

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA
GAILLIMHE**

CUNTAS BUISÉADACHTA 2015



GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

DRAFT BUDGET 2015

Index

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CHUIG GACH BALL DEN CHOMHAIRLE
DRAFT BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 2015

To: The Cathaoirleach and each Member of Galway County Council

Re: Draft Budget for financial year ending 31st December 2015.

Submitted in accordance with Section 103, Local Government Act 2001 (as amended)

Dear Member,

I enclose, for your consideration, the Draft Budget for 2015, together with a report detailing the main provisions outlined therein and a summary report from the Directors of Service in respect of activities in their respective functional areas.

In accordance with the statutory requirement issues relating to the preparation of the Budget and the Draft Budget was considered at meetings of the Corporate Policy Group held on 8th July 2014, 15th September 2014 and 6th November 2014.

The Council considered and made its determination on the Local Property Tax adjustment at its meeting held on 22nd September 2014 and each of the Municipal Districts considered the Budgetary Plan for each Municipal District at a series of meetings held between 6th October 2014 and 10th October 2014.

The Council may by resolution amend the Draft Budget but shall 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 and where appropriate have regard to the base year adjustment – determined in accordance with Section 29 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

The Council is required to complete the statutory process within a period of 14 days. This allows, for the adjournment, if necessary of the statutory meeting which is scheduled for 20th November 2014, provided the process is completed by 4th December 2014.

Base Year Adjustment

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 made statutory provision for the bridging of any gap between the County rate and the rate that was applied in any former town council area. The methodology was by means of a Base Year Adjustment and the merging of the two rates over a period of time not to exceed 10 years.

There is a further provision which prohibits the Council from raising the County Rate for the period of the adjustment. Therefore if the adjustment period is 10 years then Galway County Council cannot increase its rate for 10 years. Given that it is 6 years since the rate has increased the retention of this position for a further 10 years would be unsustainable.

The rates being applied in 2014 are €66.59 for the County council area and €52.00 for the former Ballinasloe Town Council area. The former town council areas of Tuam and Loughrea will experience a reduction as they will no longer have to pay a separate town rate.

This aspect of the budget was discussed in detail with the Corporate Policy Group. Essentially two options exist:

- (1) Implement an accounting increase in the County Rate in 2015 and then undertake a base year adjustment for both the County rate and Ballinasloe rate so that neither are actually increased for 2015. The Budget meeting in 2014 is the only point at which this could be done and would have the advantage of facilitating a longer adjustment period between the County and Ballinasloe rates as the possibility of a rate increase would be available to the County during the adjustment period even if such a course of action was not taken.

- (2) Undertake a base year adjustment for the Ballinasloe town rate only. As previously stated this means that the County rate cannot be increased during the adjustment period and therefore a shorter adjustment period would be envisaged. Following discussion with the Corporate Policy Group the Draft Budget is presented on the basis of the latter. At the end of the adjustment period businesses in Ballinasloe will be paying the same rate as all other towns in the County and this will mean an increase of €487,218 on the rate demand attributable to the former Town Council area.

Budget 2015

While the reduction in revenue expenditure between 2008 and 2015 is significant the budget available still provides considerable opportunities for our County and enables the delivery of a vast array of services. It must be borne in mind that part of this revenue spend serves to support the capital investment in the county which is currently in the region of €32 m per annum giving a total investment in the county through Galway County council of approximately €137m each year.

The funding derived from the Local Government Fund in recent years is replaced by the proceeds from the Local Property Tax / Equalisation Fund in 2015. The amount received in 2015 from the proceeds of Local Property Tax is the same as that received in 2014 from the Local Government Fund. The decision of the Elected Members not to reduce the Local Property Tax has ensured this level of funding but with a number of new areas of activity the continuation of the delivery of existing services is challenging.

The budget for 2015 includes an income from the NPPR of €350,000 which includes income from the agreements put in place, by those with a liability to discharge the amount due, to do so over a period of years.

The Members will be aware from their recent discussions on the Municipal District Allocation that the level of discretionary expenditure is extremely low. Much of the budget in any year is comprised of non-discretionary costs such as loan charges, payroll, statutory demands, Insurances, pensions etc or is comprised of expenditure that is assigned to the delivery of particular services

Given that the funding available is similar to 2014 and the decision of the Members to retain the level of Local Property Tax the draft budget is consistent with that prepared for 2014 and seeks to continue the level of service currently provided. It is recognised that additional funding could be utilised effectively under almost every budget heading but the allocation of further resources has not been possible. The budget for housing maintenance and the Councils contribution to roads from its own resources have been maintained in 2015.

The most significant changes in the figures presented in the Draft Budget arise from the reduction of funding allocations in respect of Irish Water (c.€14m) and Higher Education Grants (c.€3.5m) which were contra items and the incorporation of the budget for the Ballinasloe Town Council area. This included adjustments required from varying accounting practices for example the coding of pensions to the Central Management Charge at County level while they were coded directly to the service in Ballinasloe Town Council.

The issue of Unfinished Housing Estates and the process of Taking in Charge has received on-going attention over the past few years. Much progress has been made utilising funding for safety works and funding from the Site Resolution fund in addition to working with developers and receivers to have issues addressed. However significant issues remain and while it is not possible to provide the level of funding that is desirable an allocation has been made to allow some issues to be addressed on a priority basis. The continuation of funding over a period of years together with the approach of working with others will help to address the more significant issues over a period of time.

Local Authority Structures

The year 2014 has been very significant for all of Local Government including Galway County Council. Following the local elections in June 2014 Galway County Council was reconvened with an increased Membership of 39 Members. The revised legislation framework clearly envisages a greater policy role for council.

The sub county structures of Local Government were revised with the dissolution of Town Council's including Ballinasloe, Loughrea and Tuam and the establishment of 5 Municipal Districts with a set of functions defined in legislation. It is intended that the Municipal Districts will consider more detailed matters relating to the Municipal District Areas.

Work will be on-going over a period of time to ensure that there is no duplication of work between the County and Municipal District structures and that functions are carried out and discussions take place in the appropriate forum.

In June 2014 the Regional Authorities were formally dissolved and the West Regional Authority was replaced by the Border Midlands & Western Regional Assembly. On the 1st January 2015 the three new regional structures will come into effect with Galway being covered by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly.

In response to the new powers entrusted to Local Government the Local Community Development Committee was established firstly on a non-statutory basis and subsequently on a statutory footing and has assumed responsibility for the Local Community Development Programme. In effect the work of this Committee has just begun and in the course of 2015 it is expected that the LCDC will deliver on the completion of tendering of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme and the implementation of arrangements for the delivery management and oversight of the programme.

The LCDC will also complete the preparation of the local Economic and Community Plan which is a Statutory plan intended to guide all relevant publicly funded activity. The LCDC will consider the community elements of the plan while the Strategic Policy Committee for Enterprise and Economic Development will be responsible for the economic elements. The entire Plan will in due course be considered by both the Municipal Districts and full Council.

While final arrangements have not been made it is expected that the LCDC will become the Local Action Group for the next round of Leader funding. The latest proposals would see the LCDC having a key role in the development of the strategy and oversight of the programme with the existing Local Development Companies continuing to undertake a role in the delivery of the programme.

Economic Development

A clear role was given to local government in the area of economic development under the recent Local Government Reforms. The foregoing paragraphs are part of the economic picture but there are many other areas which are under active consideration and discussion.

Galway County Council is working with Galway City Council on the preparation of an Economic Strategy for Galway with the assistance of the Whittaker Institute in NUIG. Work has advanced over the past few months and the intended outputs at the end of the first phase are an overall background report together with Sectoral Overviews for areas such as Marine, food, retail, internationally traded services, micro-enterprise, renewable and manufacturing.

It is intended that these papers will be considered by the SPC for Enterprise & Economic Development in advance of preparing the Economic Strategy. It is also intended to convene advisory groups representing both the inter-agency and business perspectives to guide the work of the preparation and implementation of the strategy. Overall it is intended that the Strategy will be a document that will help to form a consensus on economic priorities and will contain a number of actions that will guide activity in the coming period. Internally an inter-departmental group is being established to assist in ensuring that all Council activity is permeated by a focus on business and economic development.

The Members will be aware that the County Enterprise Boards were dissolved earlier this year and the Local Enterprise Offices established. The work of the unit has continued including the delivery of a number of new initiatives in areas such as on-line trading, micro-finance and young entrepreneurship. The process of integrating the work of the LEO with the Community and Enterprise and other units in Galway County Council has commenced and it is intended that the staff of the LEO will be accommodated in either County Hall or in Centrepoint when the lease on their present accommodation in Woodquay expires in May 2015.

The Galway Airport Site is currently leased for an 11 month period which will allow the undertaking of a review of the future options for the site. This site was purchased as a strategic investment opportunity for the medium to long term economic development of our County. It is likely that the formulation and implementation of a clear strategy with the provision of any necessary financial support will take some time and it is important that short term decisions do not impact negatively on the sites longer term strategic potential.

Galway County Council has been liaising with Galway City Council over the past few months on a proposed bid for European Capital of Culture 2020. It is anticipated that a successful bid must not just focus on the City but on a wider hinterland and in particular the County of Galway. There are two distinct phases to this project with the first being the bid process and if successful the second stage is the further development of the programme which has a substantial funding requirement. No financial commitments have been given to date but it is intended that Galway County Council would support this initiative with the financial input from the County being agreed in due course having regard to the programme of events and to the potential benefit to the County. It is intended that the Members would receive a presentation on this at the November meeting of Council.

Galway County Council has continued to work with DAHG, Udaras and the OPW on the proposed development of a Visitor Centre adjacent to Pearses Cottage in Rosmuc. The project is being facilitated through the Part 8 Planning process which has already been advertised and will be before Council for decision in the near future. Galway County Council are also facilitating the required land acquisition.

The Members received a presentation from Ireland West Airport at their July meeting and Galway County Council has been requested to provide support to the Airport in conjunction with the Local Authorities in Galway City, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo and Donegal. It is intended to bring any proposal in this regard before the Members once all relevant information is available.

Works are continuing on the Conamara Greenway proposal and the Wild Atlantic Way initiative. The first part of the Greenway has been completed at Clifden, the progression of the section between Clifden and Oughterard is being assessed and planning for the section between Galway City and Oughterard is to commence shortly. The programme of works on the Wild Atlantic Way are progressing and are due for completion by 2016. The Galway to Dublin Cycle route is being progressed with the assistance of Galway County Council staff and the project is at route selection stage. It is considered that these projects are very significant for County Galway and have the potential to deliver significant amenity and tourism potential.

The revised Galway County Development Plan which is currently on its final public display period is very cognisant of the need to support job creation and employment opportunities and its capacity to consider sustainable development proposals positively will be kept under review.

It must be recognised that the taking of economic initiatives such as the above and the driving of the economic agenda will require a supporting financial commitment. While there is increased provision in the draft budget to support economic development it remains constrained by resource availability and will need to be increased on a progressive basis over a number of years.

Efficiency

Galway County Council now operates with a budget that has reduced by 33% and a staff complement that has also reduced by approximately 33% since 2008. Despite such significant reductions in resources the business of the Council and the delivery of services have not witnessed an equivalent reduction in output. Much credit must be given to the staff of the Council for the flexibility shown to ensure that services are maintained. Galway County Council has undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years to reduce costs, accrue savings and deliver efficiencies and these efforts continue. In particular the areas of public procurement, energy efficiency and shared services have been pursued with great effect. These initiatives have been in addition to savings achieved under the Croke Park and Haddington Road Agreements.

In 2014 a shared payroll processing unit for all local authorities was established in Laois County Council. Galway County Council was in the second wave of local authorities to transfer to this arrangement and work is ongoing following the substantial transfer of functions in September 2014. Galway County Councils participation in this shared facility will free up staff for other duties. One of the areas that will receive further attention as a result is the area of revenue collection.

Galway County Council will continue to progress energy efficiency projects in public lighting and Council buildings and energy efficiency upgrading to social housing stock working closely with the SEAI and the Tipperary Energy Agency

Procurement within the public sector in general is migrating towards a more centrally driven model led by the new Office of Government Procurement (OGP). More national frameworks and contracts are now being put in place and all sectors are being encouraged to utilise them in order to generate savings and to improve administrative efficiencies. The opportunities for cost savings based on price alone are diminishing however and therefore savings through other means such as process efficiencies must be examined. By utilising national frameworks and contracts Galway County Council has made savings across a number of categories. Efforts will continue to refine our product coding structure to assist in capturing more accurate analytical data.

General

It should be pointed out that July 2015 marks the end of the period during which staff can retire without further negative impact on their entitlements. While it is not known how many staff may choose to retire early before this date provision has been made in the budget for a number of such retirements. The number of retirements will have budgetary implications arising from increased costs for pensions and gratuities and reduced income from the pension levy.

The recent Local Government Reforms re-confirmed the role of Local Authorities in community development. This will be progressed through a number of the programmes already outlined but a specific initiative that is on-going is the setting up of the Public Participation Network (PPN). The registration process is now complete with a total of 336 groups registered. It is envisaged that the PPN will provide an opportunity for regular and consistent information flows between the Local Authority and the community. The establishment of the PPN will continue over the coming months and into 2015 and Galway County Council will be required to support its operation.

Members will be aware of the Keeping Communities Safe initiative and the ongoing efforts to ensure that our Fire Service meets all of the standards required. The provision of a Fire Station in An Cheathrú Rua requires a specific budget provision but it is anticipated that the implementation of KCS will in time produce savings in other locations together with the pursuit of savings and efficiencies generally within the fire service. In 2015 as part of the implementation of KCS there will be a particular emphasis on Health & Safety in the Fire Service.

