives Section works to ensure the care, preservation, management of and access to the Council's archives. Archives are valuable cultural assets which require specific care, and with growing interest in our past and in particular in family history and for The Decade of Commemorations, are also important for cultural tourism. The Section also provides policy advice to the Council on the care and management of its records.

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Continued to provide access to information on Galway County Council's archival holdings through its descriptive lists and also its on-line catalogue, and through various archival portals.
- Continued processing archive collections, in particular the Tuam Poor Law Union collection (GPL5/)<sup>1</sup>.
- Developed the Digital Archive to enable and provide free on-line access to several digitized collections (see <http://www.galway.ie/digitalarchives/>).
- Provided on-going reader services, such as access to collections for research purposes, assistance with research queries, and provision of research advice and guidance.

<sup>1</sup> Also GS13/01, GS13/02, GS13/03, GS13/04, GC/NS7 and GC/CS06

- Monitored the environmental conditions of the archives and endeavoured to ensure their continued protection, preservation and management, despite storage facilities not meeting internationally acceptable preservation standards
- Continued the programme of providing security backup and reference surrogates to collections<sup>2</sup>.
- Outreach activities included the launch of the Digital Archive in October 2013, participation in and launch of the Explore Your Archives 'Story Box' campaign in November 2013, articles in *Irish Root* and the online Irish Lives Remembered eMagazine, and circulation of the *Gleanings from the Archives* exhibition to various branch libraries around the county.
- Managed a conservation project of fragile collection.
- Provided advice on records management best practice and assistance to Sections, as required, in particular Corporate Services.
- Presentation on Records Management delivered as part of Staff Briefing Workshops May 2013, providing update on requirements and procedures.
- Continued the management of non-current record transfers to storage & record retrievals and returns: 801 recall requests were processed from January to-date (27/11/2013). There are now 70,727 records on the ArLink records management database.

#### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Additional archive collections will be processed, whilst continuing to provide access and advice to researchers.
- Continue the programme of providing security backup and reference surrogates to collections.
- Provide suitable accommodation for the Archives, meeting required international standards.
- Work with Galway County Council's in-house National Famine Commemoration and Decade of Commemoration Committees, and assist with the development of various programme targets.
- Galway County Council will continue to avail of commercial storage for its non-current records, and manage the retrieval and return of records held in off-site storage.
- Continue to liaise with Sections to develop and implement file classification & record retention schedules, and provide advice on records management best practice.

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<sup>2</sup> Backup preservation copies obtained for collections / items such as GPL5/, GS01/4, GS13/01, GS13/02,& GS01/3

## Register of Electors

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Register of Electors was published on the 1st February, 2013 with a total 132,469 on the register.
- In the context of the Referendum held in October, the Council facilitated the preparation of a Supplementary Register. There were 2,205 people on the Supplement for the Referendum on 4th October 2013.
- The total number on the Draft Register published on the 1st November 2013 was 132,425.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- The Council will publish the Register of Electors in accordance with the relevant statutory timeframe.
- Local Elections will take place in May 2014 and in this context, a Supplementary Register will be prepared.
- The coordination of the Local Elections 2014 is the responsibility of Galway County Council and will be carried out through the Corporate Services Department/Returning Officer.

## Corporate Planning & Support / Local Representation/ Civic Leadership

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- 6 meetings of the Corporate Policy Group have been held to date in 2013.
- 4 Meetings of the Corporate & Cultural Strategic Policy Committee were held during 2013 and also a Joint Meeting of the Corporate & Cultural Strategic Policy Committee and the Heritage and Bio-Diversity Fora was held in Na Forbacha.
- A number of Civic Receptions were held during 2013, including a Reception for the St. Thomas' Senior Hurling Club who won the All Ireland Club Hurling Final, and also a Reception for the Galway Senior and Intermediate Camogie Teams who won both All Ireland Camogie Finals. A Mayoral Reception was held for Kieran Molloy of Oughterard Boxing Club who captured a bronze medal at the AIBA World Junior Championships in Kiev.
- The Joint Policing Committee (JPC) is made up of Local Authority elected members, members of An Garda Síochána, members of the Oireachtas and community & voluntary representatives. Its function is to serve as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the local authority's administrative area. The JPC held the following meetings were held, Public meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013, General Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013, AGM held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013, General Committee

meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013, General Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

- The JPC 2012 Annual Report: completed in Feb 2013 and presented to Council and submitted to the Dept. of Justice, the Dept. of Environment, Community & Local Government, and to the Garda Commissioner. National Review of Joint Policing Committees - JPC Response submitted to Dept of Justice January 2013.
- The Three JPC sub-committees established in 2012 continued work in 2013 on CCTV, Community Watch and Litter and Illegal Dumping.
- Corporate Governance Unit established and Senior Management Team in place.
- BPI Group approved and established in Q2 consisting of 12 representatives from each Unit a
- Draft Code of Corporate Governance commenced.
- Review of Sect 15 & 16 FOI Manuals completed
- New Corporate Risk Register completed.
- Putting People First – Transition Team in place and preliminary assessments underway regarding new Municipal Districts and amalgamation of Town Councils.
- Co-ordination of PMDs Revised model training and re-design PDP forms.

#### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Council will update the Staff & Members Ethics Register and obtain Donations & Expenditure Declarations from Councillors.
- The Unit will actively support the role of the Strategic Policy Committees and the Corporate Policy Group in policy formation.
- The Council will continue to work with the Members to ensure that the Area Committee system remains an efficient and effective model for addressing operational issues.
- Continue Co-ordination of JPC on behalf of the organisation - Complete JPC Annual Report Dec 2013. Continue support of Sub-Committee meetings and report back to JPC on key issues and recommendations.
- Complete BPI process initiative across the organisation through the BPI Group.
- Corporate Code of Governance in place.
- Complete Town Council mergers and establishment of Municipal Districts.

## **Freedom of Information**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- A total of 45 requests were received under the Freedom of Information Acts by November 2013 and were processed in accordance with the relevant statutory timeframe.

- Presentation on Freedom of Information delivered as part of Staff Briefing Workshops in May 2013, providing update on requirements and procedures.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Council will continue to comply with our statutory requirements regarding Freedom of Information.
- A new Freedom of Information Act is being prepared nationally and the Council will comply with the terms as set out in the new Act.

<b>Access to Information on the Environment</b>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- 4 requests were received under the Access to Information on the Environment Regulations by November, 2013 and were processed in accordance with the relevant statutory timeframe.
- Presentation on Access to Information on the Environment delivered as part of Staff Briefing Workshops in May 2013, providing update on requirements and procedures.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Council will continue to comply with our statutory requirements regarding Access to Information on the Environment.

<b>Educational Support Services/Student Grants</b>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- A new single National Awarding Authority (Student Universal Support Ireland) was introduced by Government in 2012 and is operated by County of Dublin VEC. SUSI is responsible for all new applications.
- For the 2013-2014 Academic Year, the Student Grants Section has dealt with over 995 renewals including re-assessment of over 100 provisional awards and processing of maintenance and fees payments. Over 95% of first term maintenance payments were paid by end of October 2013.
- Dedicated email, [www.twitter.com/galwaystudents](http://www.twitter.com/galwaystudents), phone line and text service is ongoing for student queries.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Council will continue to administer the payments (Maintenance and Fees) and appeals procedure for existing students until their courses are completed

and addressing appeals. No new applicants will be dealt with by the Council in 2014.

## **Workplace Partnership**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Three meeting of the Workplace Partnership Committee were held in 2013
- Progress reports on all issues in relation to the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 were discussed.
- The Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014 and the Local Government Efficiency Review Group Report were also considered by the Committee
- Tenders invited for provision of Staff Health Screening Programme
- Bi-monthly publication of the organisation’s internal newsletter Aon Scéal.

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Monitor implementation of the Public Services Agreement and relevant recommendations from the Local Government Efficiency Review Group Report.
- Implement Health Screen Programme.

## **Customer Service**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Nine meetings of the Customer Services Officers Group (CSOG) were held in 2013
- Introduction of customer services email address i.e [customerservices@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:customerservices@galwaycoco.ie) whereby internally all activity within the organisation is communicated to the Customer Services Team and the general public can also email this address with general queries which are investigated and replied to appropriately.
- Information briefings were provided to all staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe regarding customer services policies, principles, initiatives and procedures.
- Introduction of a centralised system for placement of Advertising to comply with the National Procurement Framework.
- New centralised system introduced for the updating and amending of the website to ensure compliance with our Irish Language Scheme & Website guidelines.
- Collation and updating on a six monthly basis a General and Service Contact Information list for the elected members.

- Manage the administration of Meeting Rooms bookings
- Initiated a project on the Councils application forms to conclude in a central repository of all of the Councils application forms being available bilingually, in various formats with consistent layout.
- Work commenced on the development of the first phase of interactive application forms, together with associated on line payment facilities(where necessary).
- Collation of information on customer service database to focus on the most frequent queries received at the Customer Services desk.
- Collation of information on phone activity reports.
- Updating notice boards in Áras an Chontae and maintenance of the atrium internet information kiosk for staff and public
- Processing of Fix Your Street cases and follow up on outstanding cases
- Introduction and operation of the increased Social Media presence i.e. Facebook, Twitter etc.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Co-ordinate implementation of the Customer Service Action Plan 2014 in line with agreed targets
- Continue to facilitate the Customer Services Officers Group bi-monthly meetings, information sharing and joint actions across all sections. Research Customer Service Models to apply to local needs.
- Continue to implement 'Fix Your Street' to meet agreed targets.
- Update Council Web-site in both languages and maintain a central deposit and coding system for all County Council Application Forms available via the web-site

<p><b>Operation of Coroner Expenses</b></p>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Council continued to provide administrative support for the processing of all payments of fees for the City and County Coroners Service in accordance with the revised Scheme of Fees introduced in 2012.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Monitor and review the implementation of the Agreed Scheme for Funeral Directors/Undertakers and maintain updated information on the Panel.
- Continue administration of payments for implementation of the Coroners Service including Pathology, Removal, Coroners Courts and other duties in line with Agreed Schemes and Statutory Instruments.
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## Operation of Markets & Casual Trading

- Casual Trading Licenses are issued annually for a fee for a number of towns and villages throughout the County including Athenry (4), Clifden (8), , Gort (6), Loughrea (2), Mountbellew (11), Dunmore (1), Headford (1), Tuam (5); in line with Casual Trading Bye-Laws.
- Special Event Licenses are issued for various festivals and fairs which take place throughout the year, e.g. Maam Valley Fair (39) and the Clifden Pony Show (20). Litter Deposits are sought from providers.
- Requests from film makers etc. to use the public property for filming are also processed.
- Requests from Cinemobile and Funfair Operators to park at various towns and villages are also processed.

## Internal Audit Activity

Internal Audit is an independent unit, attached to the Corporate Services Section, offering a consultancy service to Management and the organisation as a whole. The Unit carries out audits and reviews through its annual Audit Plan, which is drawn up in conjunction with the Management Team and approved by the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee held 4 meetings during 2013.

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- A total of 8 audits were completed from the 2013 Audit Plan, inclusive of an examination of a sample of income generating activities in the Ballinasloe Town Council.
- All of the 2012 Audit Reports recommendations were reviewed
- Random checks were undertaken on the invoicing of Development Contributions
- Monthly checking of the cash office, quarterly checking of revenue collector's receipts and lodgments, together with weekly checking in the motor tax headquarters office in County Hall. In addition, periodic checking and stock taking was undertaken in the motor tax sub offices in Ballinasloe and An Cheathrú Rua.
- An examination of a 3 month period of plant hire record sheets was carried out to establish compliance with LA tenders.
- Burial ground caretakers receipts and lodgments were examined
- Audit testing was undertaken on a sample of housing rent a/c's to ensure the application of correct rent as per the most recent rent assessment.
- Files for a sample of 2013 capital jobs were examined to establish if relevant procurement documentation was in place.



***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Internal Audit Unit will continue to support and facilitate the work of the Audit Committee and will submit the 2014 Audit Plan for approval in early 2014.
- Completion of audits as per the 2014 Audit Plans
- Reviews of recommendations made in 2013 audit reports
- Weekly, quarterly and periodic checks on the various income collection streams.
- Continue to undertake policy compliance testing

## **Social & Affordable Housing**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- The focus on the provision of Social Housing has changed dramatically over the last couple of years. The reduction in capital spending necessitated a restructuring of the social housing investment programme to allow for the delivery of new social housing through a range of options primarily based on leasing and the Voluntary Sector.

### ***Proposals for 2014***

- In addition to the changing role of the Council in relation to the provision of housing, with emphasis now gone from building to leasing and RAS, the Department is now putting an emphasis on the role of the voluntary sector in terms of the provision of housing and its ongoing management and maintenance. This poses a number of challenges for the Council as well as the voluntary sector whose funding streams have changed quite significantly. New staffing arrangements have been put in place to deal these challenges.

### **Housing Waiting List**

- Galway County Council completed an assessment of housing need for its functional area on 30th April 2013 under the following headings;
- The provision of Housing Accommodation in its functional area for persons who require or are likely to require accommodation from Galway County Council and who, in the opinion of the County Council, are in need of such accommodation and unable to provide it from their own resources.
- The provision of residential caravan parks for members of the Traveller Community in the functional area of the County Council and in the town of Ballinasloe for persons whom the County Council has reason to believe require or are likely to require sites from the County Council and who, in the opinion of the County Council are in need of such sites and unable to provide them from their own resources.
- Applications from households which are eligible for, and in need of, social housing support are qualified for such support under the following;
  - Residency Status.
  - Income.
  - Rent Arrears.
  - Availability of alternative accommodation.

- During the assessment there were 1,474 households that did not qualify for Social Housing Support. In 2011 there were 2,433 on the housing waiting list. After the assessment was carried out this was reduced to 2,035. All applicants on the housing list were contacted through a number of methods and where a response was not received despite all these attempts they were removed from the housing list. Subsequently there has been a marked increase in the demand for housing supports and the total net need now stands at 2876.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Housing Unit will continue to assess the needs of all housing applicants and determine the most appropriate housing options having regard to the funding available for various schemes. Emphasis will continue to be placed on the allocation of housing units so as to ensure Council houses are let in a timely manner and that staff resources can be allocated to addressing issues such as estate management and anti-social behaviour rather than expending considerable time on the initial assessment. Part of the allocation process now includes a re-assessment at the allocation stage to ensure all applicants still meet the qualifying criteria. The unit will continue to assess policies and procedures so as to ensure the best use of available resources to meet priority service areas.

<b>Homelessness</b>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- There has been a marked increase in the demand for homeless services and efforts have been increased to work with applicants regarding their housing needs and options. The unit will progress the development and implementation of a Homeless Strategy that includes working with the voluntary housing sector and strengthening formal relationships with Galway City Council. Discussions are taking place with the City Council and voluntary services in relation to supported accommodation and tenancy sustainment services as a follow on from emergency accommodation. The existing funding arrangements currently in place, while 90% recoupable are currently being reviewed so as to ensure that the services provided are in line with the Council's needs.
- The Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) is the new shared client support and bed management system for homeless services and forms part of the priority actions in the National Homeless Strategy, *The Way Home*. PASS has replaced all previous systems as the single shared system in operation across statutory and voluntary homeless services. PASS will go live in this region on November 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2013. This new system will facilitate generation of statistical reports as required and enhance cooperation and coordination between service providers.

### ***Proposals for 2014***

- There is an increased emphasis on care and case management and “move on options” for service users and this will be further explored in 2014. Funding is now devolved to the Region comprising the two Galway Authorities together with Roscommon and Mayo. Galway City Council is the lead agency and is the conduit for funding. Demand for Homeless services continues to increase in numbers and complexity. The aim of homeless strategies is to provide long term accommodation with all the necessary supports. Towards this aim emphasis will be placed on seeking suitable RAS properties or ring fencing a small number of accommodation units from existing stock.

## **Voluntary Housing**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Council is engaging with the Voluntary Sector with the view to accelerating the number of units required to help tackle the growing housing list. New initiatives in relation to regeneration and partnerships with others (e.g. NAMA) to deliver units through CALF and other funding options were explored.
- Discussions took place with the Department and a number of voluntary housing associations on a range of proposals that the Council are endeavouring to progress including the finalisation of schemes under CAS and CLSS. A number of meetings have also taken place with voluntary bodies in relation to proposals throughout the county under the newer options and it is anticipated that agreements will be entered into which will assist in meeting the housing need of those on the waiting list.
- Galway County Council received funding for two units under the Capital Assistance Scheme Acquisition Programme 2013 in Ballinasloe and Gort, and has received planning permission and funding for 13 units in Letterfrack.

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- It is proposed that the Council will continue to engage pro-actively with the voluntary bodies in the provision of housing under the current options available. It is anticipated that a significant number of units will be provided in association with the voluntary sector and that all options such as new units, regeneration and management and maintenance of stock will be examined with the sector. The Council is engaging with the Voluntary Bodies in relation to the sourcing of a number of units under the Capital Advance Leasing System and it is anticipated that a number of units will be achieved in the Loughrea, Athenry and Ballinasloe areas in 2014.

## Housing Grants

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- During 2013 the Housing Unit continued to prioritise applicants and provided grant aid to those most in need. There was an increase in applications for Mobility Aid Grants and Housing Adaptation grants. There was a considerable drop in applications as a result of the qualifying age on the Housing Aid for Older People being raised to 70 years. It was agreed to provide funding to persons less than 70 depending on their state of health, their current housing conditions and their ability to assist themselves. Supporting documentation is required where the applicant is citing medical needs and this can be in the form of a consultant's report or an Occupational Therapists report. Assistance was also provided where the house is not considered to be in poor condition but where there are deficiencies that if addressed would improve the quality of life of older persons. It was also necessary to enforce the timeframe of six months whereby an application is closed if correspondence is not received from an applicant within six months.
- No. of applications for Housing Aid for Older People: 107
- No. of applications for Mobility Aids Grant Scheme & Housing Aid Grant Scheme – 124
- The total budget for 2013 was €1,644,386 of which €328,877 was to be provided from the Councils own resources. The full budget was expended on grants in 2013.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Commitment to continue administration of the grants schemes subject to the availability of the necessary funding.

## **Housing Construction**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Construction was finalised on three rural houses throughout the county two on the Aran Islands and one in the Mountbellew area.

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Council will be submitting proposals for the construction of three rural houses in 2014 and depending on the funding available it is anticipated that these will be completed within the year.

## **Extensions to Local Authority Houses**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Council continues to examine all options to meet the needs of housing applicants and existing tenants where needs have changed. This includes the provision of extension to existing local authority dwellings in order to address overcrowding or to meet other special needs of individuals/family members.
- Extensions were carried out on two units in 2013 where the individuals had overcrowding and disability issues.
- These extensions are in addition to a number of minor works carried out to address mobility issues in our local authority houses e.g. installation of level access showers, grab rails etc.

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Council will continue to examine all options available to meet the needs of its tenants including the option of providing appropriate alternative accommodation. Extensions will be considered in priority cases where it is seen as the best solution and subject to availability of funding.

## **Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) & Leasing**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Government has allocated funding for local authorities and approved housing bodies to lease or rent private residential properties for applicants on the housing list. Traditionally RAS is aimed at persons who are in receipt of rent supplement for a period in excess of 18 months. Since the 1st April 2011, any housing applicants that are in RAS type accommodation are deemed to have their housing need met.
- The (RAS) / Leasing Scheme is operated on a tenancy by tenancy basis and Galway County Council has been entering into such arrangements, with private landlords, since 2007.
- The following table outlines the RAS agreements that Galway County Council has entered into with private Landlords.

<b>Number of Applicants in receipt of rent supplement for 18 months plus</b>	<b>Galway City and County End of Q3 latest figures: 2531</b>
<b>Number of Applicants accommodated currently through contracts agreed with private landlords</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>Number of Applicants accommodated currently through contracts agreed with voluntary organizations</b>	<b>144</b>

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Continue to process eligible applicants under the schemes and source accommodation as required in order to meet the housing needs of applicants on our waiting list.

<b>Void/Vacant Houses &amp; Energy Efficiency Retrofit</b>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The framework of contractors was renewed in 2013 for General Construction Maintenance and Retrofit works. A framework of Plumbing Contractors has also been set up. The housing framework enables a more efficient and faster turnover of units and has been used to tender works in lots in order to achieve greater value for money. The housing unit has turned over 67 houses during the year using both direct labour and contractors. These works were carried out in line with our budget allocation under this heading for 2013.
- At the start of December 2013 there were 97 vacant houses. Government policy in 2013 changed from targeting the return of vacant units to use, to the upgrading of the energy efficiency of occupied stock. This has impacted on the ability of the Council to address voids due to the financial impact of losing funding in this area.
- The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (DECLG) has outlined as their current policy to upgrade our existing occupied housing stock to a "Comfortable Home Standard". This involved the upgrade of wall insulation by pumping cavities, installing 300 mm of attic insulation along with some draught proofing and ventilation measures to each house. In 2013 works were carried out on 703 houses under the Energy Efficiency Programmes. This represents 34% of our housing stock. The houses targeted in 2013 were all in council housing estates containing houses greater than 10 years old.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- It is envisaged in 2014 that we will complete the remaining estates with houses more than 10 years old and also target all rural dwellings which were constructed more than 10 years ago. Progress will depend on the availability of funding from the DECLG.
- The Council will also set up an Electricians' framework in 2014.
- We will continue the trend of reducing the number of vacant houses in our stock. Progress will depend on the availability of adequate funds and on the take up of properties offered to prospective tenants.



## Tenancy and Estate Management

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Estate Management Strategy for the county was adopted in 2013 and this provides a strategic framework for Estate Management across the county. The EMS highlights the inter-departmental and inter-agency approach adopted by the Housing Unit and its partners, in an effort to improve the quality of life for residents on our housing estates.
- The Housing Unit held meetings with the HSE, VEC and Gardai throughout the year and succeeded in working together in a number of areas with tenants requiring support.
- The anti-social Behaviour Unit was established in 2013 and is dealing with ASB complaints. The Council's strategy in this area involves active community engagement/participation at local level on an ongoing basis with an emphasis on the early identification of anti-social behaviour and breaches of tenancy agreement. There has been very strong relationships developed with the Gardai and the unit meets regularly with the senior management in the Gardai to discuss problem areas and how both organization can work together to address anti-social behaviour. In this regard a special sub-committee of the Joint Policing Committee was established to examine the use of CCTV in housing estates and other areas of need. The unit is progressing plans for CCTV at a number of estates and it is considered that this will assist the Council and the Gardai in dealing with a number of the issues that cause ongoing concerns for the residents of the estates.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- As part of the interdepartmental and inter-agency strategic approach, the Housing Unit has identified target housing estates which will be the focus of extensive estate management activity over the coming year.
- A new Tenancy Pack will be launched early 2014, which will provide up-to-date information on services, and rights and responsibilities for all new and existing Local Authority tenants.
- The Repairs & Maintenance Handbook is due to be introduced in conjunction with the Tenancy Pack in 2014 also.
- The Housing unit will work on an inter-agency level on a Home and Garden Project in Tuam.

## Control of Horses

### *Indicative Activities in 2013*

- The Council was very active in implementing its protocol in conjunction with the Garda Síochána on the control of horses during 2013. This is indicated in the

number of horses that were lifted during the year. The problem of wandering and abandoned equine is on the increase with people wilfully dumping animals on the side of the road. In some cases up to five animals have been left by the side of the road and the council has been left with no option but to have them impounded and disposed of. The Council have experienced incidents involving wilful neglect of numerous horses/donkeys. From 2011 onwards Galway County Council saw a huge increase in the numbers of horses being abandoned. Together with the issue of wandering horses on the roads the Local Authority continuously deals with issues of stray and wandering animals on Council property and housing estates. The Council also assisted the Department in the major lift of horses on private lands at Tynagh during the summer. The following are the statistics of horse lifts undertaken since 2011;

- 2011 – 52 horses collected
- 2012 – 243 horses collected
- 2013 – 267 horses collected to date
- The Protocol has proved a huge success to date and it is the only procedure that An Garda Síochána use within our County. Other local authorities have expressed interest in setting up a similar procedure. We feel that this joint effort between the Gardai and Galway County Council has prevented an unknown number of road accidents and costs which would affect the state such as care costs, insurance costs and legal costs associated with road accidents.
- As there is an ever increasing demand on Local Authorities and a drain on resources for the Department of Agriculture in funding this service, the council have undertaken a tender process to source the best value for money. Galway County Council have prepared tender documentation and are seeking tenders for the Control and Seizure of Horses for nine Local Authorities including ourselves, i.e. *Galway City Council, Roscommon, Clare, Sligo, Leitrim, Offaly, Donegal, and Cavan*. This list includes other Local Authorities who are considering using the documentation prepared by Galway County Council. The closing date for submissions is November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. We are currently arranging an evaluation team to assess all the tenders submitted and it is anticipated that this will take place on the week commencing the 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2013. There will then be a Standstill period (normally 15 Days) and after this time the successful and the unsuccessful bidders will be notified by means of letters of acceptance and regret letters.