The establishment of Irish Water and the transfer of the water services function from local authorities has been one of the single biggest changes in recent years. The activity of Galway County Council in the water services area is now governed by a Service Level Agreement with Irish Water and Annual Service Plans. Work is ongoing at National level on a number of issues but it is expected that these will be largely finalised in 2015.

Significant work has been undertaken in recent years in order to keep our staff and the public safe as we carry out our functions. This has included new procedures, revised processes, investment in dealing with risks and the achievements of OHSAS accreditation for the Housing and Water Services Units. Work is continuing in this regard and the areas of roads and the Fire Service are currently progressing towards accreditation. It is intended that all Units of Galway County Council will have a unified and consistent approach to Health & Safety with the available funding being directed to the areas of greatest need from an organisational perspective. This area needs an ongoing commitment of funding in order to discharge our responsibilities.

The Members will be aware that there are a number of initiatives that are being progressed at National level or on a pilot basis such as the Housing Assistance Payments Scheme and the National Differential Rents Scheme. The detail of how these will impact on Galway County Council and in particular the budgetary implications are not yet clear and I have been unable to make provision for same. It is likely that the implementation process will only progress in the second half of 2015 and it is expected that there will be a phasing arrangement which will mitigate any negative budgetary effects. The main impacts are likely to be an increased staff resource required for HAPS and reduced income as a result of the national differential rents scheme.

The Local Government Auditor has emphasised the need to focus on reducing the deficit of €2m on our current account together with ensuring that there is sufficient provision for rates on vacant properties. The receipt of additional NPPR monies in 2014 has allowed us to ensure that these matters have been stabilised in 2014 and the budget deficit has not increased. This in turn has provided us with the capacity to maintain services in 2015 rather than diverting funding into addressing the deficit.

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 2015, for example costs arising from severe weather events or other unexpected incidents.

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.

In line with previous years, the budget includes a figure for road grants based on the original 2014 allocation as the 2015 allocation has not yet been received.

	Roads Grant Funding €m	Council's own contribution €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
2014	18.50	2.37
2015 (proposed)	18.50	2.33
% reduction from 2008 to 2014	52%	54%

BUDGETARY TREND 2008 – 2015

2008 - Adopted Budget	€160 M
2009 - Adjusted Budget	€146 M
2010 – Adopted Budget	€149 M
2011 – Adopted Budget	€144 M
2012 – Adopted Budget	€136 M
2013 - Adopted Budget	€127M
2014 – Adopted Budget	€122 M
2015 – Draft Budget	€105 M

Local Government Fund

The Local Government Fund has been replaced by the proceeds of the Local Property Tax/Pension Levy which have been estimated to produce income of €14.5m. Given the extent of financial changes including those associated with Irish Water a direct comparison with revenue from the Local Government Fund is no longer meaningful.

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)	€27.67m	3%
2013 (LGF plus pension deduction)	€29.47m	3%
2014 (to include Irish Water and NPPR)	€29.52m	0%

Expenditure proposals

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

Expenditure by Programme Group	2014 Budget	2014 Estimated Outturn	2015 Draft Budget
	€	€	€
Housing and Building	11,719,067	11,372,731	11,541,201
Road Transportation & Safety	34,174,335	37,748,849	32,897,196
Water Services	27,101,880	14,270,556	13,119,721
Development Management	7,179,620	8,757,672	7,484,108
Environmental Services	17,112,189	16,902,549	16,930,900
Recreation & Amenity	8,457,060	8,243,768	7,931,728
Agriculture, Education Health & Welfare	8,381,538	9,548,908	4,767,523
Miscellaneous Services	10,652,770	11,780,064	10,605,729
Total	124,778,459	118,625,096	105,278,106

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

Estimated Revenue Income	2014		2015	
	€	%	€	%
Local Government Fund / LPT	12,506,381	10	12,506,381	12
Pension Related Deduction	2,167,172	2	2,060,000	2
NPPR	145,000	0	350,000	0
State Grants & Subsidies	37,468,305	30	32,674,990	31
Irish Water Income	23,620,428	19	9,262,000	9
Local Determined Income	33,361,594	27	33,336,591	32
Other Income	15,509,579	12	15,088,144	14
	124,778,459		105,278,106	100

Expenditure Adjustments

I attach hereunder a table setting out the principal variances between the Budget for 2014 and 2015.

Service	Service Description	2015	2014	Change
		€	€	€
Div C	Water Services	13,119,721	27,101,880	(13,982,159)
G05	Educational Support Services	1,975,119	5,438,840	(3,463,721)
	Subtotal of above	15,094,840	32,540,720	(17,445,880)
	Total Expenditure	105,278,106	124,778,459	(19,500,353)

Conclusion

The preparation of the Draft Annual Budget for 2015 has been challenging. I believe that the proposed Draft Budget will allow Galway County Council to deliver the optimum level of core services in 2015, having regard to available resources. However, there is no provision for contingencies included. The proposed gross expenditure of €105.27M together with the capital programme spend estimated at €32M, 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 2014. I wish to record my appreciation to the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Mary Hoade, and the former Mayor Cllr. Liam Carroll for their commitment to the special responsibilities of their office 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 2014 and in recent years and their support has ensured the continued delivery of services in difficult circumstances.

I wish to thank the Council's Directors of Service and their staff for their rigorous examination of budget items for 2015 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 and to thank all involved in delivering the draft budget.

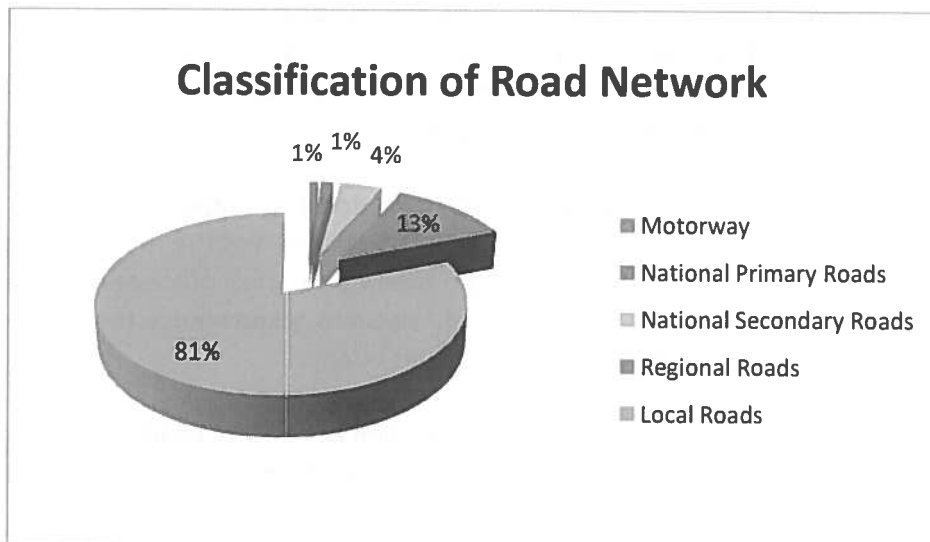
The year 2015 will undoubtedly bring new challenges for Galway County Council, but I am confident that with the support of the Members, Management team, and colleagues we will provide valuable services in 2015 to meet the critical needs of the people of Galway.

I recommend the Draft Budget to you for adoption.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Kelly,
Chief Executive (Interim)

ROADS, TRANSPORTATION, MARINE AND GENERAL SERVICES UNIT



The road grants for 2015 will be announced in February/March 2015 and it is anticipated that there will be no specific improvement grants for non national roads. 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 2014 substantial additional maintenance funding was obtained for national route maintenance.

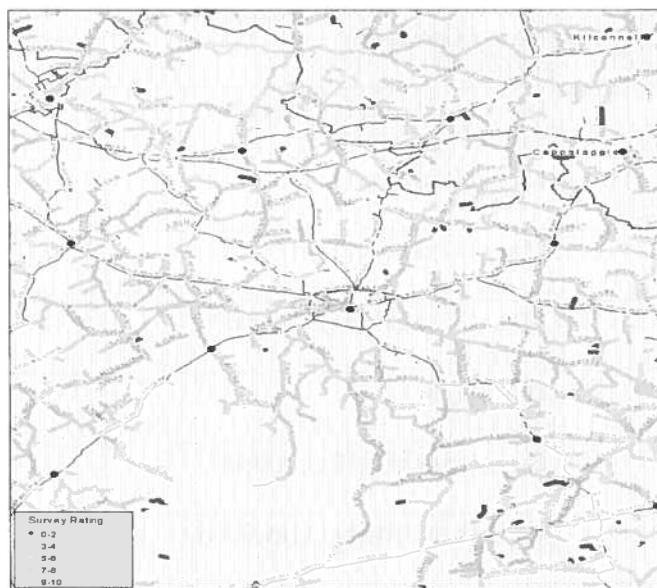
In 2014 the Municipal Districts were set-up and there is a focus on ensuring the deployment of administrative and technical staff to the municipal district offices. Reorganisation of the duties of staff has been part of this process to ensure sufficient cover for annual leave, sick leave or any other 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 2014.

2015 will be another challenging year with further reductions in staff levels due to retirements and staff taking up vacancies in other organisations. The funding for local roads from the Councils own resources in 2015 will remain largely the same as 2014. Funding allocations will continue to be made on a road length and classification basis.

Road Condition Survey

A road condition survey was carried out on the local road network by Galway County Council in 2012. The project benefits 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.

Following the local roads conditions survey which was completed in 2012, the road condition standards across the county are relatively uniform. The use of the local tertiary road repair programme was extremely beneficial and it is hoped to continue the programme in 2015. The excerpt below of the road condition survey indicates the conditions of the roads. 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 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. 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 2014

- Funding was provided in 2014 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
N59	Maam Cross/Clifden
N59	Maam Cross/ Oughterard
N84	Luimnagh
N17	Carrownurlaur/ Ballindine
N63	Annagh Hill/Abbeyknockmoy

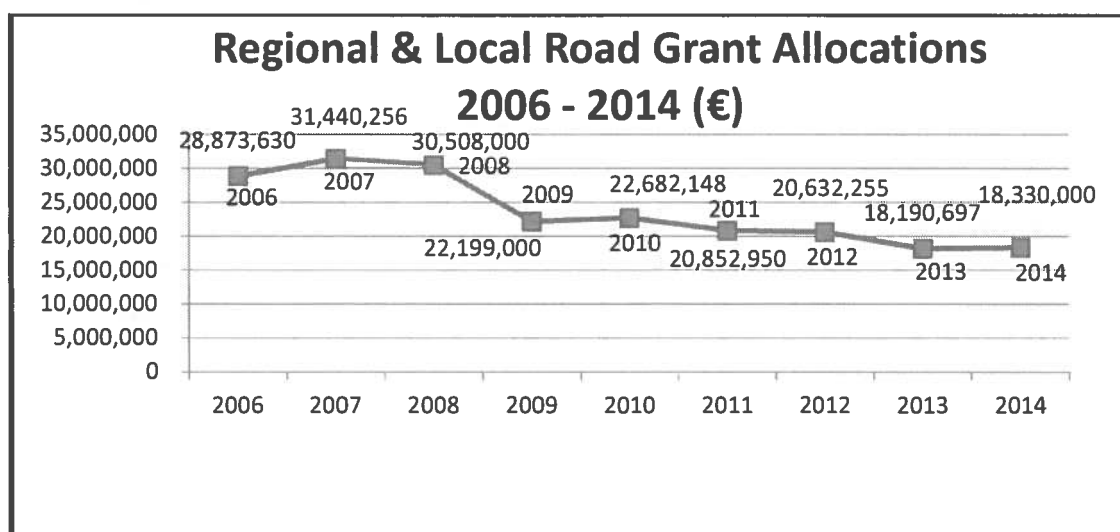
- The M6 Athlone/Ballinasloe, Galway/Ballinasloe and M18 Gort Crusheen Schemes are open to traffic with some minor landowner issues outstanding.
- Consultants have been appointed for the Galway City Outer ByPass and are based in the Project Office in Ballybrit. Emerging Preferred Routes are planned to be available for Public Consultations in Qtr 1 2015.
- Maam Cross to Oughterard has been granted Planning Approval and Advance works are programmed for Qtr 4 2014.
- Clifden to Maam Cross has been published and we are now awaiting An Bord Pleanala decision on holding an Oral Hearing.

- Contract Documents are being prepared for the N59 Moycullen ByPass. Works are planned to commence on the Moycullen Online section in November 2014.
- 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.

Proposals for 2015:

- M17/M18. Contracts have been signed. The contract is between the NRA and Direct Route. Major works will commence in Qtr 1 2015.
- N84 Luimnagh CPO is confirmed and Advance Works and Land Acquisition are now in progress, and will continue into 2015.
- N17 Carrownurlaur to Ballindine Part VIII Planning was approved by the Elected Members at the Council Meeting of the 24th October 2014. Design and preparation of contracts will be undertaken in 2015.
- N63 Annagh Hill to Abbeyknockmoy Part VIII Planning is scheduled for the consideration of the Elected Members at the December 2014 Council Meeting. Design and preparation of contracts will be undertaken in 2015.
- 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 2015 grant allocations from the National Roads Authority.

Regional & Local Roads



Indicative Activities in 2014:

The total grant allocation of €18,330,000 for Regional & Local Roads divides as follows:

Improvement Works	€15,626,000
Maintenance Works	€ 2,704,000

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

Grant Category	2014
Improvement Grant 2013	€9,803,000
Restoration Maintenance Grant	€2,704,000
Discretionary Maintenance Grant	€4,807,000
Specific Improvement Grants	€650,000
Low Cost Safety Improvement Grants	€176,000
Regional & Local Road Winter Maintenance	€100,000
Strategic Regional & Local Roads (SNNR) Grant	Included in 2014 Disc Grant
Training	€90,000
OVERALL TOTAL	€18,330,000

- The following roads were allocated funding under the Specific Improvement Grant Scheme during 2014:

Electoral Area	Scheme	Grant
Óran Mór	LP4101 Oranhill to Rinvilla	€250,000
Loughrea	R347 Cemetery Cross Roads	€200,000
	Bridge Rehabilitation:	
	R343 Crusheen, An Cheathrú Rua	€25,000
	R336 Baile an Donallan, An Cheathrú Rua	€20,000
	R340 Aconeera, An Cheathrú Rua	€65,000
	R348 Raford, Loughrea	€35,000
	R336 Crumlim, An Cheathrú Rua	€55,000
TOTAL SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT GRANTS		€650,000

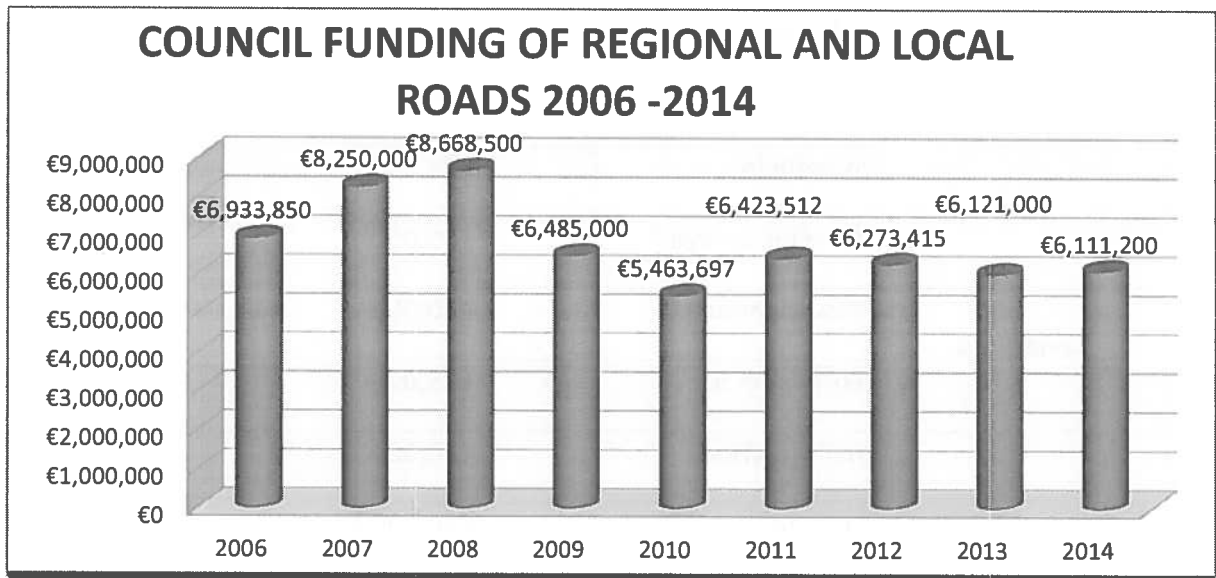
- The following projects were funded under the Strategic Regional & Local Roads Grant Scheme:

SCHEME	2014 ALLOCATION
Galway City Western Route	€50,000
R336 Conamara Access Road (Bearna to Ros a Mhíl)	€50,000
TOTALS	€100,000

- Funding of €600,000 was provided from the 2014 Discretionary Grant for the repair of Regional and Local Roads Bridges, which includes €25,000 due in relation to retention on 2012 projects and €7,000 to carry out an ecological and topographical survey. The following bridges were allocated funding:

ELECTORAL AREA	BRIDGE	ALLOCATION	TOTAL ELECTORAL AREA
Ballinasloe	Ballyforan	€84,000	€154,000
	Belview Bridge	€16,500	
	Windfield	€24,500	
	New Inn Bridge 2	€29,000	
Conamara	Tawnaghmore	€30,000	€55,000
	Formweel 3	€25,000	
Loughrea	Ballylin West	€20,000	€154,000
	Lecarrow	€20,500	
	Russaun	€10,000	
	Kilcrimple	€31,379	
	Ballynahowna	€2,621	
	Kennys Bridge	€5,000	
	Ballyshrule Bridge	€64,500	
Ballabbert	Ballabbert	€20,000	
	Sonnach 4	€28,600	

Tuam	Derreen	€30,000	€187,000
	Moneenally	€35,800	
	Fartamore	€72,600	
Oranmore	Lisheenananoran	€4,000	€18,000
	Headford Castle	€4,000	
	Cloonkeely	€4,000	
	Lisheenageeha	€6,000	
TOTAL			€568,000



The sum provided from the Council's resources in 2014 is **€6,111,200**, to include provision for public lighting. This was a decrease of €9,800 on the 2013 provision of €6,121,000.

- Funding of €2,704,000 was allocated for Surface Dressing within existing fence lines. It was allocated as follows:
 - (1) Ballinasloe Area Local Roads Maintenance **€ 594,880**
 - (2) Conamara Area Local Roads Maintenance **€ 567,840**
 - (3) Loughrea Area Local Roads Maintenance **€ 703,040**
 - (4) Oranmore Area Local Roads Maintenance **€ 162,240**
 - (5) Tuam Area Local Roads Maintenance **€ 676,000**

Proposals for 2015:

- The Unit will prepare the 2015 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 2015.
- The distribution of the Local Roads Budget 2015 will be presented to Council for approval in the context of the 2015 Roads Programme. The level of discretion that will be available to the Council in the allocation of funding in 2015 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 2014:

Strategic Piers and Harbours:

- The marine programme for developing Strategic Harbours is now complete, except for Inis Óírr Harbour, which is awaiting funding. Given the current financial situation it is unlikely that funding will be made available in 2015 for this project.

Small Piers and Harbours

- An allocation of €1,998,000 was received from the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine; this together with funding of €222,000 from the Council provided a total budget of €2,220,000 to alleviate storm damaged areas and to carry out pier improvement works.

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, Food and the Marine.

Cé Glinsk, Carna	Construct access ladders and improvement works to pier.	€150,000
Cé Leitir Calaidh, Leitir Mór	Construct new access ladders and install pier lighting.	€150,000

Proposals for 2015:

- To complete coastal protection works on An Spidéal promenade, and at Mainistir, Inis Mór.
- Progress coastal protection works and road improvements at Caladh Mór, Inis Méain.

- Progress coastal protection works to south facing shore on Inishbofin & to French Man's Strand on Inis Mór.

Coastal Protection

- The Council will continue to submit proposals to the Office of Public Works for funding to facilitate Coastal Protection Works.
- The county -wide continuation of coastal protection works.

Arterial Drainage

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- 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 2015:

- The Unit will undertake a programme of maintenance on the drainage works under the remit of the Council during 2015.
- All available sources of revenue will be utilised to undertake remedial and improvement works on the drainage districts under the remit of the Council.
- S.I. No. 478 of 2014 provides for the dissolution of specified joint drainage committees and the transfer of their functions to the relevant local authorities. In relation to Galway County Council, the Order provides for the dissolution of the Suck and Fergus Joint Drainage Committees with effect from 1 January 2015. The functions currently performed by these committees will, from that date, be exercised directly by each local authority in respect of so much of the relevant district as is within its own area, subject

to such alternative joint arrangements that may be made by the local authorities concerned.

Flood Mitigation Works & Studies

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Joint Flood Steering Group comprising representatives from Galway County Council and the Office of Public Works worked in partnership during 2014 to identify and progress works aimed at reducing the risk of future flooding.
- From 2010 to date a total of 161 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. 107 schemes have been approved to date, 44 schemes were refused by the OPW and 21 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 2013/2014 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 is currently with the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform who are required to carry out an independent review of the proposed scheme prior to making a recommendation on same. The OPW hope to progress the scheme works in 2015.
- Galway County Council has continued working in partnership with the OPW on the Western and Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management studies during 2013/2014. Draft Flood Maps have been finalised and are being made available to the public for review and comment at Public Consultation Days in various Town and Villages throughout the county where a flood risk has been identified in October & November 2014.

Proposals for 2015:

- 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 has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála in October 2014. Subject to Planning Permission the Council & OPW will make every effort to progress the scheme in 2015.
- Outstanding works on all existing minor flood mitigation projects will be completed during 2015 and Galway County Council 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 2015.

Road Safety

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- 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 2014 included:
 - Promotion of the Drive for Life Programme for secondary 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 20th May, 2014, in Ballygar.
 - During the Bealtaine Festival in May, 2014, a High Visibility Vests Campaign took place and vests were distributed, free of charge.
 - Regular road safety messages were on iRadio to raise awareness to the general public
 - During 'Slow Down Day' in June, 2014, the Council erected variable messaging signs asking the public to slow down
 - For the national Road Safety Week held in October, 2014, joint initiatives took place with NUIG where 1,000 bike lights were distributed to students and with GMIT, where 1,000 high visibility rucksack covers were circulated to its students.
 - During 2014, high visibility vests, armbands and road safety awareness leaflets were distributed, free of charge, to schools and the general public.
 - During 2014, 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.

Proposals for 2015:

- The Road Safety Together Committee is to meet regularly and continue its active role in the promotion of road safety.
- Road safety initiatives proposed by the Council during 2015 include:
 - Promotion of the Drive for Life Programme for secondary schools.
 - Support for the Cycling Safety Training Programme in national schools

- Support for the operation of the Junior School Warden Scheme in 4 schools
- Continue to raise awareness of road safety to the general public by regular radio messages and through social media
- Continue the distribution of high visibility vests, armbands and road safety awareness leaflets, free of charge, to schools, community groups and the general public.

Safety Improvement Works and Measures:

- An allocation of €176,000 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:

LP6196	Baunmore Crossroads - Oranmore
LP4195	Cahernagarry - Loughrea
R333	Corner Chapel, Headford - Tuam
LP4313	Gortanumera - Portumna
R348	Killaan -Ballinasloe North,
LP4510	Tierneevin Junction - Gort
LP6196	Baunmore School -Oranmore
R349	Lissaloodon Junction -Loughrea
R359	Castleblakeney, - Ballinasloe North
R446	Balleighter, - Ballinalsoe North
R347	Rooghaun Cross Road - Gort

- 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

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- A sum of €882,000 was provided in the 2014 Budget to fund the cost of the public lighting programme including the maintenance/energy costs.

Proposals for 2015:

- A budget similar to the current years will be provided in the Budget for the 2015 Public Lighting Programme. This budget provides for the maintenance and energy costs associated with the existing public lighting network. It is proposed to design and

implement a new public lighting policy with a core emphasis on energy efficiency and sustainability.

Community Involvement Schemes

Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- 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 **21** applications were received for the 2014 scheme, of which funding was provided for 12 schemes by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

Proposals for 2015:

- The 2015 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 on an ongoing basis and criteria for the scheme may change in 2015, details of which will be advertised when received.

Working in Partnership

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- 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.
- Galway County Council continued to progress the proposed walking and cycling Greenway from Galway to Oughterard with support from Fáilte Ireland.
- Galway County Council in association with the Department of Social Protection has employed 44 people under the Gateway scheme, with many employed in the Roads Unit as a valuable resource, carrying out maintenance works which would not be carried out without their assistance.

Proposals for 2015:

- 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 2015.
- The Council will continue to liaise with the National Transportation Authority to develop best practice for public roads in rural areas.
- The Council will continue to progress all Greenway projects in the County, offering increased sustainable transport options to both residents and tourists.

Customer Service

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Unit made information available to the general public, in 2014, on our Winter Service Plan for 2014/2015 at 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 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.
- A nominated person within the Unit deals with all Customer Service queries from whichever source they are received, such as Fix Your Street, Customer Comments system, e-mail, Twitter etc. to ensure response are issued in a timely manner.

Proposals for 2015:

- The Unit shall continue to make use of 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.
- The option of extending the on-line payments facility for other services will be considered.

Corporate Support

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Unit took on the responsibility for the efficient operation and administration associated with the Municipal District of Tuam.

Proposals for 2015:

- The Unit will actively support the role of the new 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, among other areas.
- The Unit will continue to work with the Members to ensure that the Municipal District system is an efficient and effective model for addressing operational issues.

CORPORATE, HOUSING & EMERGENCY SERVICES UNIT

Library Development Programme

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Library usage continued to increase in 2014. The Library Service of Galway County Council is one of the most heavily used services in Ireland despite the fact that Galway spends one of the lowest amounts per capita on this service.
- Library Staff through innovation and local partnerships continued to ensure a vibrant and active service with many free events in 2014. More than 500,000 visits will have been made to branch libraries across the County in 2014. This makes the Council's branch libraries the most visited public spaces in County Galway, reflecting a service and place where diversity is welcomed and encouraged.
- The services, activities and usage of the Public Libraries reflect the goals of the service to retain the trust that 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 downturn.
- Ballinasloe Library Extension and Refurbishment: Contracts were signed with Clancy Construction in May and a 14 month construction programme commenced in June '14. Funding of €3.8m from Ballinasloe Town Council with balance of €315k from DoECLG was provided.
- Work on Oughterard Courthouse began and a new public library will open there in 2015.

Proposals for 2015

- 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.
- A fully fitted out new library will open in Ballinasloe. It will have RFID (self checking system), new shelving and bookstock.
- Oughterard Library will re-open as part of the Oughterard Courthouse Community Project. This project will see an improvement in the library service in that area.
- Work will continue on a new Library Development Plan. Plans will be set out, in line with the National Library Plan to improve Library Services in Galway and will include consideration of a new Galway City library/ Galway Library HQ.

Legal Advisory Services

Indicative Activities in 2014

- 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, District Court Litigation, Judicial Review and the completion of land acquisitions on inter-urban routes, were substantial areas of work.
- 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 constantly being updated and applied to further work areas. Work is continuing on the Register of Lands.