#### ***Proposals for 2014***

- The activity for 2014 is heavily dependent on funding from the Department of Agriculture. Once the tender process has been completed it is anticipated that the Department will be aware of the costs involved in providing this service and will be in a position to fund same.

## Private Residential Tenancies Board - Registration of Rented Units

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Residential Tenancies Act 2004 came into operation on 1st September, 2004. Part 7 of this Act deals with the registration of tenancies with the Private Residential Tenancies Board. The published register is available on the Private Residential Tenancies Board website at [www.prtb.ie](http://www.prtb.ie)
- Galway County Council inspected 100 properties up to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013, to ensure compliance with standards for rented houses. A total of 87 Properties failed to comply with the current standards and 87 Improvement notices were served on landlords requiring improvements to be carried out.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- On-going inspection of Private Rented Properties to confirm compliance with current Standards for Private Rented Properties. It is intended that an emphasis will be placed on increasing the number of inspections; however this will be dependent on resources available

## Mortgage to Rent Scheme

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Mortgage to Rent Scheme was introduced by the Department of Environment Community and Local Government in 2012. Under this scheme, people who are having trouble paying their mortgages can switch from owning their home to renting their home as social tenants. If you take up a mortgage-to-rent scheme, you will no longer own your home or have any financial interest in it. The household pays rent, according to their income to the housing association.
- To qualify for the scheme the property owner must have participated in their lender's Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP), a process which the lender and the owner must take in order to try and resolve their difficulties. The mortgage must be unsustainable and the family must be eligible for social housing in the area where they live. The property must be considered suitable for purchase by a housing association. 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 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 a potential to buy back the home after a period of 5 years if the household's financial situation improves. The status from owner to renter will remain confidential. To date the Council received 25 applications under this scheme.

### *Proposals for 2014*

- The council will continue to liaise with the Housing Agency and the applicants to further their applications, and to assess new Mortgage to Rent submissions.

## **Housing & Emergency Services SPC**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Housing & Emergency Services SPC met on four occasions in 2013. The committee agree the Estate Management Strategy and the installation of CCTV in three areas of the County. Other areas covered by the committee included the Traveller Accommodation Plan, homelessness, void properties, the Disability Strategy and the housing needs assessment

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- A very strong emphasis will be put on estate management and tackling anti-social behavior. The committee will also examine the areas of choice for housing, management/maintenance of housing stock and turnovers and opportunities for collaborative working including with the voluntary sector.

## **CHES : MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT(MEM)**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Major Emergency Development Committee (MEDC) which was established by the Council as part of New National Framework for MEM is ongoing and is chaired by Mr. Eugene Cummins (Director of Services). Work is continuing by the committee in preparation of the Severe Weather & Flood Response Operational Plans, and an Evacuation Sub-Plan.
- The 2013-2014 Version 4 edition of Galway County Council Major Emergency Plan was updated and formally issued in 2013 Aide memoires –wallet card size fob key were also issued to role holders in Council MEP.
- Mr. Eugene Cummins (Director of Services) handed Chairperson of the MEM West Regional Steering Group to HSE West. The purpose of this group is to co-ordinate Major Emergency Management in the Galway, Mayo and Roscommon areas.
- The MEM West Working Group involving members of the Principal Emergency Services (PES's) in the West Region, i.e. Local Authority Fire Services, Local Garda Divisions and HSE West Ambulance Service, continues to operate, under the auspices of MEM West Regional Steering Group.
- Galway Co. Co. Headquarters continues as the location of Local Co-Ordination Centre for the three Principal Response Agencies (PRA's) – Galway City/County Councils, HSE West and Galway Garda Division - for Major Emergencies in the Galway City and County area.
- A new external emergency plan for Topaz bulk oil storage in Galway Docks – which is a Seveso II Top Tier Site -was prepared and issued in 2013 by the relevant PRA's (LCA'S) in the city: i.e. City Council including Galway Fire Service;

Galway Gardai; HSE West & Galway Harbour as required under SEVESO II regulations A table top exercise focusing on Topaz bulk oil storage in Galway Docks was held in Galway City in early 2013.

Galway Fire Service as PES to Galway City And County Councils ran a full scale exercise in conjunction with other PRA'S -also called Local competent authorities (LCA'S) under Seveso Regulations - in the city and the operator Topaz to test the new External emergency plan on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013 in the wake of the table top exercise held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013 involving all of above agencies An exercise report was prepared by Reidy Brophy on the exercise as external consultants similar to Report on table-top exercise in February.

- The Chemoran facility in Oranmore County Galway was notified to Galway County Council in early 2013 as a Seveso II Top Tier Site. Initial meetings were held in 2013 with the operator and the local PRA's -i.e Galway County Council HSE West and Galway Garda Division- to prepare a new External Emergency Plan as required under SEVESO II regulations.
- The County/City MEM integration group, established between the PRA's in Galway City and County under the chair of Mr. Ciaran Hayes (Director of Services - Galway City Council) to deal with issues in the City/County area and in particular large crowd events, continues to operate.
- Training for Local Co-Ordination Centre Personnel from both City and County Councils was held in the Local Co-Ordination Centre in County buildings in early 2013.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Both local and regional personnel will receive further training and testing in their various new roles as allocated in the Major Emergency Plan. Validation and updating of the existing plan is envisaged to continue in 2014.
- Work on the Major Emergency Regional co-ordination plan is ongoing.
- Council personnel and Galway fire service personnel will continue to support Regional Steering Group and Regional Working Groups and local MEDC and The Galway County/City integration group.

## **CHES : FIRE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Schools Fire Safety Programme was not rolled out in the City and County in 2013, again due to constraints on resources.
- Self contained Smoke alarms units, including kits for those who are hard of hearing, were procured by GFRS for installation in 50 houses as selected by Community and Enterprise Section in the County in late 2012 early 2013, as part of the ongoing National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) Programme.
- Self contained smoke alarms with long life batteries have been procured by GFRS for 300 households and continue to be issued to households in Galway City and County for installation by community groups as in previous years. This project was completed with the assistance of the Community and Enterprise Units in both Galway City and Galway County Councils.

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- It is hoped to have the Schools Fire Safety Programme restarted in 2014 involving local fire officers visiting 4<sup>th</sup> class in a number of national schools in Galway City and County. This programme delivers a national fire safety message but is subject to the availability of financial resources.
- Self contained smoke alarms will be issued in 2014 in both city and county from allocation received in 2013.

**KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE  
A FRAMEWORK FOR FIRE SAFETY IN IRELAND**

“Keeping Communities Safe”, which is the outcome of a review of Fire Services and Fire Safety in Ireland was published in February 2013. “Keeping Communities Safe” (KCS) is an integrated blue-print for the development of the critical public safety roles performed by Fire Services, to be implemented in the period of 2013-2015, that manages risk, addresses, public safety improvement, incident reduction, response standards and service delivery structures for the decade ahead.

KCS will deal with key issues including reform of service delivery structures, the role of the Fire Service in society and will, identify strategies and, set standards for effectiveness and quality assurance processes. KCS will also set challenging outcome targets to be achieved by the end of the implementation period in December 2015.

The Fire Service is subject to the same financial constraints and consequent scrutiny of expenditure as are all Local Authority services. Additional investment in Fire Services beyond that already programmed will be challenging, given the impairment of public and local government finances.

The challenge – as reflected in the document title – “Keeping Communities Safe” – is to manage the available resources to achieve an optimal outcome for the public in terms of their individual safety, and to minimise loss and disruption to society.

Achieving the successful implementation of the main provisions in KCS by the end of 2015 will require commitment and endeavour from the Fire Service, the City and County Management Teams along with the City and County Elected Representatives. It will be necessary to prepare a Service Development Plan/ Action Plan which will be reflected in the form of a new Draft Section 26 Plan prepared by the Fire Service Management. It is envisaged that the Draft Section 26 Plan will be presented for consideration to the relevant City and County Special Policy Committees outlining the background and content of the document and the associated proposed changes in the Fire Authority Policy as a consequence. The updated Draft Section 26 Plan will then be presented to a full meeting of the Council.

***Indicative Activities in 2013:***



- There are **10** Fire Stations in the City and County located at Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Galway City, Gort, Loughrea, Mountbellew, Portumna, Tuam and Inis Mór. All stations are resourced with retained personnel except Galway City, which is a mix of full-time personnel on shift and retained personnel.
- The Council employ approximately **150-155** personnel at full complement directly in the Galway Fire Service including full time and retained fire-fighters in the City and County and senior fire officers and civilian support personnel in the Galway City Fire station.
- The Fire Brigade continue to attend at emergency incidents in the City and County, as in previous years. The total number of incidents in Galway City and County attended by all brigades to **1<sup>st</sup> September 2013** was **1,323**, of which **606** were in Galway City Brigade Area.
- The increase in fire and emergency calls attended for first 3 quarters this year is **21%** when compared to same period last year.
- The Council endeavoured to ensure that all of its Fire and Emergency Services personnel received training as in previous years at local level. Senior and Junior Fire officer training with the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Planning (NDFEP) also progressed. Training was carried out as per annual training programme for 2013 as per previous years.
- All county retained operational personnel are operating under the National Incident Command System since 2009 as per Fire Services Change Programme under the Health and Safety remit. The roll-out of the NICS for the fire station in Galway City will be rolled out in early 2014 subject to refresher training being provided.
- The Council recruited and trained 2 No. new full-time fire fighters for Galway City from existing retained ranks to replace f-t vacancies in 2013 & 2014. Similarly the Council have recruited up to 20 retained personnel over last 2 years and is continuing to complete initial training for the most recently employed retained personnel by end of 2013.
- The Council intend to continue to prepare pre-fire plans for City and County risks, with an Assistant CFO assigned to this task which is a statutory duty under Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003.
- The Fire Service's Health & Safety Steering Group continued to meet in 2013 with monthly meeting to manage and drive the Health & Safety Management Plan throughout the fire services. A revised Ancillary Safety Statement for GFRS was issued in 2013.
- National Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) that underpin generic risk assessments in the fire service Ancillary Safety Statement (ASS) will form the backbone for our training plans throughout the City and County for all fire personnel to the end of 2013.
- The review of Fire and emergency cover for the City And Western environs was completed and the report and it's appraisal of options was presented to both the Housing & Emergency Services SPC and full Council in 2013

- The preliminary initial risk categorization of all 10 Galway Fire station grounds was prepared for initial consideration by management team as per KCS procedure

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

#### **Operational**

- The revised Draft Fire and Operations Plan which was approved by Housing & Emergency Services SPC in 2010 will be revised in Light of KCS and new draft will be presented to the Housing & Emergency Services SPC and Council for formal approval in 2013, and will take cognisance of the outcome of the city and west review.
- The Council will endeavour to ensure that all of its Fire and Emergency Services personnel continue to receive training as in previous years, at local level. Fire Officer training with the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Planning Training will be carried out with as per annual training programme for 2014 subject to budgetary provisions.
- National SOGs will continue to form the backbone of our training plans throughout the City and County for all fire personnel in 2014. The next set of SOGs will be rolled out in 2014 and Galway Fire Brigade continues to catch up with the national programme of 5 No. SOGs per quarter by mid 2014.
- The National Framework 2010-2015 and Keeping Communities Safe, by National Directorate will inform the service of other work to be carried by Galway fire brigade in 2014.