Proposals for 2015

- Concentrate on providing advisory legal services and continue to provide legal services for all programme areas.
- The completion of any residual work arising from Compulsory Acquisition on inter-urban routes.
- 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.
- Workflows for the Case Management System will continue to be rolled out, enhancing work delivery and capacity - availing of software assistance.
- Continue implementation of the Record Management Schedule and remove all non-current files from the office.

Recreation, Amenity & Play Facilities/

Outdoor Leisure Operations & Water Safety

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The **Water Safety Programme** involved the recruitment of a panel of highly trained Lifeguards to provide services at 10 locations in the County [including five Blue Flag Beaches from May 31st to September 14th] and at six locations in the City as part of a Shared Service Agreement with Galway City Council. Services were provided from May 31st to September 14th 2014. Additional funding was secured to provide upgraded Coastal Ringbouys. Two new Lifeguard Huts were purchased and a further three Huts were upgraded following storm damage. Funding of six thousand euro was advanced to the Irish Water Safety Council.

- Concessions were introduced in 2014 as a new initiative, to permit applicants to sell icecreams and soft drinks at four beach locations in the County for the summer season.
 - **Playgrounds** In accordance with commitments previously given under the Play Policy, assistance was provided to playgrounds through direct funding and provision of insurance. To-date, a total of 61 playgrounds have been developed in the County, under this policy. The Smoke Free Playgrounds Policy launched in 2013 was ongoing in 2014. Further promotion of the County Playground Guide was undertaken on social media during the Summer season.
 - Additional investments were advanced in 2014 for Portumna Play Area and Palace Ground Playgrounds Tuam under the Public Enhancement Schemes. A new playground is due to open in Corofin prior to the end of 2014 with part-funding by the Council. The Council first committed part funding in 2007 as part of the play policy and since then the group have accessed a site and raised additional funding.
 - Under the annual maintenance scheme Loughrea Adventure Playground was upgraded and Dublin Road Playground Tuam.
 - The transition of the management and maintenance of playgrounds in the former administrative area of Ballinasloe Town Council was undertaken.
 - **National Play Day** was held in Gort Playground in July and **National Recreation Week** events (2nd to 10th June) were held in Tuam and Loughrea in partnership with local groups.
- Swimming Pools**
- New Licence Agreements were issued for Tuam and Ballinasloe Leisure Centres following a tender process. Information on the number of people using the facilities is tracked annually as part of National Service Indicators.

Rinville Park, Maree, Oranmore is one of the County's largest parks, with a network of walkways, a playground and an outdoor gym.

- Funding under the Public Area Enhancement Scheme was invested in macadam surfacing of main walkways. Three new, Family Friendly fully Accessible Toilets, were provided.
- The Parks' Maintenance Programme continued to be delivered in partnership with local groups. Expressions of Interest were invited to cut and retrieve haylage on lands in and adjacent to Rinville Park and an awareness programme on dog fouling was delivered in partnership with the Environment Unit.
- A Concession for the provision of refreshments at Rinville Park during April to September was continued.
- At the start of the year the Outdoor Gym was formally launched and a Tree Planting Scheme for Decade of Commemorations was held.

- Further to a recent Bio-Diversity Plan, a Woodlands Management Plan was commissioned for the Park. Actions to address necessary health and safety and sustainability measures in the Park were identified. It is proposed to undertake Public Information Session and commence selective felling in sections of the Park in 2015, to promote re-growth and facilitate replanting of native species. The Plan will be implemented over the next five years with a view to the long term sustainability of the woodlands for future generations.
- **Palace Grounds Tuam** - Maintenance Programme for Palace Grounds, Tuam was implemented in association with Council sponsored CE Scheme.
- **Loughrea** – A new Outdoor Gym was completed and launched adjacent to existing network of playgrounds and green space at the lakeshore.
- Administrative support and advisory services was provided to community groups – Clifden & District Development Association, Sliabh Aughty project, Cosmona Loughrea to advance community recreation projects and access available funding.
- **Tuam All Weather Pitches** officially opened 27th January and a Licence Agreement put in place with Tuam Celtic Football Club to November 2014. A Liaison Committee was established to review operation of facility. Local schools and youth groups were advised on the availability of the pitches free of charge at designated times, with provision for 40 hours free usage per week. A website (www.tuamallweatherpitches.com) was set-up for on-line bookings and a successful soccer tournament held in June/July.
- A new changing room facility at Dunlo recreational park is under construction and is part funded by Ballinasloe Town Council.

Indicative Proposals for 2015

- Continue progress of the Play Policy and Playground Inspection Programme in partnership with Community Groups and sustain a programme of maintenance within resources. Continue the promotion of Playgrounds available in the County and distribution of the County Council's Guide to Playgrounds.
- Implement Beach Lifeguard Programme on a Seasonal Basis and progress works required under the ISLE Risk Assessments in line with resources.
- Continue the implementation of the Rinville Park Woodlands Sustainability Plan and ensure ongoing communication with the public and users of the Park on its impact;
- Implement Rinville Park 'Know Your Woodlands-Love Your Park' series of events to promote knowledge of the Park's bio-diversity and its use as an amenity and recreation space for the County.
- Implement further promotions of the Park's Facilities & Events.
- Continue monitoring of the usage of Local Authority Leisure Facilities in 2014, including Tuam and Ballinasloe Leisure Centre and progress further energy efficiency measures.

- Funding applications were drafted in 2014, for Outdoor Gym Facilities Tuam & Portumna and additional equipment for Rinvilla Park. These will be advanced if any new funding opportunities arise in 2015. Promotional campaign will be undertaken to promote existing facilities in Loughrea and Rinvilla with the Sports Partnership and Age Friendly Galway.
- Continue to provide administrative and advisory support to community groups wishing to advance proposals for recreation and to access available funding.

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

Indicative Activities 2014

- An internal Historic Assets Group was established in 2012 with representation from Corporate, Planning, Conservation and Community & Enterprise. Its purpose is to advance projects and identify funding sources for the re-use and regeneration of some Corporate owned properties.
- A Section 183 Agreement was presented and approved by the Council in January 2014. A thirty-five year Lease was completed and signed with the Oughterard Courthouse Conservation and Heritage Limited for the re-use and development of Oughterard Courthouse. The Library was re-housed pending completion of works in the Courthouse.
- The Framework of Specialist Contractors for Small Conservation Works were invited to submit tenders for works on St. Mary's Athenry, adjacent to the Athenry Heritage Centre. The project was successful in gaining an offer of funding from Galway Rural Development Ltd under Conservation Measures.
- The Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre, managed by Galway County Council continued to facilitate additional School and Group Tours. The Centre was a partner in the Aughrim Remembered and Aughrim Summer School and participated in Bealtaine and Culture Night programme of events. The Centre held a series of 'Heritage Bites' Talks during the Summer Season. A promotional film of the Centre was also completed.
- Funding was provided to Athenry Heritage Centre to support events and maintenance of the Facility.

Indicative Proposals for 2015

- Implement agreed actions of the Historic Assets Group in line with resources to conserve and protect structures in Council ownership. The section will provide administrative and technical support and work with Planning and other Departments on re-generation of buildings.

- The 'GROW' Aughrim Centre Team will increase its marketing and promotion in 2015, to ensure the Centre becomes an essential stop on walking, cycling and driving tours in the region. The Centre will continue to link with Athlone Castle and the Battle of the Boyne Centre as part of a national battle trail/Cycle Network. It is hoped that Aughrim Visitor Centre would form a stop on the preferred route for the proposed National Cycle Route from Dublin to Galway City.

Community Warden Scheme

Indicative Activities in 2014

Corporate Services supports the co-ordination of the Warden Service which delivers a range of services on behalf of the Council. Monthly workplans are compiled based on service needs.

- 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 and this has Priority Action in 2014..
- Dog Licensing inspection campaigns 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.
- A pilot project was initiated with the Environment Section regarding the automation of task reporting.

Proposals for 2015

- This Unit will continue to co-ordinate the allocation of functions to the Community Warden Service and review the impact of functions based on agreed service indicators, including co-ordination of budgets for Traffic and Warden services within the former Ballinasloe Town Council administrative area.
- Work will continue on assessing how the Service can best assist in meeting the objectives and business priorities of the organisation.

- Phased replacement of the Community Wardens vans will be implemented as resources allow.

Disability Action Plan

Indicative Activities 2014

- Continued delivery of the Disability Action Plan 2007-2015, within the limits of previously allocated funding.
- Agreed Accessible Actions as part of the Galway Age Friendly County Strategy.
- Contributed to the drafting of the Galway County Council Quality Customer Service Strategy to ensure target for physical access were integrated.

Proposals for 2015

- Continued implementation of the Disability Action Plan 2007-2015, within the limits of available funding.
- 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.
- Implement a Promotion and Awareness Project as part of the Transition Year Initiative with selected Schools.

Promoting the Irish Language

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The Council continues to engage with An Roinn Ealaín, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta on 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. Two 10 week programmes here completed with 40 staff participating
- Information briefings were provided to 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.
- New website content approval procedure continued to be implemented in association with Customer Services and Information Systems.
- The email gaeilge@cocogaillimh.ie was promoted to customers as part of enhanced service delivery.

- 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.
- An Award for the Irish Language was included in the Cathaoirleach's Awards.

Proposals for 2015

- 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.
- Promote Irish language category for Gradaim an Chathaoirlaigh and community support grants;
- Review operation of Irish language phone service with a view to continual improvement.
- Continue to operate web-site approval process in partnership with Customer Services and Information Systems.
- Provide advice to Gaeltacht communities in preparing language plans for their areas.
- Continue with the annual Irish Language Awareness initiatives.
- Lead on activities for Seachtain na Gaeilge.
- Continue to support the inclusion of Irish as part of the Decade of Commemorative Strategy.

Facilities Management – Council Properties / Health & Safety

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Corporate Services continued to provide caretaking and facilities management services for the Council's network of offices and civic functions.
- Revised Cleaning Contracts for Office and Library Accommodation were signed and bi-monthly cleaning inspections implemented. Additional Litter Control measures were implemented for the Prospect Hill Plaza entrance to Áras an Chontae.

Energy Reduction Initiatives:

- A combined heat and power plant (CHP) commissioned at Tuam Leisure Centre was monitored and had a measurable contribution to reduced energy costs at the leisure centre. The project was part funded through BMW Region NSS Gateways and Hubs European Regional Development Grants Scheme.

Energy Management

- MPRN Validation exercise was completed for all electricity accounts for offices, and courthouses for submission to Sustainable Energy Agency of Ireland (SEAI)
- Grant approved from SEAI of circa €108,000 for energy efficiency works in Area Offices and Libraries at Westside, An Cheathrú Rua, Tuam, Loughrea and County Hall through Better Energy Communities Initiative. In 2014, the natural gas system installed in County Hall in 2013, was monitored.

Council Chamber Extension

- Planning Permission granted by Galway City Council in Jan 14 towards the reconfiguration of the Council Chamber to accommodate 39 elected members. Design Team procured and detailed design progressed. Tenders received at end of September 2014 and contracts were signed in November.
- **Health and Safety** inspections carried out on a regular basis in line with implementation of the County Health and Safety Management Programme.

Proposals for 2015

- The reconfiguration of the Council Chamber to accommodate 39 members will be completed.
- Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) will continue to be implemented using staff trained in this area in 2013.
- Maintenance contracts will continue to be the subject of ongoing review to achieve further 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 2015. Corporate Services Section will aim to achieve OHSAS 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series) accreditation for occupational Health and Safety.

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, they 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 2014

- 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 Town Commissioners/Council collection (TTC/1/).
- Provided on-going reader services, such as access to collections for research purposes, assistance with research queries, and provision of research advice and guidance.
- Monitored the environmental conditions of the archives and endeavoured to ensure their continued protection, preservation and management.
- Continued the programme of providing security backup and reference surrogates to collections
- Outreach activities included the
 - research, compilation and production of an on-line exhibition on the *Irish Volunteers, Galway City Corp*, together with its launch by the Mayor at a Council meeting (Apr 2014);
 - presentation to the SPC on the Archives' contributions to the Decade of Commemorations strategy (Apr 2014);
 - publication and launch of *For the Record, The Archives of Galway's Rural District Councils* (May 2014);
 - Galway launch of Military Archives exhibition on the Irish Volunteers (Jun 2014);
 - Talks on archives / our collections (e.g. to NUIG MA students (Jan & Sept 2014), and Heritage Week seminar organised by Galway City Heritage Office (Aug 2014); and
 - Connacht Tribune, feature on Galway County Council Archives & the Rural District Council Guide (by Judy Murphy) (Aug 2014).
- Managed a conservation project of fragile collection.
- Provided advice on records management best practice and assistance to Sections and abolished Town Councils, as required.
- Continued the management of non-current record transfers to storage & record retrievals and returns: 430 recall requests were processed from January to-date (22/09/2014). There are now 78,116 records on the ArLink records management database.

Proposals for 2015

- 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.

- Work with Galway County Council's in-house Decade of Commemoration Committee, assist with the development of various programme targets, and in particular undertaken the research and preparatory work required for the 2016 Archive exhibition.
- 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.

Register of Electors

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The Register of Electors for 2014/2015 was published on the 1st February, 2014 with a total of 132,816 on the register.
- Actions were implemented to promote the Register and to add new Voters to the Supplementary Register of Electors for the European and Local Elections. 'Ensure Your Vote' Campaign was launched by the Mayor and supported by local print and social media promotions.
- Members from a range to stakeholders were invited to endorse the campaign including sports organisation, youth groups, schools/colleges, the community and voluntary forum and social inclusion groups. Posters were designed, printed and distributed to schools, youth groups, post offices, libraries, area offices and Garda stations.
- Outgoing mail from County Hall carried a promotion message to support the Ensure Your Vote – www.checktheregister.ie campaign.
- **Local Election – 23rd May, 2014** Nominations from the Candidates running for election were taken week beginning 28th April, 2014. Corporate Services arranged printing of Ballot papers, the venue (Bailey Allen Hall, NUIG) and counting of votes.
- The Draft Register of Electors for 2015/2016 was on Public Display from the 1st to 25th of November, 2014, with Revision Courts to follow.

Indicative Proposals for 2015:

- The Council will publish the Register of Electors in accordance with the relevant statutory timeframes and undertake a promotional campaign to increase voter registration.

Corporate Planning & Support / Local Representation/ Civic Leadership

Indicative Activities in 2014

There was significant change in the structure of Local Government in 2014, the new Council was established with 39 members and Municipal District Councils were established in five areas, while the transition of services to the Council from dissolution of Town Councils was undertaken.

- Six meetings of the Corporate Policy Group have been held to date in 2014.
- Civic Receptions were held during 2014 for Baile Chláir (Claregalway) All Ireland Intermediate Ladies Club Football Champions 27/1/14 and Pride of Place & Tidy Towns (24/2/14). Corporate Services hosted the Mayor of Boston, Martin J. Walsh on Monday 22nd September and a special Council meeting was held.
- Administrative services were provided to the Chief Executive and Cathaoirleach and Elected Members, Corporate Policy Group, Council meetings, consultation facilitated regarding the set up of new Strategic Policy Committee further to the local elections.
- Support was provided for meetings outside of County Hall
- Corporate Services arranged for the publication of the 'Quarterly Public Register of Attendance and Payments to Elected Members' on-line on the Councils website in line with new regulations.
- Corporate Services continued to manage process for receipt, storage and opening of tenders and management of the postal services.
- Assistance was provided to elected members in order to facilitate attendance at Training and Conferences.
- Corporate Services facilitated elected members inputs and sections contributing to drafting of a new Corporate Plan for 2014-2019.
- New guidelines for the establishment of Joint Policing Committees (JPC) (following the establishment of the Council and Municipal Districts) were issued by the Department of Justice and Equality in August 2014. 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 previous JPC held meetings on January 20th 2014 and had its Annual Public Meeting February 17th and its General Meeting April 14th.
- Corporate Governance Unit progressed actions from the Draft Code of Corporate Governance.
- Corporate Services is a lead partner in the Galway Commemorative Strategy for the

Decade of Commemorations 2013 – 2023 Events held to date included:

- Formal launch of the Strategy on the 24th February including a Tree Planting Ceremony.
 - National Library of Ireland '*Gallant Sons – Irishmen and the First World War*' hosted in County Hall, Loughrea Library, Clifden Library and Tuam Library with a formal opening of the exhibition by the Mayor in Loughrea Library.
 - Launch of on-line archive on the Irish Volunteers – Galway City Corp in April 2014.
 - Launch of '*For The Record*' – *The Archives of Galway's Rural District Councils* with key note lecture delivered by Dr. Mary Clancy, NUIG.
 - Projects relevant to the strategic objectives of the Commemorative Strategy were supported through the Community Support Grants.
 - Agreement was reached with the Military Archives host the Irish Volunteers Exhibition in County Hall from mid June 2014.
 - Galway Great War Road Show was held by the Library Service and visited Loughrea on October 10th followed by the Military History People Places and Records Event on October 11th 2014.
- Implementation of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) and Competency based Review was ongoing in 2014.

Proposals for 2015

- Corporate Services will continue to support the Cathaoirleach, elected members and the organisation of Council meetings.
- The Council will update Staff & Members Ethics Register.
- The Unit will publish the Quarterly Public Register of Attendance and Payments to Elected Members.
- The Unit will actively support the role of the Strategic Policy Committees and the Corporate Policy Group in policy formation.
- Continue Co-ordination of the Joint Policing Committee on behalf of the organisation
- Complete Business Process Improvement initiative across the organisation through the BPI Group.
- Co-ordinate the implementation of the Corporate Code of Governance
- Continue to support the implementation of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) and Competency based Reviews in the organisation.

Freedom of Information and Access to Information on the Environment

A new Freedom of Information Act was introduced in 2014.

- 25 FOI Requests were received up to October 2014 and decisions issued in accordance with statutory deadlines: 12 granted, 7 part granted, 4 refused, 2 remain to be decided.
- A tracking system has been developed in conjunction with the IS Unit to support the administration of FOI Requests and referrals from the Office of the Ombudsman. The system improves efficiency in co-ordinating response across all sections.
- Appeals for an Internal Review of FOI Decision received and decision issued within statutory deadline.
- 9 Access to Information on the Environment Requests received and replies issued in accordance with statutory deadlines: 3 granted, 4 refused, 2 remain to be decided.

Proposals for 2015

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

Educational Support Services/Student Grants

Indicative Activities in 2014

- 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.
- The Council remains responsible for 380 students and over 95% of first term maintenance payments were paid by end of October 2014.
- Dedicated email, www.twitter.com/galwaystudents, phone line and text service is ongoing for student queries.

Proposals for 2015

- The Council will continue to administer the payments (Maintenance and Fees) and appeals procedure for existing students until their courses are completed. No new applicants will be dealt with by the Council in 2015.

Workplace Partnership

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Tenders for Staff Health Screening Programme were issued and a programme was implemented in October 2014 offering health screening test to employees.
- Bi-monthly publication of the organisation's internal newsletter Aon Scéal.

Proposals for 2015

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

Customer Service

Indicative Activities in 2014

Customer Services Plan and Customer Services Officers Group

- Seven meetings of the Customer Services Officers Group (CSOG) were held. The CSOG is comprised of staff representatives from all the main service areas.
- CSOG Action Plan 2014 was compiled, agreed and implementation commenced and reviewed.
- The Customer Services Action Plan 2009-2014 was revised and Quality Services Strategy Drafted for 2014-2019 in line with the time period of the new Corporate Plan.

Opening Hours and Customer Experience Surveys

- Customer Experience Surveys were initiated and launched in Áras an Chontae and Centrepoint office locations.
- Revised opening hours of 9.00am to 4.00pm were agreed across all services in County Hall. As a result, Motor Tax was opened a further 2.5 additional hours per week to the public.

Customer Services Desk

- The Customer Services Desk continues to be operated to provide efficient referral/query handling for customers as they enter Áras an Chontae. Customer interactions have been tracked since April 2013. The switchboard service continues to be operated from the Customer Services Communications Centre on the first floor of Áras an Chontae.
- The numbers available to Customers on the phone system were reviewed on a regular basis to ensure efficient access to services.

Communications and Social Media

- The email address, customerservices@galwaycoco.ie remains in operation. All Staff are asked to submit information on events so that the Customer Services Team know what events are taking place across the Council and are better informed to handle queries. The general public can also email this address with general queries which are investigated and replied to appropriately.
- Increased use of Social Media (Twitter, FB) integrated with Advertising and other Promotional Campaigns of the Council was continued daily in 2014.
- Specific attention given to the use of Social Media during severe weather events which has been acknowledged by the OEP and Dept of Environment, Community & Local Government.
- Customer Services continued to moderate and process **Fix Your Street** cases and follow up on outstanding cases with relevant sections. The Fix Your Street is a national programme and is an on-line public forum where issues can be submitted by location to the relevant local authority.

Public Notices

- A centralised system for Advertising was continued in 2014 to enhance our Corporate Image in the Print Media, to generate savings through shared advertising space and also meet our requirements under National Procurement Framework. Advance copies of public notices prior to notices appearing in the various newspapers appear on Social Media and are sent to Elected Members with relevant contact details included.

The Customer Services Team also provides a weekly newsletter to staff - What's Happening? –to ensure improved internal communications and co-ordinates meeting room bookings and access cards for staff.

Proposals for 2015

- Co-ordinate implementation of the Customer Service Action Plan 2015 in line with agreed targets and goals in the Quality Customer Services Strategy
- 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
- Continue to focus on the development of the County Council's use of Social Media.
- Promote the revised Customer Charter.

Operation of Coroner Expenses

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The Council continued to provide administrative support for the processing of all payments of fees for the City and County Coroners Service.
- County Hall was made available for Coroners Court during 2014.

Proposals for 2015

- 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.

Operation of Markets & Casual Trading and Requests for Filming in County

Indicative Activities 2014

- 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.
- The section dealt with Licences for Ballygar Festival, Events in Dunmore and is supporting the Tuam Christmas Market to be held in the 'Shambles' in December.
- Requests from film makers to use the public property for filming were processed.
- Requests from Cinemobile and Funfair Operators to park at various towns and villages are also processed including those formerly dealt with by Ballinasloe Town Council.
- In 2014, further to the dissolution of Ballinasloe Town Council, Corporate Services undertook increased co-ordination in Casual Trading, with the addition of trading at St. Michael's Square throughout the year and the co-ordination of trading at the Fair Green for the Ballinasloe Horse Fair in October. In addition to trading, the Unit worked with the Municipal District office with regarding to parking, security and access to the trading area. The Unit also worked with the Community and Enterprise Section and local Committees in the promotion of the activities throughout the Festival.

Proposals 2015

- Continue to issue Casual Trading Licences in line with existing Bye-Laws
- Progress on-line payment facilities for Licences
- Continue to facilitate queries and issue permissions as required to Media and Production Companies wishing to film in the County in support of the Film Galway Partnership.
- Co-ordination and operation of trading at the Ballinasloe Horse Fair in October.

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 Executive Management Team and the Audit Committee. The outgoing Audit Committee held 2 meetings before their term expired in May 2014. A new Audit Committee was appointed in July and held its first meeting in September.

Indicative Activities in 2014:

A total of 8 audits were completed from the 2014 Audit Plan

- 2013 Audit Report 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 lodgements, 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.
- Periodic examination of plant hire record sheets was carried out to establish compliance with LA tenders rules.
- A number of burial ground caretakers were visited for the purpose of checking receipts with lodgements and corresponding entries on the death registers.
- Attendance at tender openings.

Proposals for 2015:

- The Internal Audit Unit will continue to facilitate the work of the Audit Committee
- The 2015 audit plan will be drawn up in conjunction with the Audit Committee and will be risk based, have target completion dates and agreed actions for use as key performance indicators.
- Completion of audits as per the 2015 Audit Plan.
- Reviews of recommendations made in the 2014 audit reports.

- Continue work on Policy compliance testing.
- Bi Weekly, monthly, quarterly and periodic checks on the various income collection streams.
- Periodic checking and stock taking in the motor tax sub offices in Ballinasloe and An Cheathrú Rua

HOUSING AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Funding was made available in 2014 for bringing vacant houses back to use and the Council carried out works on 74 houses.
- An Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme continued to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock throughout 2014 and works were completed on 350 houses.
- Funding was provided for Disabled Persons Grants and it is anticipated that 23 Local Authority Houses will have work carried out to improve the quality of life for tenants
- A new post of Anti- Social Behaviour Officer was filled in 2014.
- CCTV monitoring will be in place in three Local Authority Estates by the end of 2014. The pilot sites chosen were Gort Bride, Loughrea, Bridge Court, Ahascragh and Cullairbaun, Athenry

Social & Affordable Housing

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The provision of Social Housing is met through the Rental Accommodation Scheme, the Voluntary Sector and the traditional Council Housing stock. It is considered that an allocation of social housing through any of these channels meets the housing needs of the applicant. Funding approval has been granted for the purchase of approximately ten units in 2014.

There are currently over 4,000 applicants on the housing waiting list.

Proposals for 2015

- The Council will continue its progress in the provision of Social Housing for persons on the Social Housing list and will endeavour to reduce further the number of vacant Council units subject to funding and allocate them in a timely manner.
- The Council will seek to optimise the supply of housing units through all available channels. In particular the Councils land banks will be examined and proposals will be put in place to construct housing units should funding become available for construction.

Homelessness

Indicative Activities in 2014

- 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 implementation of a Homeless Strategy that includes working with the voluntary housing sector and strengthening formal relationships with Galway City Council.
- 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.

Proposals for 2015

- 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.
- The Council will examine the feasibility of the provision of step down facilities.

Voluntary Housing

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Council is engaging with the Voluntary Sector with a view to increasing the number of units being made available to help tackle the growing housing list. New initiatives in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies to deliver units through Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) were explored and progressed during the year.
- Discussions took place with the Department and a number of Approved Housing Bodies (AHB's) on a range of proposals that the Council are endeavouring to progress including the finalisation of schemes under Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS).
- Cluid Housing Association and St Vincent de Paul received funding for 12 units at Dunlo Hill, Ballinasloe under the CAS.
- Work is still ongoing on the 13 approved units in Letterfrack.

- Payment and Availability agreements were signed for 8 units in Tuam and one unit in Mountbellew under the Capital Advance Leasing Funding Scheme (CALF). This scheme gives the Council 100% nomination rights for a period of 30 years.

Proposals for 2015:

- It is proposed that the Council will continue to engage pro-actively with the AHB's in the provision of housing under the current options available. It is anticipated that a significant number of units will be provided under available schemes and that all options such as new units and possible regeneration will be examined with the sector. The Council is continuing to engage with the AHB's in relation to the sourcing of further units under CALF and it is anticipated that a number of units will be acquired under the scheme in 2015.

<p>Mortgage to Rent Scheme</p>

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- 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 will go towards the mortgage debt and the applicant makes an arrangement with their lender for any remaining payments owed. There is 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 40 applications under this scheme, of which 39 applicants had received their mortgage from private lenders and one applicant through a Galway County Council mortgage.