#### **CAMP WEST**

- The Fire Authorities of Connacht and Donegal and the HSE West are involved with this Central call-out and communications project, which is run by Mayo County Council as Contracting Authority from the Western Regional Communications Centre WRCC in Castlebar. HSE West Ambulance Service will be withdrawing from the WRCC in early 2014. All Local Authority partners' contributions will increase accordingly in 2014-2016 to make up for the HSE contribution shortfall. All three National Camp Projects are currently being reviewed by NDFEM.

#### **Regional Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Project**

- Galway County Council is the Contracting Authority to roll out the CISM system to the 6 No. Fire Authorities of Connacht and Donegal. Tenders for the project were sought and awarded in late 2008 to Staffcare in Northern Ireland and the project was rolled out again for 2009-2013. Provision is being made in 2014 budgets to continue this project, with Galway County Council acting as the contracting authority. A new contract from 2013-2016 was issued by Galway

County Council as contracting authority for the West to VHI as CISM service provider to Fire authorities in the WEST AND Donegal after a tender competition in e-tenders in 2012-2013.

<b>CHES : FIRE SAFETY CERTIFICATES AND FSA 1981 INSPECTIONS</b>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013 (based on 2012 data):***

- In 2012, the Fire Service fire prevention staff carried out **381** inspections of premises as part of its Fire Prevention Function, under the Fire Services Act (FSA) 1981 & 2003, Licensing Acts, Planning Acts, Dangerous Substances Act and **278** inspections for the issue of Fire Safety Certificates (FSC's) under Building Control Act 1990 respectively. The Fire section received **400 public** licence applications and dealt with **98 planning** applications in 2012.
- The Fire Prevention Department dealt with **208** Fire Safety Certificate (FSC) Applications in 2012 under Building Control Regulations, **135** in the County area and **73** in the City.
- The breakdown of the types of Fire Safety Certificate applications were as follows for 2011;

▪ Standard FSC	118	Applications
▪ Regularisation certificates	57	Applications
▪ 7 day notice FSC	42	Applications
▪ Revised FSC	14	Applications
- Fire officers processed **56** Disability Access Certificates **DAC** applications on behalf of the County in 2012.
- Fire Officers continued the inspection of nursing homes in 2011 under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003 and carried out inspections of retail petroleum stores under the Dangerous Substances Act 1972 & Retail Petroleum Stores Regulations 1979.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Fire prevention staff will continue to process all FSC type applications on behalf of County and City and DAC certificates on behalf of County.
- Process licence applications and planning applications as received in 2014
- Continue the programme of inspection of retail petroleum stores in the city and county.
- Continue the survey of all retail petroleum stores in the county.
- Continue to inspect nursing homes in the City and County.
- Commence an inspection programme of hostels and hotels in the city and county.
- Carry out inspections on foot of complaints on a prioritised basis.

## **GALWAY CIVIL DEFENCE**

- Galway Civil Defence, through their 5 training centres, Galway City, Oranmore, Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Clonberne have had an intensive year with duty activities and training, locally and centrally, through the Civil Defence College, Roscrea.
- A programme of training in Cardiac First Response, Occupational first Aid, Emergency First Response is currently ongoing through 2013 and again in 2014. 17 student EMT's are currently in training and will be qualify in early 2014.
- Focus on training foe 2014 will centre in developing the Search Management capability and Swift Water Rescue training with members partaking in courses rolled out by the Civil Defence College, Roscrea.
- Instructors will qualify in 2014 and training will commence with unit members from then.
- Search Management training in 2014 will be conducted in the Garda Training College in Templemore.
- All units will again be responding to their community's requests for assistance at local community events, providing first aid cover and other assistance that may be requested.
- New members are always welcome from their community and training will be provided to all members of the highest standard by our instructor core.

## FINANCE UNIT

### Value for Money, Shared Services & Public Procurement

#### *Indicative Activities in 2013*

- A Centralised method was used to run LA Quotes for Road Making Materials and Plant Hire for 2013 and the results of the Mini Tenders were circulated to all areas.
- 123 RFT's and 82 RFQ's were raised on LAQ during 2013.
- A new National Framework for Bulk Fuel was put in place during 2013. GCC signed up and began utilising the framework in October. Topaz is now the preferred supplier and the framework is due to expire in July 2015, there is however a provision to extend for a further 2 x 12 month periods.
- LVP Processing – We completed the roll out of the LVP Rapid Transaction Processing System (RTPS). Feedback in most cases has been positive and it is working extremely well.
- Electricity is currently purchased under the National Framework. This framework is due to expire in Jan 2014 for most lots with Lot 10 & 13 expiring in Jan 2015. Numerous difficulties such as the taking on of new sites and the lack of information have been reported to the NPS.
- The expansion of the Fuel Debit Cards across the organisation took place. We now have 191 Fuel Cards in operation. All vehicles both Council owned and externally hired now have Fuel Cards attached to them. We also switched over to Topaz under the old NPS framework agreement. A new 3 year framework is currently under consideration by the NPS and will be decided in early 2014. It is anticipated that by utilising the National Framework for Fuel Debit Cards we will generate savings in the region of 4% on our fuel purchases.
- Cash Collection - Installed a new Cash 360 Safe in Motor Tax. This Safe can be used by both Motor Tax and Income (Cash Desk) to lodge during the day. It will reduce the number of collections required by our cash collection services providers thereby reducing costs.
- WLAPN looked at the idea of running a regional tender for PPE. There is however a number of current contracts running at present in the region. The NPS contract is not very suitable to meet all needs and is currently under review.
- The new OGP (Office of Government Procurement) was formally set up. Mr. Paul Quinn is the CEO reporting directly to the Minister.

- In September the OGP (Office of Government Procurement) issued a Circular 16/13 in relation to utilising National Contracts and in particular accountability: Accounting Officers and Accountable Persons are reminded that systems of internal control within public service bodies should support compliance with the requirements of this Circular. Procurement practices are subject to audit and scrutiny under the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 and Accounting Officers are publicly accountable for expenditure incurred.
- A number of sites switched over to Natural Gas under the National Framework. County Hall will be switching during November 2013.
- We switched over to the new National Framework for Bulk Gas. Flogas are now the preferred supplier and tank replacement has been completed. There is a 40% price differential between the old contracts and the new National Framework and this will result in expected saving of approx €18,000 over the full year.
- Expenditure in 2013 Year on year against specific Account Elements:
  - External Plant Hire – down 5.5% or €185k
  - Printing & Office Supplies – down 8.1% or €21k
  - Library Book Purchase – down 48.8% or €145k
  - Materials – down 23% or €1.8m
  - Energy (including Diesel & Heating Oil) – down 1.9% or €71k

#### ***Proposals for 2014***

- Expand the use of LAQ across the organisation.
- Control and reduce non-compliance of National Contracts
- Expand the use of Fuel Cards
- Introduce new Product Coding Structure into Agresso – Retrain staff
- Reduce the overall number of Purchase Orders generated by at least 15%
- Introduce new methods of processing Payment Transactions.
- Carry out a review of the Corporate Procurement Plan 2011 – 2015
- Run a new Cash in Transit Tender
- Monitor and Control the Fuel Cards and the LVP Cards
- Analyse the 2013 spend profile with a view to identifying possible Cost Saving initiatives
- Work closely with the NPS, NPO and the OGP to ensure that all relevant Circulars, Guides and instructions are circulated and implemented.

<b>Discharge of Payments</b>
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#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- Continued & increased use of electronic fund transmission (EFT) as a method of payment to trade suppliers/staff.
- Implementation of Directives issued by the Revenue Commissioners
- Education of relevant Staff on Relevant Contracts Tax efficiencies

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Continued implementation of electronic payment methods/upgrades to meet ePayments Government initiative.
- Review and continued application of best practice within both the Accounts Payable & Payroll functions
- Continued implementation of Directives issued by the Revenue Commissioners

## **Revenue Collection**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- Continued review of the Revenue collection function – to ensure best practice is achieved and any new income stream is incorporated efficiently.
- Enforcement of the collection of the NPPR charge, including direct processing of payments.
- Continued implementation of electronic payment methods e.g Billpay, Household Budget, EFT, online payment facility etc to facilitate customers.
- Implementation of the new SEPA Direct Debit system.

### ***Proposals for 2014***

- Monitor and update the Revenue collection function.
- Review debt collection procedures.
- Extension of the online payments option to include Planning Fees, Fire Fees, RAS, PEL etc.
- The unit will continue to offer the Bill Pay option to Rents, Loans, RAS and Rates customers in 2014.
- To implement Cash Desk facility at Loughrea Area Office.
- Continued implementation of the new SEPA Direct Debit system.

## **Motor Tax and Driver Licensing Systems**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- 155,005 motor tax transactions were processed by Galway Motor Tax Offices to end of October 2013 at a value of €27.3m (compared to 143,766 transactions with value of €26.1m for same period last year).
- Of the motor tax transactions carried out by the Motor Tax Offices, 83% were conducted at the counter and 17% were conducted by postal applications. 47% of total motor tax activity for the Galway area was carried out online in the year to date – an increase from a 44.8% share of activity in 2011.

- The Government introduced a new system of declaring non-use of a vehicle on 1st July 2013, and allowed a 3 month transition period until 30 September 2013 for owners to have the non-use of their vehicles for past periods to be witnessed by a Guard and brought up-to date, otherwise, they would be liable for arrears for any undeclared periods. There were unprecedented queues at the Motor Tax Offices at the end of September which led to a large backlog of work due to approximately 6,000 declaration forms being received over the course of a few days. The number of Off-Road Declarations under the new system processed each month since the introduction of the new system is as follows:
  1. 401 in July
  2. 774 in August
  3. 3,782 in September
  4. 3,998 in October
  5. A further 1,500 declarations remain on hand to be processed.
- The Road Safety Authority took over legal responsibility for driving licences at 1st January 2013 and the transitional period during which local authorities continued to accept and process applications ended on 25th October 2013. From then on, all applications for a driving licence must be made in person at an NDLS (National Driving Licence Service) Centre. Up to the end of October, 25,929 applications were processed at a value of € 1m (an increase of €500,000 on revenue for the same period last year due to the increase in driving licence fees).

#### ***Proposals for 2014***

- A large backlog of applications remains on hand to search the archives of the Motor Tax Office and Department of Transport for persons wishing to put restored vintage vehicles back on the road, and these will have to be processed in accordance with changes in policy introduced by the Department of Transport. The Motor Tax Office will continue to process all motor tax activity in accordance with Government policy and procedures.

### **Financial Management Systems**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- Additional efficiencies achieved re: claims system for travel & subsistence
- Additional efficiencies achieved re: Budget drafting system (Budgeting / Forecasting by Account Element, additional controls).

#### ***Proposals for 2014***

- Implementation of Agresso upgrade version 5.6-when it is released
- Implementation of Unification plans to integrate Ballinasloe Town Council into Galway County council to create one Agresso Company
- Continuation of the development of the Debtor Module



- Implementation of any further upgrades in the Financial Management System

## Information Technology Systems

### *Indicative Activities in 2013*

- A new generic online payments system was developed. New payment types will be brought online during late 2013/2014
- Our IP telephony system was expanded to include some area offices, treatment plants etc. As a result charges for internal and mobile calls will be reduced. The system will continue to be expanded to other sites in 2014.
- Our Disaster Recovery (DR) site is now hosting approx. 50 servers in failover mode. This means that critical business systems, including telephony, databases and servers etc. will continue to function in the event we suffer loss of County Hall ICT infrastructure. Further work on the DR site will continue into 2014 e.g. testing of failover operations. 85% of DR budget of 250,000 has been spent to date.
- A new I.S. service desk software solution was implemented in early 2013. The solution supports best practice (ITIL) service delivery models and is based on a classification of ICT services. The classification and corresponding service levels should be reviewed and agreed annually with internal departments.
- Support and training was provided by the GIS team for the Water Metering Data Capture project.
- A new public facing map zone was provided on [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie).
- A quality assessment was undertaken [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie). Lists of actions were prepared and executed resulting in improved quality of information we provide via our web site. It is expected that the update of Irish language translations will be complete in Q1 2014.