Proposals for 2015

- 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 Grants

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The number of applications for Housing Aid for Older People paid in 2014 was 128 with the number of Mobility Aids Grants & Housing Aid Grants totalling 69.
- The total budget for 2014 was €1,899,780 of which €379,956 was to be provided from the Councils own resources. The Housing Unit is on target to expend the total 2014 allocation approved by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government.
- A new housing grant scheme was announced by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government in early 2014 and came into effect from February 27th 2014. The Mobility Aid Grant, predominately stayed as it was however there were some changes made to the Housing Aid for Older People and the Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes as follows:
 - The Housing Aid for Older People had the maximum grant payment reduced from €10,500 to €8,000.
 - The percentage of the Housing Aid for Older People & the Housing Adaptation Grant allowable per household's income changed with the maximum income for a household reduced from €65,000 to €60,000.
 - The age criteria for eligibility with regard the Housing Aid for Older People was reduced from 70 years to 66 years. However it was agreed to provide funding to persons less than 66 depending on their state of health, their current housing conditions and their ability to assist themselves. 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.

Proposals for 2015:

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

Housing Construction

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government provided approval for the construction of three rural houses in Kinvara, Carna and Ardrahan.

Proposals for 2015:

- Progress the construction of three rural houses given funding approval in 2014, with completion of same before year end.
- Identify strategic opportunities based on the council's land bank and other available options.

Extensions to Local Authority Houses

Indicative activities in 2014

- 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 extensions to existing local authority dwellings in order to address overcrowding or to meet other special needs of individuals/family members.
- No extensions were carried out in 2014

Proposals for 2015:

- 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 2014:

- 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.
- At the end of Quarter 3, 2014 there were 1117 applicants in receipt of rent supplement for 18 months or more.
- There are 458 households accommodated currently through the RAS Scheme.

Proposals for 2015:

- The Council will continue to administer the RAS Scheme, subject to notification from the Department on future arrangements regarding the Housing Assistance Payment.

Void/Vacant Houses & Energy Efficiency Retrofit

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- Funding was made available in 2014 for bringing vacant houses back to use and the Council carried out works on 74 houses .
- The housing unit has completed energy efficiency works on over 50% of our stock since the 2013 programme was introduced.

Proposals for 2015:

- Further energy efficiency works are proposed for 2015 depending on available funding.
- We will continue the trend of reducing the number of vacant houses in our stock. Progress will depend on the availability of adequate funds.

Tenancy and Estate Management

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Housing Unit continues to work with its vulnerable families in assisting them in maintaining their tenancies.

- The Tenancy and Estate Management Unit/ anti-social Behaviour Unit was established in 2013 and has been further staffed during 2014.
- An Anti-Social Behaviour Officer was appointed to the Unit in March 2014 and is working intensively in a number of areas.
- The Council's Tenancy and Estate Management Strategy 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. The Council continues to engage with the Gardai and the unit meets regularly with the senior management in the Gardai to discuss problem areas and how both organizations can work together to address anti-social behaviour.
- CCTV will be in operation in three sites by the end of the year.
- The Housing unit worked on an inter-agency level on a Home and Garden Project in Tuam during the year.

Proposals for 2015:

- 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.
- CCTV will be rolled out in further Council estates in 2015

Control of Horses

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The Council continued to implement its protocol in conjunction with the Garda Síochána on the Control of Horses during 2014. The number of stray and abandoned horses has reduced on 2013 figures but continues to be significant. The following are the statistics of horse lifts undertaken since 2011:
 - 2011 – 52 horses collected
 - 2012 – 243 horses collected
 - 2013 – 331 horses collected
 - 2014 – 202 horses collected to date (22/10/14)
- In addition to the issue of wandering horses on public roads the Local Authority deals with stray and wandering animals on Council property and housing estates. The Council has undertaken a number of exercises to raise awareness and reduce the instances of keeping of animals on estates. Such exercises include public notices, letters to Residents as well as Community Warden visits.

- Funding for the task is an ongoing issue as it has proved difficult for the Council to attain the service at the rates approved by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The maximum contribution payable by the Department is €450 per horse seized and euthanized or €200(max) where a horse is seized and rehomed.

Proposals for 2015:

- New service agreements are expected to be put in place in November 2014 and it is expected that these will remain in place for the coming year. Galway County Council will continue to work with the Gardaí in tackling the issue of stray and abandoned horses on public roads. Furthermore we intend to build on the campaign of education and prevention measures undertaken to date on our estates with the support of the Community Wardens, Housing staff and Residents Associations. However our activity in this area will have to be kept within the available budget.

<p>Private Residential Tenancies Board - Registration of Rented Units</p>
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Indicative Activities in 2014:

- 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
- Galway County Council inspected 54 properties up to 31st October 2014, to ensure compliance with standards for rented houses. A total of 52 Properties failed to comply with the current standards and Improvement notices were served on landlords requiring improvements to be carried out.

Proposals for 2015:

- 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

Housing & Emergency Services SPC

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Housing & Emergency Services SPC met on two occasions in 2014. Areas covered included Vacant Council Stock, appointment of Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, new regulations on the Housing Aid for Older People, Mobility Aids and Housing Adaptation Grants.

Proposals for 2015:

- A very strong emphasis will be put on estate management and tackling anti-social behaviour with a view to extending the rollout of CCTV in other estates. The committee will also examine the areas of choice for housing, the differential rent scheme and the new Housing Assistance Payment Scheme.

CHES : MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT(MEM)

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Major Emergency Development Committee (MEDC) which was established by the Council as part of the New National Framework for MEM is ongoing and is chaired by Mr. Peter Gavican (Director of Services). Work is continuing by the committee in preparation of the Severe Weather & Flood Response Operational Plan.
- The MEM West Regional Steering Group continues to meet in its role of co-ordinating 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 the 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 the Chemoran facility in Oranmore County Galway - which is a Seveso II Top Tier Site - was prepared and put on public display in 2014 by the relevant PRA's (County Council including Galway Fire Service; Galway Gardai, & HSE West) as required under SEVESO II regulations. A table top exercise focusing on the Chemoran facility in Oranmore was held in early 2014. An exercise report was prepared by Reidy Brophy on the table top exercise as external consultants as part of the process of validating the new External emergency plan, which will go live after external consultation and adoption of amendments if any following public display
- The County/City MEM integration group, established between the PRA's in Galway City and County under the chair of Mr. Billy Dunne (A/Director of Services - Galway City

Council) to deal with issues in the City/County area and in particular large crowd events, continues to operate.

- Regional training is ongoing for relevant personnel in the eight PRA'S in the west region
- Galway County Council procured a temporary body holding mobile storage unit on behalf of the 11 Local Authorities in the West, North West and Midland MEM regions as part of mass fatality planning and response for the 3 MEM Regions

Proposals for 2015:

- 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 County Council Major Emergency plan is envisaged to continue in 2015.
- 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.
- A Major Emergency exercise involving the 4 LCA's, including Galway Harbour Authority and Site operator TOPAZ involving an simulated incident at the Seveso II site in the Galway City Docks will be scheduled in 2015 as part of the testing and validation of the external emergency plan as required under SEVESO II regulations.
- Galway County council will procure a second temporary mobile body storage unit for the 11 Local Authorities in the West North West And Midlands MEM regions respectively

<i>CHES: FIRE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS</i>
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Indicative Activities in 2014:

- The Schools Fire Safety Programme was rolled out again in County Station Areas
- Self contained smoke alarms with long life batteries have been procured by GFRS for 250 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 as part of the ongoing National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) Programme.

Proposals for 2015:

- It is hoped to have the Schools Fire Safety Programme restarted in 2015 involving local fire officers visiting 4th class in a number of national schools in Galway City Brigade Area. 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 2015 in both city and county from allocation received in 2014.

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE (KCS)

A FRAMEWORK FOR FIRE SAFETY IN IRELAND

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. The Draft Section 26 Plan has been presented for consideration to the County Council housing & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee in May 2014 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 be presented to a full meeting of the Council in late 2014 or early 2015

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- 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 employs 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.
- During **2013**, the fire service responded to a total of **1,564** emergency incidents, **785** by the County Brigades and **779** by the Galway City Brigade in its City and County fire ground. This represented a **13%** increase in emergency calls when compared to **2012** outturn. It should be noted that **2012** was the least busy year for Fire service emergency call-outs in recent history. The Fire Brigade continue to attend at emergency incidents in the City and County, as in previous years. The total number of incidents – approximately-in Galway City and County attended by all brigades to **1st September 2014** was **1,146**, of which **515** were in Galway City Brigade Area.

- The decrease in fire and emergency calls attended for first 3 quarters this year is 13% 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 Management (NDFEM) also progressed. Training was carried out as per annual training programme for 2014 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 GICS for the fire station in Galway City was implemented in October 2014
- 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 including BAIW for the most recently employed retained personnel by end of 2014.
The council recruited three senior fire officers in 2014 to fill previous vacancies
- The Council intend to continue to prepare pre-fire plans for City and County risks, which is a statutory duty under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003.
- The Fire Service's Health & Safety Steering Group continued to meet in 2013 with monthly meetings to manage and drive the Health & Safety Management Plan throughout the fire services. A revised Ancillary Safety Statement for GFRS was issued in 2013 and is being updated again in 2014
- 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 2012. The first 40-45 of the national SOGs were substantially rolled out by the end of October 2014
- The preliminary initial risk categorisation of all 10 Galway Fire station grounds was prepared for initial consideration by management team as per KCS procedure. The output of the preliminary Risk categorisation was presented to both housing & Emergency Services SPC and Connemara area committee in 2014 with one of the key outputs being the need for a new retained Fire station in an Cheathru Rua
- Unfortunately there were 6 deaths due to accidental fires in Galway City and county in domestic premises to date in 2014 in comparison to zero deaths in 2013

Proposals for 2015:

Operational

- The revised Draft Fire and Operations Plan which was approved by the Housing & Emergency Services SPC in 2014 will be revised in Light of KCS and new draft will be before Council for formal approval in 2014 or early 2015, and will take cognisance of the outcome of the city and west review and risk categorisation process .

- 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 2015 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 2015. The next set of SOGs will be rolled out in 2015 and Galway Fire Brigade continues to catch up with the national programme of 5 No. SOGs per quarter by mid 2015.
- 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 2015.
- The Council will progress the establishment of a new retained Fire Brigade in an Cheathru Rua

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 by end of December 2014. All Local Authority partners’ contributions will increase accordingly in 2014-2016 to make up for the HSE contribution shortfall. All three regional Camp Projects are currently being reviewed by NDFEM.

Regional Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Project

- Galway County Council is the Contracting Authority to role 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 for 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

CHES :	FIRE SAFETY CERTIFICATES AND FSA 1981 INSPECTIONS
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Indicative Activities in 2014 (based on 2013 & 2014 data):

- In 2013, the Fire Service fire prevention staff carried out **303** 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 processed **255 public** licence applications in 2013 and **230** to date in 2014, and dealt with **154** planning applications in 2013 and **121** to date in 2014.

- The Fire Prevention Department dealt with **213** Fire Safety Certificate (FSC) Applications in 2013 under Building Control Regulations, **121** in the County area and **92** in the City. Fire officers have processed 178 FSC Applications all types 77 for the City and 101 in the County from January to October 2014.
- The breakdown of the types of Fire Safety Certificate applications were as follows for 2013;

▪ Standard FSC	121	Applications
▪ Regularisation certificates	50	Applications
▪ 7 day notice FSC	32	Applications
▪ Revised FSC	10	Applications
- Fire officers processed **74** Disability Access Certificates (**DAC**) applications on behalf of the County in 2013 with **63** processed to date in 2014.
- Fire Officers continued the inspection of nursing homes in 2014 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 2015:

- 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 2015.
- Continue the programme of inspection of retail petroleum stores in the city and county.
- Continue to process DSA licences of retail petroleum stores in the city and county as received.
- 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

Indicative Activities in 2014

- 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 2014 and again in 2015. 17 student EMT's are currently in training and will be qualified in 2014.
- Search Management training in 2014 was conducted in the Garda Training College in Templemore.
- All units will again be responding to their communities requests for assistance at local community events, providing first aid cover and other assistance that may be requested.

Proposals for 2015:

- Focus on training for 2015 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 who qualified in 2014 and training will commence with unit members from thereon.
- 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 and Public Procurement

Indicative Activities in 2014

- A Centralised approach was used to run LA Quotes for Road Making Materials and Plant Hire for 2014 and the results of the Mini Tenders were circulated to all areas.
- 118 RFT's and 48 RFQ's were raised on LA Quotes during 2014 YTD. There were also 64 Tenders processed through eTenders.
- There are some changes and additions to the LAQ Frameworks for 2015 details of which were circulated. Galway County Council will be utilizing the following frameworks:
 - Plant Hire Services
 - Road Making Materials – Supply Only
 - Road Making Materials – Supply & Placement
 - Footway & Road Pavement Restoration
 - Ready-Mix & Concrete Additives (Supply only)
 - Voids Framework (2014) for a No of Las
 - Electricians (2015)
 - Plumbers (2015)
 - National Contracts: Galway County Council is now utilizing the following National Contracts/Frameworks:
 - Bulk Fuel
 - Electricity
 - Natural Gas
 - Fuel Cards
 - Stationery
 - Envelopes
 - Copying Paper
 - Personal Protective Equipment
 - Janitorial
- During 2014 we continued to use the Lighthouse BCS Portal to process transactions to Agresso. There is now an annual flat rate charge of €6,000 to use this system. We currently have 144 Active Cards with a YTD Spend of €720,000 and have processed 5,400 transactions YTD.
- A new National Contract for Electricity has been signed. We expect to see improvements in terms of reporting during 2015. As follows:
 - One supplier only will be appointed for the local authority sector – this eliminates dealing with multiple suppliers

- A fixed rate
 - Specific reporting requirements to be provided within defined timeframes.
 - The term will be for 20 months
- Bulk Fuel: We are currently utilizing the National Contract for Bulk Fuels in relation to Heating Oil & Diesel (Derv) for the machinery yard. A recent exercise carried out by Kerry County Council however suggests that by running constant RFQ's through the LA Quotes system, greater savings could be achieved. It was estimated that this could be as high as 3%. This would entail a significant amount of additional administration and it also conflicts with OGP policy.
- Fuel Debit Cards: We currently have 230 active fuel cards with a YTD spend of €597,000 made up of 7,871 transactions across 61 Filling Stations.
- Taking an average of 5 Cent difference on pump prices when the discount is applied this would represent a saving of €22,000 YTD.
- Training/Information Session: It is expected that the Procurement Officer will give a presentation/briefing to all staff involved in procurement during the month of November.
- Cash Collection for Galway County Council is tendered on a regional basis..
- PPE: The OGP is currently engaged with all sectors in formulating a new tender competition, should be available early in 2015.
- Circular 16/13: In September 2013 the OGP (Office of Government Procurement) issued a Circular 16/13 in relation to utilising National Contracts.
- Circular 10/14: In the context of the reform of the Public Service and the establishment of the Office of Government Procurement, it has been decided to update and strengthen measures aimed at facilitating SME participation in Public Procurement in order to reinforce their application across the public sector.
- Galway County Council in conjunction with the LGER has developed templates for the extraction and reporting nationally of expenditure information for the LA sector. These are currently in use in relation to 2011 – 2014 expenditure reports..
- Significant work has taken place at committee level and a new format of National Product Coding is now nearing completion. It is expected that Galway County Council will be one of the first LA's to pilot the new structure either in late December 2014 or early January 2015
- The OGP is currently undertaking a Business Process Review (BPR) in relation to Procurement across the public sector.