### *Proposals for 2014*

- Budget permitting we aim to rollout Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) to County Hall and other locations. VDI can offer a small return on investment over time and a large improvement in hardware provisioning overheads.
- Resources will need to be allocated to upgrade existing computers due to the end of life of the Microsoft XP operating system. PC will be replaced with newer models capable of running Windows 7/8 or replaced with Virtual Desktop devices (VDI, as above).
- Assistance will be provided to business units in the amalgamation of ICT systems in use by Ballinasloe Town Council and Galway County Council. Further assistance will be provided relating to the introduction of new municipal areas.

## **Planning, Community Enterprise & Economic Development Unit**

### **Planning for Sustainable Development**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- 1229 Planning applications have been received to date (15th November 2013).
- 16 substitute consent applications have been submitted to An Bord Pleanála under Section 261A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. 10 notices are currently under review by An Bord Pleanála and 39 files have been referred to the Enforcement Department for review.
- New Local Area Plans were adopted for the towns of Gort and Maigh Cuilinn and Amendments made to the Bearna, Gaeltacht and Clifden Local Area Plans to ensure that the objectives of the Local Area Plans are consistent with the Objectives and Core Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan.
- Work continued in 2013 on the County Galway Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment screening.

#### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- To continue the implementation of the objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015.
- To commence the review of the Portumna, Headford, Oughterard, Claregalway Local Area Plans to ensure that the objectives of the Local Area Plans are consistent the Objectives and Core Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan.
- Progress the review of the County Development Plan including preparation of a Draft County Development Plan and associated strategies/documents.
- To complete the County Galway Strategic Flood risk Assessment. Identify towns/villages or other areas for more detailed flood risk assessment if necessary.
- Arrange and manage the translation of all new policy (variations to the CDP, relevant Local Area Plans) in accordance with the Scéim Teanga.

## **Building Control / Taking in Charge**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- 331 commencement notices have been received to 15/11/2013.
- A Building Control Officer continued to inspect commenced developments for compliance with the Building Regulations.
- This Unit has continued to monitor and process applications for the Taking in Charge of Housing estates under the new guidelines for 'Taking in Charge of Developments' which were adopted by Galway County Council.
- A database has been compiled of 398 estates in the County with a view to establishing the current status of each one and prioritizing estates for Taking in Charge.
- To date this year, 6 no. Housing Estates have been taken in charge.
- 6 new Taking in Charge applications have been submitted to date in 2013
- The Building Control staff continues to work with the Department of the Environment, Health & Safety Authority to eliminate safety risks on unfinished estates. All unfinished estates were mapped onto MyPlan (the Irish National Planning Information Service system).

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- It is proposed to continue to assess and process taking in charge applications within available resources in 2014 with a view to determining an overall approach to non-compliant and unfinished housing estates.
- To continue to liaise with Department and other relevant agencies regarding Unfinished Housing Estates.

## **Enforcement Measures**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- 210 Warning Notices/Letters served to date.
- 115 Enforcement Notices served to date.
- 49 Files have been referred for legal action to date.
- 155 New Files opened to date.
- 375 approx. Enforcement Files have been resolved/closed to date.

### ***Proposals for 2014***

- It is proposed to continue to provide resources to the Enforcement Team to ensure the implementation of the Planning Regulations in 2014.
- It is proposed to continue to examine old enforcement files with a view to closing same, where appropriate.

- To prioritise unfinished housing estates for enforcement action as necessary.

## Heritage

### *Indicative Activities in 2013*

- Lough Derg Heritage Project – Launched the Lough Derg brochure, iphone app, podcast and educational resource booklet for the lake. Undertook a Natural Heritage Trail Audit and a Review Audit was undertaken on works to date. Compilation of text for a ‘coffee table’ book was commenced.
- Ecclesiastical Heritage Trail for Connemara Phase 2– An ecclesiastical heritage audit was undertaken for Connemara documenting and creating a database of the rich artwork that is contained in the churches.
- Field Monument Advisor Project – The role of the FMA is to provide advice and information on field monuments. The area chosen for 2013 was the Kinvara area and Slieve Aughty.
- Biodiversity Project – The project operates as a partnership Project between the County Council through the Heritage Office and the Applied Ecology Unit, NUI, Galway in conjunction with Galway Rural Development and Galway County Heritage Forum supported by the Heritage Council and Galway County Council. Funding was sought for the payment of the salary and overheads for the Project Manager and to undertake projects such as producing further biodiversity Action Plans for towns and villages in the county, the development of an invasive species strategy, graveyard management conservation plan for a select number of graveyards and the provision of an education and awareness programme for the communities in the county. A bi-lingual Schools Education pack was also produced for Renville Park.
- Athenry Walled Towns Day – This event attracted over 2500 people and took place on Sunday 18th August. The aim of the day was to showcase the rich heritage of Athenry.
- Athenry Town Walls Capital Works – Funding was received from the Heritage Council towards this project. Work for 2013 concentrated on the Eastern wall adjacent to the South East Tower. Wall conditions recorded using rectified photography, archaeology reports undertaken, Ministerial consent received and conservation works undertaken.
- Athenry Town Walls: The Legacy a local archaeologist and Loughrea Art Group worked with 2 local schools on producing models of some heritage buildings in Athenry and also produced a ‘Junior Heritage Ambassador’ pack for each child.

- Community Events – Assistance, advice, and support was also given to numerous Town and Community events in 2013. In July, the annual ‘Aughrim Remembered’ event took place and in September, the popular ‘Feile na gCloch’ weekend was held in Inis Oirr with over 65 participants from all over the world attending the weekend stone wall workshop. Many heritage events were held during Heritage Week in August, two festivals of Hidden Heritage, one in Ballinasloe and the other in Oughterard as part of ‘The Gathering’ initiative was held. In addition, a Local History Seminar, a Remembrance Conference in Loughrea in November, Graveyard and Folklore recording and Conference, Tuam 400 Conference, Woodford Conference, was held. Digital Mapping of Graveyards in the County continued, and the Beo Schools Project with DERI is ongoing. The Mayoral Awards are to be held in November and the Golden Mile Calendar to be produced in December and the Golden Mile Awards Ceremony is to be held on 17th December. Advice and guidance was also given to individuals, Schools and groups throughout the year.

#### ***Proposals for 2014***

- Lough Derg Heritage Project –Community mapping around the lake, site audits, ‘coffee table’ book to be undertaken.
- Ecclesiastical Heritage Trail for Connemara – It is proposed to develop a Brochure, App and CD and create a trail.
- Field Monument Advisor Project – Funding will be sought for the post of Field Monument Advisor and it is proposed that the Field Monument Advisor will work again in the Slieve Aughty area.
- Biodiversity Project – Funding will be sought for the payment of the salary and overheads for the Project Manager and to undertake projects such as producing further biodiversity Action Plans for towns and villages in the county, the development of an invasive species strategy, the provision of an education and awareness programme for the communities in the county.
- Biodiversity Capital Fund – If available in 2014 it is intended to apply for funding to undertake further works in Rinvilla Park.
- Athenry Walled Towns Day – If funding is available in 2014 it is intended to apply for funding to hold an event in Athenry for Walled Town Day and also apply for funding for pre-Walled Town Day events.
- Athenry Town Walls Capital Works - if funding becomes available in 2014 it is intended to apply for funding to undertake further works on the Eastern Wall and to finish off Conservation works.

- Community Events – Funding will be sought to continue to deliver and support and assist the numerous heritage and community events in 2014, such as ‘The Famine’ and Emigration, Aughrim Remembered, Remembrance Day Celebration in Loughrea, and to support new initiatives such as Digital Heritage projects in conjunction with the Museum of Country Life (Castlebar), Memory Mapping Decade of Commemoration. In addition, Digital Mapping of Graveyards in the County, the Beo Schools Project with DERI will continue.

## Conservation

### *Indicative Activities in 2013*

- Consulted with the relevant department, state agencies, voluntary and European organisations on matters of architectural conservation including AACO, ICOMOS.
- Liaised with Leader Groups, and other funding bodies to promote joint community and local Authority based initiatives.
- Liaised with Tourism Development Bodies.
- Promoted Open House Galway in County area, including bus tour and private dwelling open to the public.
- Investigated European funding measures.
- Liaised with local communities regarding Tidy Towns.
- Identified, evaluated and provided advice on structures, groups of structures areas and other features of architectural heritage significance. Provided advice to owners and occupiers of historic structures on good practice and on the availability of assistance, including financial assistance, for such conservation.
- Assessed structures on Record of Protected Structures (RPS) with a view to issuing Declarations as to works that require planning permission and provide pre planning advice to owners /occupiers. Reported and advised on planning applications where architectural heritage issues arise.
- Monitored the state of repair of structures on RPS, and as necessary, made recommendations on the need, if any, for the planning authority to take enforcement action.
- Historic Assets Committee: Prioritised six local authority owned projects, and submitted funding applications; Pilot Survey of condition of Local Authority owned graveyards.
- Maintained the Architectural Inventory System (AIS) database of protected structures, including updating owners’ details.
- Input into Local Area Plans, as required.
- Inspected and assessed structures for inclusion on RPS, including Ministerial National Inventory of Architectural Heritage recommendations.
- Processed the Structures at Risk scheme for which one application was successfully completed.

### ***Proposals for 2014***

- Continue to carry out the duties of Architectural Conservation Officer as set out in Circular 5/99 or as amended by DAHG.
- Propose additions to RPS and ACAs, as part of the review of the County Development Plan.
- Expand and promote Open House Galway.
- Promote and participate in Europa Nostra Pilot Project 'Our Place'.
- Continue to promote traditional skills use and training.
- Continue to contribute to the Historic Assets Committee.
- Promote any funding initiatives available.

## **Customer Service**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Increased use of social media to engage with communities and citizens.
- Engaged in consultative meetings with citizens, public meetings, community forum meetings and one to one meetings.
- Participated in customer Service Initiatives within Galway County Council.
- Produced CDB Newsletter to help promote the work of the CDB.

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Promote participation in EU funding programmes for Council services to communities and businesses.
- Continue to review CEED section on website to provide up to date useful information for communities, businesses and citizens.
- Implement agreed actions in Customer Service Action Plan and Irish Language Guidelines.
- Implement 'Plain English' guidelines in communications with the public and on web-site.
- Improved use of website and social media to link with citizens.

## **Human Resource Activity**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Twenty One recruitment competitions were held during the year, involving a total of 335 candidates being called for interview for the various posts. 69 appointments were made up to mid-November
- Galway County Council provided work experience placements for 21 interns for 9 month periods in 2013 through the Job-Bridge National Internship Scheme
- Twenty eight employees will have retired from the Council in 2013.

- The Voluntary Redundancy Scheme 2013 was offered to staff of Galway County Council. 20 staff members have been approved under this scheme.
- In excess of 3% of Galway County Council's Total Payroll Costs has been spent on Training and Development in 2013, with 2,298.54 training days provided by mid-November. Health & Safety training formed a considerable part of the 2013 Training Plan including courses as follows: Confined Spaces Training, Supervising Safely in Construction, Signage, Lighting and Guarding Renewal, Location of Underground of Services, Decision Driving and Fetac Level 5 Safety Representative Training.
- Two staff members commenced the MSc in Bio-Diversity & Land Use Planning in 2013.
- Galway County Council has a number of Family Friendly Schemes in place including:
  - **Employee Assistance Programme:** A confidential counselling service, the "Employee Assistance Programme" or EAP is available to all Galway County Council employees. Laya-Health Care delivers this service on behalf of Galway County Council.
  - **Shorter Working Year Scheme:** 35 staff members availed of unpaid leave under the Shorter Working Year Scheme in 2013.
  - **Parental Leave Scheme:** 43 staff members availed of parental leave in 2013.
  - **Work Sharing Scheme:** 43 staff members availed of work sharing arrangements in 2013.
  - **Career Breaks:** 11 staff members availed of career breaks in 2013.
  - **Cycle to work scheme:** Under this scheme an employer may provide an employee with a bicycle and/or associated safety equipment up to a maximum value of €1000 without the employee being liable for benefit –in-kind taxation. The purpose of the scheme is to:
    - Encourage more employees to cycle to and from work;
    - Contribute to lowering carbon emissions;
    - Reduce traffic congestion; and
    - Help improve health and fitness levels.
  - The employer saves on employer's PRSI on the value of the benefit (up to €1000) provided to the employee and to date approximately 24 applications for participation in the Cycle to Work Scheme have been processed in 2013 for Council employees.
  - **Travel Pass Scheme:** There are currently 18 staff members availing of the TaxSaver Travel Pass Scheme.

**Haddington Road Agreement July, 2013 – June 2016**



- The Haddington Road Agreement became effective from 1st July, 2013 and set out hereunder is a summary of changes implemented by Galway County Council to date:

***No. 1: Summary of changes to the standard working hours for indoor employees which became effective on 1st July, 2013***

- Employees with a working week of 34 hours with the exception of Grade VIII and equivalents and above including SIPTU (LAPO) grades increased to a 35 hour 10 minutes week.
- Grade VIII and equivalents and above including SIPTU (LAPO) grades increased to a 37 hour week.
- Employees with an existing working week of 35 hours at 01/07/2013 increased to a 37 hour week.

***No. 2: Summary of changes to Overtime for Indoor employees which became effective from 01st July, 2013***

- Overtime for indoor employees and equivalents will not be paid until 37 hours have been worked even if the standard working week under the new arrangements does not reach 37 hours and the divisor for overtime calculations for all indoor staff will be 37 hours.

***No. 3: Summary of changes to Overtime for Craftworker grades:/General Operative & related grades which became effective from 1st July, 2013.***

- For outdoor grades on a 39 hour week, the first hour's overtime per week effective from 1st July, 2013 is unpaid (free) for the nine months up until the 31st March 2014.
- With effect from 1st July, 2013 overtime is calculated with reference to annualised salary (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay). Allowances in the nature of pay are in general terms ones that are fixed, periodic, taxable and pensionable allowances.

***In general:***

- For employees on an annualized salary of up to €35,000 (including fixed periodic pensionable allowances), overtime will be paid at the rate of time and a half at the first point of the appropriate scale. This formula will not apply to any scale where this provision would result in overtime being paid at less than time at any point on the scale. In the case of such scales, overtime will be paid at time and a quarter at the employee's scale point.
- For employees on an annualized salary of €35,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay) or greater, overtime will be paid at the rate of time and a quarter at the individual's scale point on the wage scale.
- Premium payments for overtime worked on Saturday afternoon and Sunday remain unchanged.

- For employees on an annualized salary of up to €35,000 (including fixed periodic pensionable allowances), overtime will be paid at the rate of time and a half at the first point of the appropriate scale. This formula will not apply to any scale where this provision would result in overtime being paid at less than time at any point on the scale. In the case of such scales, overtime will be paid at time and a quarter at the employee's scale point.
- For employees on an annualized salary of €35,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay) or greater, overtime will be paid at the rate of time and a quarter at the individual's scale point on the wage scale.
- Premium payments for overtime worked on Saturday afternoon and Sunday remain unchanged.

***No. 4: Summary of changes to Overtime for Full Time Firefighter Grades which became effective from 1st July, 2013***

- For Full Time Firefighter grades on an annualized salary of up to €35,000 (including fixed periodic pensionable allowances), overtime will be paid at the rate of time and a half at the first point of the appropriate scale. This formula will not apply to any scale where this provision would result in overtime being paid at less than time at any point on the scale. In the case of such scales, overtime will be paid at time and a quarter at the employee's scale point.
- For Full Time Firefighter grades on an annualized salary of €35,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay) or greater, overtime will be paid at the rate of time and a quarter at the employee's scale point on the wage scale.
- For Full Time Firefighter grades, the first hour's overtime per week effective from 1st July, 2013 will be unpaid (free) for the nine months up until the 31st March 2014.

***No. 5: Summary of changes to Increments effective from 1st July, 2013***

***(a) Increments for employees with annualized salary under €35,000***

- For employees on an annualized salary of below €35,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay), a 3 month increment freeze will apply during the Agreement. The freeze will take place after the next increment is paid.

***(b) Increments for employees with annualized salary of between €35,000 and €65,000***

- For employees on an annualized salary of between €35,000 and €65,000 (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay), there will be two 3 month increment freezes. This will take effect after the next increment is paid. Therefore after the next increment is paid, for the next 2 consecutive increments due there will be a 15 month period between each increment date.

**(c) Increments for employees at the final point of their incremental scale**

- For employees who are on the final point of their incremental scale and whose annualized salary (inclusive of fixed periodic pensionable allowances) is between €35,000 and €65,000 the default option will be a reduction in annual leave of 2 days per year for the three years (6 days in total), apart from grades with annual leave of 23 days or less. As an alternative, an employee may elect to avail of (a) Unpaid leave in respect of the 6 annual leave days subject to management approval or (b) Cash deduction equivalent to six days annual leave or (c) half their most recent increment.

**(d) Increments for employees with an annualized salary of €65,000 or more**

- For employees on an annualized salary of €65,000 or greater (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay), two 6 months increment freezes will apply.

**No. 6: Reduction in salaries of employees who earn over €65,000 effective from 1st July, 2013**

- Employees whose annualised salary (inclusive of allowances in the nature of pay) is €65,000 or more have had the reductions applied in accordance with the following table:
- Annualised Amount of Remuneration Reduction
- Any amount up to €80,000 5.5%
- Any amount over €80,000 but not over €150,000 8%
- Any amount over €150,000 but not over €185,000 9%
- Any amount over €185,000 10%

**No. 7: Option to retain existing working hours**

- Employees on an individual basis were give the option to retain their working hours up until 31/12/2013 and have their salary reduced with reference to the revised hours on 1st July 2013.

**No. 8: Pension Related Deduction (PRD)**

- Arrangements are being made to have the revised rates for the PRD to take effect from 1st January 2014 and the adjustments are as follows:
- Bands and rates
- €15,000 Exempt
- €15,000 - €20,000 2.5%\*
- €20,000 - €60,000 10%
- Above €60,000 10.5%
- \* Changed from 5%

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014
  - Actions as set out in County Galway Local Authorities Public Service Agreement Action Plan 2010 – 2014 are progressed on an ongoing basis by the Human Resources Department in conjunction with the various Departments in Galway County Council.
- The 2014 Training Plan will continue to focus on the delivery of mandatory Health & Safety Training. Training Programmes that support managers and staff in addressing the challenges of new approaches and greater flexibility in the delivery of work programmes with reduced resources will be prioritised, while having regard to the personal and career development needs expressed by staff members through the PMDS process.
- According to service records, a minimum of 13 staff members will retire in 2014

<b>Promoting co-ordination of agencies and implementation of Galway County Strategy</b>
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### ***Indicative Activities in 2013***

- Facilitated discussions between Local Action Groups, Galway Rural Development, Forum Connemara and Comhdail na nOileán with sections of Galway County Council as part of their planning for activities for 2013.
- Managed the endorsement process for the Annual plans of the Local Action Groups which involved co-ordination with the other state service providers in the County through the County Development Board
- Consulted with stakeholders in the County in regard to the implementation of the proposals in 'Putting People First' in regard to the greater alignment of Local Development and Local Government.
- Acted as one of the 10 pilot areas for the establishment of a Local Community Development Committee.
- Participated in interagency committees and initiatives in relation to youth and children and integration and interculturalism.
- Participated in management of rural transport for the Connemara area Rural Transport initiative "Bealach" and contributed to the negotiations for the integration of Rural Transport through the creation of a County wide Transport Co-ordinating Unit.

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Implement Departmental guidelines in regard to the establishment of a Local Community Development Committee.

- Support the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office within Galway County Council.
- Prepare a 5 year Economic Strategy for County Galway.
- Preparation of the Local community Development Plan in conjunction with the establishment of the Local Community Development Committee.
- Continue to support the smooth integration of Rural Transport provision into a County wide service and its increased linkage with mainstream transport provision, the County Development Planning process, and into long term Socio Economic and Spatial planning.

### **Promoting enterprise and supporting economic development**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Sustained the Business Response Unit (BRU) as point of contact within Galway County Council for businesses.
- Continued implementation of Galway County Council Economic Strategy.
- Supported initiatives/events that encourage Entrepreneurism and provide information seminars for business and communities about funding opportunities and create jobs in the County. 4 workshops held in conjunction with the County and City Enterprise Board
- Delivered programme of support for Community Based Economic Initiatives.
- Supported the MEET WEST business networking initiative in 2013. Over 250 companies and approximately 350 delegates attended over 2 days.
- Supported events that provide marketplace for Galway Companies (Food Fairs/Farmers/Town Markets) i.e Local Christmas market of Galway Producers Producers market at Claregalway Garden Show, Galway Food Festival.
- Supported the Gathering 2013 in County Galway. Over 100 gathering events took place in the County over the year. Funding and promotional supports were provided to many of these events. Three flagship events were held in County Galway, the Aer Lingus/Etihad Airways International Festival of Hurling, The Aquinas reunion in Letterfrack and The Ballinasloe October Gathering. The Aer Lingus Festival of Hurling was shortlisted for County Gathering of the Year in the Chamber of Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award.
- Over €100,000 was spent by Galway County Council in 2013 in different schemes promoting Galway as a visitor location during the Year of the Gathering. This included overseas promotion at the Irish Festival in Milwaukee, Wine and Food Festival in An Jou France and an Expo of Galway Art in The Committee of the Regions office in Brussels. The Unit continued to promote Galway through the destination programme of Failte Ireland. The Unit compiled, published and circulated a list of festivals taking place in the County as part of the Gathering.
- Continued to promote Galway through the destination programme of Failte Ireland.

- Compiled, published and circulated a list of festivals taking place in the County as part of the Gathering.
- Participated in promotional events for local produce from County Galway through the Made in Galway Website. This initiative won the Excellence in Local Government Award 2013 for Services to Business. The traffic to the website continued to increase, a facebook page and twitter account have been added to increase awareness of the initiative. The number of producers registered on the Website exceeds 200. Exhibition space under the Made in Galway brand were hosted at the Committee of the Regions Office in Brussels, Food and Wine Festival in Anjou, France, the National Ploughing Championships 2013, Galway Food Festival, and Claregalway Garden Festival
- Worked with NUI, Galway to provide marketing experience for 11 Bachelor of Commerce students under the Made in Galway Initiative.
- Maintained the on-line Calendar of Events on [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie) promoting over 500 events taking place in the County as the point of information for visitors to County Galway.
- Worked with Galway Rural Development, Forum Connemara and Comhdail na nOilean to put in place a food sector development officer. The Council has also started up a network of stakeholders in the food sector to further develop this sector in County Galway.
- Participated in two EU projects, one under the Atlantic Area Programme, APC which promotes the development of marine renewable energy Sector and a second one as part of Interreg IVc, GRISI plus, which is focused on sharing best practice in rural development in the partner areas.
- Co-ordinated the Council Participation in the ERDF BMW Gateways and Hubs Development Fund and progressed capital projects for the development of the Hub Town of Tuam.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Project manage Meet West 2014 which will be taking place in Galway in 2014.
- Further develop the Made in Galway Initiative to support local enterprise to access markets.
- Support community enterprise projects that are employment creating.
- Implement actions assigned to Local Government in the Government's Action Plan for Jobs.
- Host a Living Landscape Conference that focuses on the potential of the Food sector in County Galway.
- Further support the development of the Food Sector.
- Support initiatives that encourage entrepreneurship in County Galway.
- Support the development of the Creative Sector as an employment generator for the County.
- Support the development of the Renewable Energy sector.
- Continue to promote Galway as a location for investment and job creation

- Implement the Ireland Connect Initiative in County Galway.
- Prepare a 5 year Economic Strategy for County Galway.
- Prepare 50 snapshot videos of Tourism destination locations in County Galway for use as promotion of the website.
- Support and participation in Galway Science and Technology Festival.
- The Unit will continue to participate in the APC and GRISI plus EU funding projects in 2014.
- The Unit will continue to co-ordinate the participation of Galway County Council in the ERDF BMW Gateways and Hubs Development Fund.