Proposals for 2015

- Expand the use of LAQuotes and eTenders across the organization
- Control and reduce non-compliance of National Contracts particularly in relation to Circular 16/13
- Carry out staff training in relation to procurement
- Continue to expand the use of Fuel Cards to replace LVP use.
- Introduce the new Product Coding Structure into Agresso
- Continue to reduce the overall number of Purchase Orders generated by increased use of LVP's & Fuel Cards.
- Finalise the review of the Corporate Procurement Plan and publish it on the Intranet.
- Analyze the 2014 spend profile with a view to identifying possible Cost Saving initiatives in line with OGP and LAQuotes frameworks and contracts.
- Liaise with the LGCPO and the OGP to ensure that all relevant Circulars, Guides and instructions are circulated and implemented.

Discharge of Payments

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Implementation of Travel & Subsistence Module in Jan 2014
- Compliance with Government eDAY 19th Sept 2014
- Implementation of Directives issued by the Revenue Commissioners
- Education of relevant Staff on Relevant Contracts Tax efficiencies
- SEPA Compliance achieved
- Unification achieved of Ballinasloe Town Council
- Integration achieved of Local Enterprise Office.
- Migration of GCC Payroll to MyPAY achieved.

Proposals for 2015

- Continued implementation of electronic payment methods/upgrades to ensure compliance with ePayments.
- Review and continue application of best practice within both the Accounts Payable & Payroll functions
- Continued implementation of Directives issued by the Revenue Commissioners
- Ensure Accounts function meets BPI requirements

Revenue Collection

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Continued review of the Revenue collection function – to ensure best practice is achieved and any new income stream is incorporated efficiently.
- 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 2015

- 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.
- To implement Cash Desk facility at Loughrea Municipal Office.
- Continued implementation of the new SEPA Direct Debit system.

Motor Tax and Driver Licensing Systems

Indicative Activities in 2014

- 115,859 transactions were processed by Galway Motor Tax Offices up to the end of September 2014 at a value of €22m (in the same period in 2013, 135,000 transactions were processed for motor tax at a value of €24.4m).
- 56% of total motor tax activity for the Galway area was carried out online in the year to date – an increase from 47% in September 2013.
- 5,818 declarations of non-use were recorded at the Motor Tax Offices in the year to date.

Proposals for 2015

- The Motor Tax Office is storing driving licence files on an agency basis for the Road Safety Authority pending their permanent transfer or other national decision regarding retention or disposal.
- Work is commencing on retrieving and collating information from archives to recreate registers of vintage registration numbers issued for Galway registered vehicles prior to 1987.

- Galway Motor Tax Offices will continue to implement all motor tax policies and procedures.

Financial Management Systems

Indicative Activities in 2014

- 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 2015

- Implementation of Agresso upgrade Milestone 4 when timetabled
- Continuation of the development of the Debtor Module
- Implementation of any further upgrades in the Financial Management System

Information Technology Systems

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Windows XP was replaced with Windows 7 on all PCs connected to the councils network
- Cisco Phone Expansion to NRDO/Centrepoint/ Fireservice /Gort / Clifden / An Cheathra Rua. Loughrea /Tuam to be complete before year end.
- Galway City Network MAN Sites E-tender procurement completed and implemented
- A pilot project was undertaken to provide the Community Wardens with mobile devices for data capture.
- Review and redesign of website for Galway.ie was completed. A number of new public facing modules were launched (Pre Planning Report, ePlan, Galway Graveyards and a new mapping interface).
- A reusable ePayment solution was implemented.
- A new network monitoring solution was implemented in 2014 This tool should help ICT avoid outages, address bottlenecks before they cause problems and reduce costs.
- A tender was awarded to upgrade WAN links to Gort, Clifden, Carraroe and Athenry.
- Support was provided by the GIS team during the handover of data to Irish Water.
- Assistance was provided to business units in the amalgamation of ICT systems in use by Ballinasloe Town Council and Galway County Council.

Proposals for 2015

- Budget permitting we aim to rollout some elements of Office 365. Initially our primary focus will be on Exchange Online.

- Resources will need to be allocated to upgrade existing servers due to the end of life of the Microsoft Windows Server 2003 operating system.
- Redesign and launch of a new Elected Members portal. The new portal will be responsive and work seamlessly across a number of devices. Feedback will be sought from the Councillors prior to design to ensure a best fit solution.
- Upgrade the existing intranet. An intranet steering group will be formed to gather ideas/information from a number of departments across the organisation.

Planning, Community Enterprise & Economic Development Unit

Planning for Sustainable Development

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- 1189 Planning applications have been received to date (4th November 2014).
- 28 substitute consent applications in respect of quarries are currently under consideration by An Bord Pleanála.
- An Bord Pleanála have granted two applications for substitute consent.
- As a result of the section 261A process 36 quarry files have been referred to enforcement for review, this has resulted in 33 enforcement notices issued to date.
- The Draft County Development Plan and associated Appendices and Environmental/Supporting documents went on display 28th February to 9th May. Material Alterations to the Draft Plan went on display from 23rd October 2014 to 20th November 2014.
- Work commenced on the new Local Area Plans for Headford, Portumna and Ballinasloe.
- Work continued in 2014 on the County Galway Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment screening.

Proposals for 2015:

- To finalise the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021.
- To continue the implementation of the objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015, until the new Plan is finalised.
- To finalise Local Area Plans and associated documents for the towns of Portumna, Headford and Ballinasloe.
- To commence new Local Area Plans for Oughterard and Baile and Chláir to ensure that the objectives of the Local Area Plans are consistent the Objectives and Core Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan.
- To commence the Renewable Energy Strategy.
- To commence the Retail Strategy in consultation with Galway City Council.
- 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 2014:

- 449 Commencement notices have been received to 4/11/14
- The Building Control Officer continued to inspect commenced developments for compliance with the Building Regulations. New legislation effective from March 1st 2014 provides for increased documentation to be submitted and additional inspections by the Building Control Officer up to completion stage.
- This Unit has continued to monitor and process applications for the Taking in Charge of Housing estates.
- To date this year, 8 Housing Estates have been recommended for taking in charge.
- 9 new Taking in Charge applications have been submitted to date in 2014
- The Building Control staff continue to work with the Department of the Environment and Health & Safety Authority to eliminate safety risks on unfinished estates.

Proposals for 2015:

- It is proposed to continue to assess and process taking in charge applications within available resources in 2015 with a view to determining an overall approach to non-compliant and unfinished housing estates. A fund of €100,000 is being established to undertake limited works on a priority basis in 2015.
- To continue to liaise with Department and other relevant agencies regarding Unfinished Housing Estates.

Enforcement Measures

Indicative Activities in 2014

- 145 Warning Notices/Letters served to 17th October 2014.
- 59 Enforcement Notices served to 17th October.
- 31 Files have been referred for legal action to 17th October 2014.
- 118 New Files opened to 17th October 2014.
- 152 approx. Enforcement Files have been resolved/closed at 17th October 2014.

Proposals for 2015

- It is proposed to continue to provide resources to the Enforcement Team to ensure the implementation of the Planning Regulations in 2015.
- 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 2014

- Lough Derg Heritage Project –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 Loughrea Electoral Area– An ecclesiastical heritage audit was undertaken for the Loughrea Electoral Area documenting and creating a database of the rich artwork that is contained in the churches.
- Reading the Landscape Course and booklet: A course was held in Tuam and 25 people attended. A booklet and online resource is also being produced as part of this project.
- Field Monument Advisor Project – The role of the FMA is to provide advice and information on field monuments. The area chosen for 2014 was the Slieve Aughty area of County Galway in addition to providing advice and guidance to farmers and communities in all parts of the county.
- 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
- Athenry Walled Towns Day – This event attracted over c.4500 people and took place on Sunday 17th 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 2014 concentrated on the south town and adjoining walls. Ministerial consent received and conservation works undertaken.
- Athenry Medieval Town & Loughrea Medieval Town joint educational project: Funding was sought and awarded from the Heritage Council for the development and production of a comic book that would showcase the rich heritage of the two towns and would involve children from St. Brendan’s Boys School, Loughrea and Lisheenkyle School Athenry. The comic was launched on 30th August 2014 in Loughrea Library.
- Loughrea Medieval Festival: This 3 day event was run by Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee with the Heritage Office and over 8000 people attend this 3 day event.
- Decade of Commemoration: Investigations and initial steps taken in the development of a memory mapping project and a bi-lingual website for the Decade of Commemoration.
- Cathaoirleach Awards: includes best heritage project, best heritage publication and best Irish/heritage schools project.
- Ican – Community Heritage website. The Heritage Office working in partnership with the Museum of Country Life Castlebar has developed a county heritage website called www.galwaycommunityheritage.org 7 groups have received training and have their own website within the website. This project will be officially launched in January 2015.
- Community Events – Assistance, advice, and support was also given to numerous Town and Community events in 2014. A ‘Hidden Heritage Conference was held in Abbey, Loughrea in March and 50 people attended this event. In July the ‘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. A workhouse conference was held in partnership with the Irish Workhouse Centre in Portumna in May with 150 people attending this event. A Famine Conference was held in June in Ballinasloe and 300 people attended this conference, A Famine Conference was also held in Williamstown relating to the 1880 Famine and 70 people attend this event. In October The Great War Road Show was held in Loughrea, Social Media training was held in Killimor for Heritage Groups.
- Tuke Emigration Scheme Project: Working with the Clifden 2012 Group and Oughterard Heritage Group, two emigration projects have been initiated re. Tuke and emigration in Connemara in the 1880s. In Clifden, a website has been developed and a booklet produced and a conference will be held in November. Oughterard are researching the townlands as part of the project and are also developing a website.
- Burren World Tentative List- working on proposal,

- Digital Mapping of Graveyards in the County continued with several graveyards being mapped and memorial inscriptions being recorded and up loaded to www.galway.ie
- The Beo Schools Project with DERI and Galway Education Centre 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 2015

- Lough Derg Heritage Project –Production and printing of a ‘coffee table’ book and possibly Lough Derg Life+ Project if funding becomes available.
- Ecclesiastical Heritage Trail for Tuam Electoral Area– An ecclesiastical heritage audit will be undertaken for the Tuam Electoral Area documenting and creating a database of the rich artwork that is contained in the churches.
- Reading the Landscape Course Phase 2: working with several community groups who were involved in part 1, they will now learn field skills and use same to upload content onto the new community heritage website.
- Field Monument Advisor Project – The role of the FMA is to provide advice and information on field monuments. The area chosen for 2015 will be the Slieve Aughty area of County Galway in addition to providing advice and guidance to farmers and communities in all parts of the county.
- 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 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 further 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.
- Athenry Walled Towns Day – Funding will be sought from the Walled Towns Funds of the Heritage Council and if successful a walled town Day will be held in August 2015.
- Athenry Town Walls Capital Works – Funding will be sought to undertake another programme of works for the Walls and an ensuing body of work will also take place if successful.

- Athenry Medieval Town & Loughrea Medieval Town joint educational project
- Loughrea Medieval Festival: To hold a 3 day event in Loughrea in August 2015 in partnership with Loughrea Medieval Festival Committee.
- Decade of Commemoration: Further development of a memory mapping project and a bi-lingual website for the Decade of Commemoration. Commence a publication on 1916 for 2016.
- Cathaoirleach Awards: includes best heritage project, best heritage publication and best Irish/heritage schools project.
- Ican – Community Heritage website. The Heritage Office working in partnership with the Museum of Country Life Castlebar will further develop this website.
- Community Events – Assistance, advice, and support will also given to numerous Town and Community events in 2015 including Feile na gClogh, Heritage Week Events.
- Burren World Monument Tentative List will receive further consideration.
- Tuke Emigration Scheme Project: further work with the Clifden 2012 Committee and Oughterard Heritage Group on this project.
- Digital Mapping of Graveyards in the County continued with several graveyards will be mapped and memorial inscriptions will be recorded and up loaded to www.galway.ie
- The Beo Schools Project with DERI and Galway Education Centre will be ongoing.
- The Golden Mile Competition and Calendar and awards ceremony will also take place during the year.