## Supporting Sustainable Communities

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- Supported the County Galway Integration & Diversity Committee to develop a five year Integration strategy (2013 to 2017) which was launched in Oranmore Library in March 2013.
- Organised a Galway based learning group for participation in the University of Limerick led EU SONETOR initiative to promote online accredited learning to create an EU community of Cultural Mediators. 16 people from Galway's Integration Committee and County Intercultural Forum participated in the first accredited workshop and additional numbers will participate in the further online learning within the project.
- Led the interagency sub-committee on Health and Access to Services under the Integration Committee and commenced actions for training and access to information under the strategy.
- Continued to support the Galway County Intercultural Forum and to identify funding and networking opportunities for the Forum to interact with both the County Community Forum and other neighbouring networks and forums.
- Continued to work with schools and youth organisations to further develop the 6 Local Area Comhairle na nÓg youth networks at Electoral Area Level. Facilitated County Galway Comhairle committee and Annual General Meeting held in NUI Galway on 26th October 2013. Over 200 young people from around the County participated in the various events organised by Comhairle and contributed to the research to produce a Study Skills Booklet which will be launched in 2014.
- Supported the Young Social Innovators annual 'Speak Out' in the Ardilaun Hotel where young people from schools from Galway City and County spoke out on the social issues that concern them.
- Supported the integrated committee promoting the development of the Clonbur Eco Park, an integrated interagency proposal for creating an EU designated EcoPark in the Clonbur Region of North West Galway.
- Continued to work with Tidy Towns groups to progress them within the National Tidy Towns competition.

- Supported Inis Oirr to participate in the international competition in China LivCom 2013. Also supported other Communities in Leenane, Oranmore, Parkmore and Ireland Reaching Out to participate in the All Ireland Pride of Place competition in 2013 in Derry.
- Supported County Galway Community and Voluntary Forum.
- Held the County Mayors Awards 2013.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Continue to support the County Galway Integration & Diversity Committee in monitoring the implementation of the five year Integration & Diversity Strategy for County Galway (2013-2017).
- Continue to support the Galway based learning group for participation in the University of Limerick led EU SONETOR initiative to promote online accredited learning to create an EU community of Cultural Mediators. Contribute learning scenarios to the online resources of the site and participate in the forums, upload relevant local research and disseminate learning from the site to interested parties.
- Continue to lead the interagency sub-committee on Health and Access to Services and complete actions for completion in early stages of strategy and contribute to Annual Review of Strategy.
- Continue to support the Galway County Intercultural Forum and to identify funding and networking opportunities for the Forum to interact with both the County Community Forum and other neighbouring networks and forums.
- Continue to facilitate the Comhairle Steering Committee and identify suitable additional agency representatives (as relevant to the issue selected by young people) to co-opt on to the Committee.
- Continue to support the Young Social Innovators annual 'Speak Out' event for the Connaught Region.
- Continue to support the development committee to bring the Clonbur Eco Park proposal to "submission ready" status to present to the European Commission.
- Support Oranmore to participate in LivCom 2014.
- Support communities in the County to participate in the Pride of Place competition in 2014.
- Support Tidy Towns groups in the County to participate in the Tidy Towns National Competition in 2014.
- Develop the County Galway Community and Voluntary Forum and support its participation in Local Government and Local Development structures.
- Organise the County Mayors Awards 2014.



## Supporting Social Inclusion

### *Indicative Activities in 2013*

- Produced 2 social inclusion newsletters and kept social inclusion info up to date on Intranet & [www.galway.ie](http://www.galway.ie).
- Produced Census results report for County Galway based on Census 2013
- Promoted a plain English campaign internally with Staff of Galway County Council
- Supported Galway City & County Age Friendly Programme roll out including a pilot interactive telecare system in partnership with the Innovation Centre of GMIT.
- Facilitated County Galway Traveller Interagency Group.
- Facilitated the SIM (Social Inclusion Measures) Committee including coordinating the CDB endorsement of annual plans of the local development companies in County Galway.
- Supported other committees involved in social inclusion activities such as the LGBT Interagency Working Group and Homestart.
- Coordinated Traveller Pride Week on behalf of County Galway Traveller Interagency Group.
- Worked in partnership with Housing Department, Tullyvoheen Residents, St. Joseph Court, Cluid Housing, and local voluntary and statutory organisations as part of a two day information event in Clifden, as part of the Bealtaine Festival.
- Organised Social Inclusion Awareness Week 2014.
- Organised Culture Night for County Galway.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Develop, monitor and implement a Social Inclusion Work Programme for 2014.
- Work with the Customer Service Officers Group to ensure social inclusion is embedded into customer service.
- Work with Customer Services team and key personnel in relevant departments to embed plain English into documentation, and present information clearly on all forms and publications and on the website for use by the public.
- Identify and implement relevant training for Key staff and elected members involved in policy development and in the development of new forms and customer services.
- Social Inclusion Unit will Work with Housing Department to identify and roll out Social Inclusion Measures,
- Support Galway Age Friendly City and County Programme, by developing and supporting the Galway City and County Older Persons Council to ensure that all older people are represented.
- Participating in Childrens Services Committee

- Organise Culture Night in County Galway in 2014.

## Supporting RAPID areas - Tuam & Ballinasloe

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The RAPID Co-ordinators in Ballinasloe and Tuam continued to provide ongoing advisory project management services to agencies and communities through continued facilitation of RAPID Area Implementation Teams (AIT) and sub-groups involving cross-section of agencies and community representatives to progress action plans.
- Dormant Account Local Sports Partnership Projects in both RAPID areas were completed.
- The agreed actions contained in the Ballinasloe Economic Programme of actions were progressed.
- There was a focus on Employment & Training issues in Ballinasloe and Tuam and supports to those facing unemployment was provided in terms of referrals.
- In Tuam, through the Training Matters group, 80 people were facilitated to complete full and part-time courses in Health & Social Care, while a further 25 adults completed a Level 7 course in Enterprise and Community Development delivered in Tuam but accredited by Athlone Institute of Technology.
- Tuam RAPID brought the Silver Comedy team from England to Tuam and Ireland for the first time. Silver Comedy Manager with two established comedians led 2 comedy engagement sessions in Áras Mhuire (HSE Community Nursing Unit in Tuam) and in Greenpark Nursing Home for over 300 residents and day centre attendees.
- In Tuam two small scale Domestic Violence initiatives were supported by GRD as prioritized by the AIT and the Family Support Sub-Group.
- During National Recreation Week in June, Tuam Library launched the Summer Reading Programme, RAPID launched its Sports Kits for Schools and Communities which are being managed on behalf of RAPID and the Sports Partnership by the Tuam School Completion Programme, and in Ballinasloe, Youth Work Ireland launched their "Consulting with Young People" booklet in Ballinasloe Civic Offices.
- Tuam's newly established Community Enhancement Forum continued to meet to bring residents associations and their representatives together with LA Housing Officers and key members of other agencies such as HSE Family Support, GRETB, WRTDF and others facilitated by the RAPID Co-ordinator. New projects for progression were identified to roll out during 2014.
- Parkmore Community House continues to be used as a valuable resource within the local community and was visited by Community Development consultants working with the Housing Agency on regeneration projects in Limerick and Sligo to look at models of community and resident involvement in regeneration.

- The Tuam Community Allotments, which are a pilot allotments initiative in the County, continue to be further developed by the Western Traveller and Intercultural Development Association in conjunction with Parkmore Residents and with support from RAPID, the Housing Unit, and Local Agenda 21 funding from the Environment Unit.
- The RAPID Co-ordinators worked with the Local Development Agency for East Galway (GRD) to ensure prioritisation for the Ballinasloe and Tuam RAPID areas in the implementation of agreed plans. In 2013 10 projects were progressed in the Ballinasloe RAPID area and 15 in the Tuam area.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- RAPID Co-ordinators to continue to provide ongoing advisory project management services to agencies and communities to progress Strategic Plans in Community Safety & Anti Social Behaviour, Education, Employment & Training and the Physical Environment and assisted in securing funding to deliver.
- Progress the agreed actions contained in the Ballinasloe Economic Programme of actions.
- Work with the Local Development Agency for East Galway (GRD) to ensure prioritisation for the Ballinasloe and Tuam RAPID areas in the implementation of agreed plans through the LCDP programme.
- In Tuam, the AIT is proposing to continue and consolidate its key projects from 2013.

Specifically the Training Matters group has prioritised the delivery of a Level 8 outreach programme in Tuam to provide progression routes for those who have already achieved Level 6 and Level 7 qualifications. In conjunction with St Jarlath's Credit Union, Training Matters will aim to run focused, targeted open days and information seminars to reach groups of young people and adults seeking to reskill or take up new opportunities in the labour market.

## Promoting and developing Arts activity

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- Invested in communities through the Arts Grants and Awards.
- Supported development and promotion of new arts activity by Artists resident in County by investing €25,000 on Individual Artist's Bursary Awards.
- Provided an information & advice service to community groups, individual artists, Elected Members and other sections of the Council on arts activity.
- Supported access and development of projects in Public Health Facilities, Schools, and Communities and with 'at risk' youth groups using film, visual arts, theatre in partnership with other public and community groups and Arts Council funding.
- Promoted development of Coole Park Arts Programme in partnership with National Parks and Wildlife Service and local groups to enhance use of this facility in South East Galway.
- Implemented full programme of youth arts and arts & education activities.
- Supported development of creative economy and [www.screenwest.ie](http://www.screenwest.ie) to promote County as a location for film production.
- Continued to deliver programme of Disability Equality Training within the Arts in Galway
- Completed a full programme of Age Friendly projects for older people to include Bealtaine & Burning Bright Projects.
- Assisted in the preparation of the Music Education Partnership application 2013.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Implement the Arts Act Grants
- Administration of Individual Artist Grants as a valuable means of support employment within the creative sector in Galway County
- The management of a central cultural information and arts advice service to support sustainable communities and promote cultural tourism.
- The establishment and maintenance of projects with other agencies and institutions.
- Promotion of a strong Cultural Enterprise in Galway County
- Management of a strong arts partnership programme within the county.
- Support the County's only professional arts centre in the development of a Cultural Programme with Economic and Tourism Impacts on the Islands.
- Support Screen Commission West.
- Galway County Council will consider the establishment of an UNESCO Film Officer in conjunction with Galway City Council.

## Local Sports Partnership

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- Source funding from Irish Sports Council and other agencies to continue the work of the Partnership in 2013.
- Finalise merger with the City Sports Partnership.
- Continue to deliver core activities of the Irish Sports Council locally, Buntús, Code of Ethics, Women in Sport, Girls Active.
- Support the Tour of Connemara in 2013
- Organised the Galway Sports Partnership 10k in 2013.
- Implement the 'Meet & Train' projects under the Women in Sport initiative
- Held disability training for leisure centre staff in the county to enable them to facilitate people with disabilities in their establishments.
- Promote the Partnership through newsletter, website and in local media.
- Delivered the Buntús Start programme in association with the Galway City & County Childcare committee to encourage early access to sports.
- Establish a Physical Activity Centres staff training programme to help them cater for the Over'55's.
- Continue to promote the Link2BActive programme.
- Establish a 'Goal to Work' programme, in association with National Governing Bodies of Gaelic, Soccer, Rugby and Basketball/Volleyball to train people who are unemployed to become coaches in their respective fields of sporting expertise.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Prepare and implement a new Strategic Plan for the Galway Sports Partnership through consultation with stakeholders.
- Prepare and implement a new year on year Operational Plan for the Partnership
- Source funding from the Irish Sports Council and local resources to fund the activities of the Partnership throughout 2014.
- Continue to implement the core programmes of the Irish Sports Council – Buntús, Code of Ethics, Women in Sport, Meet & Train.
- Through public consultation identify priority areas for activities in Galway and implement these.
- Update all information in all databases of GSP. – schools, sports clubs and organisations.
- Implement the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme throughout Galway, including disability training through the Disability Inclusion Training programme from CARA, Tralee.

- Organise and implement a disability training programme for leisure centres and their staff.
- Organise the annual Galway Sports Partnership 10k.
- Implement cycling programmes/activities, and support the coordinate Bike Week activities for 2014
- Establish a new website for GSP and promote the activities of the partnership through this medium and that of facebook, newsletter and in local media.
- Implement the 'Men on the Move' fitness programme for men throughout Galway.
- Continue to promote the Link2BActive programme.
- Establish a 'Goal to Work' programme, in association with National Governing Bodies of Gaelic, Soccer, Rugby and Basketball/Volleyball to train people who are unemployed to become coaches in their respective fields of sporting expertise. In conjunction with the GSP Steering Group, examine ways to get groups and communities throughout Galway, more physically active throughout 2014
- Deliver the Buntús Start' programme in association with the Galway City & County Childcare committee to encourage early access to sports.

### **Quality Service Delivery, Customer Care & Organisational Effectiveness**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Increased use of social media to engage with communities and citizens
- Engaged in consultative meetings with citizens, public meetings, community forum meetings and one to one meetings
- Participated in Customer Service Initiatives within Galway County Council
- Produced CDB Newsletter to help promote the work of the CDB.

#### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Promote participation in EU funding programmes for Council services to communities and businesses.
- Continue to review CEED section on website to provide up to date useful information for communities, businesses and citizens.
- Implement agreed actions in Customer Service Action Plan and Irish Language Guidelines.
- Implement 'Plain English' guidelines in communications with the public and on web-site.
- Improved use of website and social media to link with citizens.

## Environment & Water Services Unit

### Water Services Investment Programme

#### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- It is important to acknowledge the introduction of Irish Water in 2014. From 2014 onwards all of the water services assets will be transferring to Irish Water and the Council will provide the water and wastewater services as an agent of Irish Water in 2014 and thereafter. It is difficult to set out at this stage what the effect of this new approach will be but the Council will continue to develop the county in a balanced and prioritised manner and in a way that meets the needs of communities and industries. Priority for the use and assignment of available resources in 2014 will be determined by the need to protect public health and the environment in consultation with Irish Water. Capital and revenue expenditure as agreed with Irish Water will be targeted at achieving further improvements in regulatory compliance in all areas of water and environmental management with particular emphasis on drinking water supplies.
- The Water Services Investment Programme as we knew it up to now is effectively finished. Only those schemes which have contracts signed at 31/12/2013 will novate to Irish Water. In all other cases each scheme will be the subject of a business case review by Irish Water who will make the investment approval decision.

### Management and maintenance of Water and Wastewater Schemes

#### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The responsibility for the management, operation and maintenance of the water and wastewater infrastructure will transfer to Irish Water in 2014. The Council will be working closely with Irish Water to implement Irish Water policies and priorities which are likely to be based around Health and Safety at work, maximising savings through framework procurement and introducing efficiencies in working practices at every opportunity.
- Drinking Water Remedial Action Programme:
  - This extensive project is practically complete and has been very successful in improving the water quality and security of supply in the schemes. The full extent of the maintenance implications of the new plant and equipment has yet to be appreciated in full but that challenge will be met in partnership with Irish Water.

- Wastewater Treatment Plants:
  - Regulations introduced in 2007 required that Galway County Council seek licences – or, in the case of plants less than 500 P.E., certification - from the EPA for all wastewater treatment plants and networks. The first licence and certificates issued in 2011 from the EPA. The Council is assessing the administrative and financial implications of compliance with the conditions when issued they may well give rise to the need for upgrades at several plants and a scheme similar to the Drinking Water Remedial Action Programme may be needed for these upgrades to occur. The availability of funding for such a scheme will in 2014 be a matter for Irish Water and the Council will work hand in hand with Irish Water and the EPA to advance compliance on all plants.

## **Water Conservation**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Phase 1 and 2 of the programme are complete with District Metering Areas (DMAs) completed throughout the county and active leak detection and repair programmes are ongoing. Since the beginning of the project savings of 15,000 cubic meters per day have been achieved through Phase 1 and Phase 2. The county wide mains rehabilitation programme which is Phase 3 of the programme will have to be agreed with Irish Water apart from those elements which are commenced before year end.

## **Waste Management Infrastructure**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Barna Waste operates the three Civic Amenity Sites at Ballinasloe, Clifden and Tuam.
- There are 92 Bring Bank Centres provided throughout the County for the collection of glass and beverage cans for recycling. The collection service is provided by Rehab Athchursáil Arainn Teo. Operates an integrated waste management scheme for the Aran Islands, on a partnership arrangement with the Council.
- The Local Authority Prevention Demonstration (LAPD) Programme continues to be implemented. The Waste Prevention Programme is ongoing and is continually identifying actions for prevention and capacity building within community, business and public sectors in relation to resource use efficiencies. Areas covered include waste prevention, energy conservation, water conservation and capacity building, training and awareness



- Following the implementation of the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009 a comprehensive awareness campaign has been aimed at the commercial sector. The segregation of commercial food waste has commenced.
- A food waste prevention programme operates on Inis Oirr in conjunction with Comhar Chaomhán. Workshops and seminars to assist all sectors improve their environmental performance are ongoing.

***Proposals for 2014:***

- Monitor the operation of leased recycling facilities countywide.
- Provide mobile hazardous waste & WEEE collections at targeted locations
- Implement waste collection bye-laws.
- Provide an education campaign in support of separate organic waste collection upon implementation of separate collection by private collectors.

<p><b>Environmental Monitoring &amp; Enforcement Measures</b></p>
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***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Council issued enforcement notices, warning letters, and initiated prosecutions under Environmental legislation in 2013. These details will be set out in the 2013 RMCEI (minimum inspection criteria for environmental inspection) returns which are due for issue by January 31st 2014. These returns set out in detail all inspections, warning letters, statutory notices, prosecutions upheld and enforcement actions taken during 2013.
- The 2013 RMCEI returns detail planned pro-active inspections carried out on regulated facilities and unplanned reactive inspections in relation to complaints received and incidents of environmental pollution. Inspections are carried out in relation to complaints, permitted waste facilities, permitted collectors, quarries, garages, various waste producer categories, discharge licences, sewage sludge facilities, farms, private wastewater treatment systems, air pollution licences and deco paints facilities.
- Contracts were put in place for drinking water, bathing water, river, lake and landfill monitoring in accordance with legislative requirements. Follow-up actions were taken in response to non-compliances.
- Notifications of non-compliance in relation to drinking water were issued to the EPA. Public notices in relation to bathing water quality were issued and investigative monitoring was carried out as required.
- Five Blue Flags and Six Green Coast plaques were awarded to bathing areas in County Galway.
- The Council inspected waste collector permit holders and waste facility permit holders on an ongoing basis.
- The CCTV programme to detect illegal dumping continued to be extended to various locations throughout the County

#### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Council will set out all planned pro-active inspections of authorised facilities under various Environmental Legislation in the 2014 RMCEI Plan which is due for issue by January 31st 2014. The scale of Enforcement activity in 2014 will reflect the resources available for inspections and will be on a prioritised basis taking consideration of Departmental guidance.
- The Council will continue to carry out investigations and monitoring under environmental legislation, in accordance with government policy and EPA directions, and take enforcement measures as required for non-compliance with environmental legislation
- The Litter Management Plan 2011-2014 will continue to be enforced
- Use of CCTV cameras will be extended where required to include use of covert cameras at locations where persistent dumping occurs.
- Inspections of waste water treatment systems will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the EPA

### **Protection of Natural Waters**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Local authorities and other public authorities are incorporating the programmes of measures set out in the River Basin Management Plans in their business plans and schedules of work. Investigations are prioritised in areas where public health must be protected
- Galway County Council continued to coordinate and cooperate with other public authorities through the WRBD management group
- Relevant staff in Galway County Council attended training on septic tank system inspections, oil pollution preparedness and a regional workshop on environmental awareness & water protection

### **Derelict Sites**

#### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Council is exercising its powers under the Derelict Sites Act 1990, in order to compel the owners of neglected, ruinous and unsightly buildings and land to take remedial action. There are currently 15 sites on the Derelict Sites Register.

#### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Sites in the county will continue to be reviewed in accordance with the Derelict Sites policy and the Dangerous Structures policy.

## Burial Grounds

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- There are currently 233 burial grounds listed on The Council's burial ground register. The Council, with the participation of the many local burial ground committees, carry out works of maintenance and improvements as resources permit.
- Burial ground extensions were completed at Rinvile, Ballynahown, Kilmurvey, Cloonkeenkerrill, Mountcross and Lettermore.
- Improvement works were supported at a number of burial grounds resulting in increased plots available.
- An annual grant is provided to committees who maintain the burial grounds in their area. The amount of this grant was €450 and grants were made to 155 committees in 2013

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- The Council will continue to progress extensions in conjunction with the local communities.
- Extensions will be advanced in partnership with local communities at Abbey, Annaghadow, Cortoon, Ballinafad, Barr A Doire and Quansboro as resources permit

## Environmental Awareness & Education

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- The Awareness Officers were involved in promoting environmental awareness through information meetings with community, voluntary groups and tidy towns committees. Press releases, advertising and radio advertising on environmental issues were produced and circulated.
- Ongoing involvement in the tidy town project noted increased success in competition
- Ongoing implementation of the Green Schools showed that over 90% of all schools are now involved in the programme
- In conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Galway County Council funded several community -based anti-litter initiatives.
- Increased use of the website for environmental awareness
- WEEE and Mobile Hazardous Waste collections were organised in areas not convenient to recycling centres and were a resounding success.
- Liaised with Community and Enterprise unit, water services unit and Heritage Officer on various environmental projects to highlight links and maximise budgets.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- The Awareness campaign will continue with particular emphasis on further enhancing partnerships with community and voluntary groups and increased use of media, local press and the website for distributing environmental information.
- Ongoing implementation of the Waste Prevention Programme.

## Energy Efficiency

### *Indicative Activities in 2013:*

- Energy efficiency upgrades were completed in 836 local authority houses (of which 133 houses in Ballinasloe Town Council area). This year funding was received for upgrading occupied as well as vacant houses
- Energy efficient LED street lighting was installed in Tuam town centre
- The heating system in Aras an Chontae was converted to natural gas and a PV array generating electricity was installed on the roof
- Energy efficient replacement pumps were installed at Carna /Cill Chiaráin and Oughterard water treatment plants
- A 20kw wind turbine generating electricity was installed at Carna Cill Chiaráin water treatment plant
- A seminar on energy efficiency and energy saving was provided for the business community in Ballinasloe, followed with free energy audits where requested.

### *Proposals for 2014:*

- Continue with improved energy controls and pump replacements in water and wastewater treatment plants
- Complete feasibility studies for energy generation at suitable sites
- Prepare a strategy for energy efficiency in public lighting
- Prepare a retrofit action plan for building stock
- Prepare and implement an energy awareness campaign within Galway County Council
- Provide workshops /seminars for the business and community sector.

## **Animal Control & Welfare**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- Animal welfare cases involving dogs, cattle, sheep and horses were investigated in conjunction with Gardai, Dept of Agriculture and welfare groups.
- The Council continued to be active in providing pound facilities for impounding of horses, sheep, cattle and goats. The Council veterinary service liaised with Housing in the implementation of the Control of Horses Act.
- The Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010 (which requires the registration of all dog breeding premises, especially puppy farms) was implemented and a number of premises inspected and registered

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- The Council will continue to provide pound services and hope to carry out improvement works to Ballinasloe Pound.
- Continued improvements to the efficiency of the Dog Control service will be implemented during the year to include a targeting of specific areas with a view to increased compliance with dog licensing.
- The Council will continue to investigate cases of animal welfare breaches in conjunction with Dept of Agriculture, Gardai and welfare groups.

## **Food Safety**

### ***Indicative Activities in 2013:***

- The Council provides a Veterinary Public Health Inspection Service under the terms of its 5 year service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- There are 9 local abattoirs in the county which are approved by the Council under Irish and EC legislation. These premises slaughter cattle, sheep, goats and pigs under Council supervision. The Council also supervises 10 approved meat processing premises in both the city and county. Another three premises are registered to slaughter and supply their own poultry on-farm in the county.
- One approved meat processing business carried out major expansion under the supervision of the Council veterinary service.
- A new meat processing business commenced business in the county following approval by the Council veterinary service.

### ***Proposals for 2014:***

- Resources for this service have been included in the budget for 2014.
- Implementation of new 'Welfare of Animals at time of Killing' legislation in slaughterhouses.
- It is proposed to organise training for Food Business Operators and veterinary inspectors in 2014.