Architectural Conservation

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Consulted with the relevant department, state agencies, voluntary and international 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.
- 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 the 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 St Mary's Athenry successfully achieved funding through Leader. Supported funding applications of local communities; Oughterard Courthouse successfully brought to completion.
- Maintained the Architectural Inventory System (AIS) database of protected structures in liaison with GIS section.
- Input into Local Area Plans, as required. (Headford, Portumna and Ballinasloe)
- Processed proposals for inclusion on the RPS as part of the County Development Plan.
- Promoted and participated in Europa Nostra Pilot Project 'Our Place'. Gave presentation on Inis Oirr at International Conference in Chios, March 2014.
- Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme 2014. Administered allocation of €139,000 for conservation works to 19 projects throughout the county
- Traditional Skills Pilot Training Scheme in association with Irish Workhouse Centre , Portumna and Roscommon /Galway Educational Training Board. 12 participants in accredited training course in use of lime in traditionally built structures.

Proposals for 2015

- 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 and liaise with owners and occupiers.
- Expand and promote Open House Galway, Irish Year of Design and other opportunities to raise awareness of the architectural heritage.
- 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 2014:

- 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.

Proposals for 2015:

- 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.

Promoting co-ordination of agencies

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Established the Galway Local Community Development Committee
- Supported the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office within Galway County Council and held launch.
- Facilitated Tender process for the SICAP programme for the County Galway Lot in conjunction with the Local Community Development Committee.
- Continued 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.

Proposals for 2015

- Facilitate the Galway Local Community Development Committee
- Facilitate the preparation of Expression of Interest and Strategic Plan for the National Rural Development Programme on behalf of Galway LCDC
- In conjunction with Galway City Council prepare an Economic Strategy for Galway
- Prepare a Local Economic and Community Programme for County Galway
- Deliver Rural Transport Scheme in County Galway
- Partner on the UNESCO City of Film application
- Partner on the Capital of Culture application
- Award the SICAP Programme for 2015 for the County Galway Lot

Promoting enterprise and supporting economic development

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Joint host of Meet West 2014 which took place in Galway in 2014. Over 250 companies and approximately 350 delegates attending over 2 days
- Further developed the Made in Galway Initiative to support local enterprise to access markets. Held 4 Made in Galway EXPO events in Galway in 2014. This initiative was winner of the LAMA Award for Services to Enterprise in 2014.
- Supported community enterprise projects that are employment creating. Headford Hot Desks, BACD Enterprise Centre, Clonberne Enterprise Centre
- Implemented actions assigned to Local Government in the Government's Action Plan for Jobs.

- Worked with Galway Rural Development, Forum Connemara and Comhdail na nOilean to implement a food sector development initiative. The Council has also supported a network of stakeholders in the food sector to further develop this sector in County Galway.
- Supported business startups through the Galway Local Enterprise Office
- 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. Claregalway Christmas Market, Kinvara Farmers Market.
- Supported initiatives that encouraged entrepreneurship in County Galway such as Taking Care of Business Event, LEO enterprise roadshow.
- Supported the development of the Creative Sector as an employment generator for the County.
- Continued to promote Galway as a location for investment and job creation
- Implemented the Ireland Connect Initiative in County Galway. Event held in Athenry.
- Prepared 50 snapshot videos of Tourism destination locations in County Galway for use as promotion of the website.
- Compiled, published and circulated a brochure of festivals taking place in the County for tourism promotion
- Maintained the on-line Calendar of Events on www.galway.ie promoting over 500 events taking place in the County as the point of information for visitors to County Galway.
- Continued to promote Galway through the destination programme of Failte Ireland.
- Secured funding of over 130,000 for tourism infrastructure in Portumna
- Supported the Galway Science and Technology Festival.
- The Unit continued to participate in the APC and GRISI plus EU funded projects in 2014.
- The Unit co-ordinated the participation of Galway County Council in the ERDF BMW Gateways and Hubs Development Fund.
- Support community enterprise initiatives that create employment

Proposals for 2015

- An amount of €200,000 has been provided to support economic development initiatives in 2015.
- Support Meet West 2015
- Use the Made in Galway initiative to highlight food and craft sectors in County Galway
- Support Community Enterprise initiatives that create employment
- implement actions assigned to Galway County Council in the National Action Plan for Jobs

- Support micro enterprise start-ups through the Galway Local Enterprise Office
- Support the development of the Food sector in County Galway
- Publish an economic strategy for Galway
- Support the Film and Creative Industries Sectors in Galway
- Facilitate the development of local markets throughout the County
- Support the development of craft sector in Galway
- Develop the Tourism Product in Galway
- Prepare a Tourism Strategy for County Galway

Supporting sustainable communities

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Five communities (Belclare, Claregalway, Conamara Lar, Killimor & Shragh/Woodford) entered into the 2014 Pride of Place competition
- Continued to work with Tidy Towns groups to progress them within the National Tidy Towns competition. Commissioned particular expertise to work with 6 Tidy Towns locations (Abbey, Athenry, Clifden, Craughwell, Milltown & Monivea)
- Supported County Galway Community and Voluntary Forum. Initiated the set up of the Public Participation Network (PPN) which is a successor to the Community and Voluntary Forum.
- Rolled out the first year of the Community Tourism Diaspora Fund is to provide support to local and community event organisers and activities / projects that will harness diaspora links for the benefit of local and community tourism. 16 projects supported in Co. Galway.
- Approximately €320,000 was approved for projects across 11 categories under the Community Support Scheme in 2014.
- The Unit facilitated 29 projects supported under the Ballinasloe Special Capital Grant Scheme with a total funding approved amounting to €1,175,682.
- With the dissolution of Ballinasloe Town Council the CEED Unit implemented a number of projects approved for funding in the 2014 Town Council budget. These included Tidy Towns, Tidy Estates, Initiatives under the Ballinasloe October Fair, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Christmas Lights, Twinning and the AMT Town project.
- Organised the County Galway Cathaoirleach's Awards 2014

Proposals for 2015

- Support communities in the County to participate in the Pride of Place competition in 2015.

- Support Tidy Towns groups in the County to participate in the Tidy Towns National Competition in 2015 and build on specific interventions organised in 2014.
- Develop the Public Participation Network (PPN) and support its participation in Local Government and Local Development structures
- Progress the second year of the Community Tourism Diaspora Fund.
- Deliver the Community Support Scheme in 2015.
- Complete all projects under the Ballinasloe Special Capital Grant Scheme.
- Organise the County Galway Cathaoirleach's Awards 2015

Supporting Social Inclusion

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Developed and Launched Galway Age Friendly City and County Strategy 2014 -2019
- Developed Action Plan to implement the Age Friendly Programme
- Supported Galway Age Friendly Alliance & Implementation Groups and Older Persons Council.
- Facilitated County Galway Traveller Interagency Group.
- 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.
- Organised Social Inclusion Awareness Week 2014.
- Organised Culture Night for County Galway.
- Worked with the Customer Service Officers Group to ensure social inclusion is embedded into customer service.
- Worked 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.
- Participated in the European Integration Fund
- Continued to provide support to local youth organisations and school to develop the local area Comhairle na nÓg youth networks at electoral area level. 12 Committee meetings took place during 2014 with approximately 20 young people from across the electoral areas attending these meetings, which were supported by Youth Work Ireland Galway. A number of local area events took place with over 200 young people attending. Members of the County Committee took part in Youth Work Ireland Galway, Youth Week 'Development Education Showcase' event in April and 5 committee members attended and presented at the Galway County Council meeting in April.

- 206 young people attended the AGM held in Park Lodge Hotel Spiddal on 15th of October 2014. The theme of this year's AGM was Celebrating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Committee members participated in three workshops on the UNCRC prior to the AGM. A number of Committee members attended consultations with the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs during 2014.
- The Comhairle na nÓg Revision Guide (Study Skills booklet) was officially launched by the Minister of Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan TD on October 16th 2014 as part of Social Inclusion Week.
- Comhairle na nÓg researched various student discount cards, carried out surveys to over 400 young people to gather the interest level in the student card for young people aged 12-18 years. A number of young people met with Galway Chamber on two occasions to promote a student card among its members and a presentation was made to Galway Chamber on this item. The County Committee will be linking in with ISIC Ireland International Student Identity card, and will print cards in schools across the county during November and December.
- Participate in the Children Services Committee which is under the remit of TúsIa.

Proposals for 2015

- Set up and develop internal Social Inclusion Network to progress and develop an interdepartmental focus on Social Inclusion.
- Develop, monitor and implement a Social Inclusion Work Programme for 2015.
- 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 for use by the public
- Identify and implement relevant training for Key staff 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
- Continue to support Galway Age Friendly City and County Programme, by Supporting the Alliance and Implementation Groups and Older Persons Council.
- Organise Culture Night in County Galway in 2014.
- Continue to provide support to local youth organisations and school to develop the local area Comhairle na nÓg youth networks at electoral area level.
- Continue to Link with the Young Social Innovators 'Speak Out'

Supporting RAPID areas - Tuam & Ballinasloe

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The RAPID Co-ordinator(2) s continued 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.
- The agreed actions contained in the Ballinasloe Economic Programme of actions were progressed.
- In Tuam, the AIT continued to consolidate its key projects from 2013 Specifically the Training Matters group 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 ran 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. Training Matters also worked in collaboration with Transitions Optical to provide support and advice in relation to training and educational opportunities for up to 66 workers being made redundant in Tuam Town.
- There was a strong focus on Employment & Training issues in both Ballinasloe and Tuam and supports to those facing unemployment was provided in terms of referrals. Job seeker events were held in October 2014 in both locations, in conjunction with the Local Development Company for East Galway (GRD) In 2014 9 projects were progressed in the Ballinasloe RAPID area in conjunction with the Local Development Company including a level 7 BA in Business Enterprise & Community Development for 15 participants; Transition and Study Skills Programme for Ballinasloe Schools (primary and secondary); Incredible Years Parenting Programme; Music Tuition Project; an Afterschools project in Garbally College; Support for the Simon Community project in Ballinasloe; a Home Management Programme with GRET B; Business Training Support for a group of Women to develop further a Country Market. Projects in the Tuam area included: in addition to the major investment in Level 8 education progression; bringing Silver Comedy back to Tuam to perform with the Tuam Men's Shed and in Greenpark Nursing Home; support for cyber-bullying training for Youth Workers in conjunction with Youth Work Ireland; continued focus on after school homework support as well as play and art therapy supports for targeted children – including children in community pre-school setting and support for a teenage Traveller girls programme.

Proposals for 2015

- Agree a process for progressing the RAPID programme in light of Local Government Reform agenda given the continued RAPID national designation.

- In line with the above, the 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 relevant agency(s) to ensure prioritisation for the Ballinasloe and Tuam RAPID areas in the implementation of agreed plans through the new SICAP programme.

Promoting and developing Arts activity

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Invested in communities through the Arts Grants and Awards
- Supported development and promotion of new arts activity by Artists resident in County by investing €15,000 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.
- Continued to deliver programme of Disability Equality Training within the Arts in Galway & delivered a full arts and disability programme
- Commenced the Council's first Artists in Schools Scheme (8 schools)
- Completed a full programme of Age Friendly projects for older people to include Bealtaine & Burning Bright Projects (88 projects and events)
- Delivered child protection training for artists (28 artists attended)
- Delivered an Amateur Drama Training Programme for Amateur Drama Companies in Galway (11 groups participated)
- Commenced a new literature and drama scheme in schools
- Hosted Galway Culture night over 80 events in 27 towns and Villages in Galway
- Arts & Libraries Programme
- Delivered a programme of professional practice seminars for Artists
- Supported development of creative economy www.screenwest.ie
- Promoted the County as a location for film production
- Hosted an International Film Production Event
- Submitted Application to UNESCO to have Galway designated as a city of film
- Implemented key pilot projects under the Galway Music Education Partnership

Proposals for 2015

- 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.
- Arts & Libraries Programme
- Manage and Deliver a county wide programme of events for Culture Night
- The establishment and maintenance of projects with other agencies and institutions.
- Management of a strong arts partnership programme within the county.
- Develop a full arts & education programme in Schools
- Artist in residence in Schools
- Writers in Schools
- Film in Schools
- Galway Music Education Programme implementation
- Continue our Arts & Health & Disability Programme
- Burning Bright-Artists in Nursing Homes Programme
- UCHG Arts Trust
- Bealtaine Programme for Creativity in Older People
- Arts Ability- Our Disability Arts Programme
- 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
- Support projects as part of National Year Design ID2015
- Galway County Council will establish a UNESCO Film Office in conjunction with Galway City Council.
- Establish a film locations office to attract more companies to shoot here
- Better international collective marketing for Film in Galway
- Enhance existing film programmes and projects
- Better promotion of our existing skilled workforce
- Better networking and collaboration to jointly market and sell Galway internationally
- Secure potential funds to better support the business cluster of film businesses located here
- Collaborative film tourism promotions
- Galway has launched its bid to become Europe's Capital of Culture 2020. NUIG have been appointed to oversee the drafting of the bid. The bid will be drafted in 2015 and Submitted in early 2016.

- Both Local Authorities propose to work collaboratively on a number of projects for 2015 as a prelude to the Capital of Culture Submission.

Local Sports Partnership

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Sourced funding from Irish Sports Council and other agencies to continue the work of the Partnership in 2014.
- Delivered core activities of the Irish Sports Council locally, Buntus, Code of Ethics, Women in Sport, Girls Active.
- Galway Sports Partnership 10k run on the 20th April 2014 – 200 adults, 68 children took part.
- The following Courses were delivered; 20 Code of Ethics courses, 2 Children’s Officer courses, 2 Disability Inclusion Training courses with 48 participants, SAQ Strength & Conditioning course with 38 participants, Sports Specific First Aid course.
- The following Events took place in 2014
- Operation Transformation – 18th January in Salthill, Galway. 200 people took part
- Xcessible Sportshall Athletics – six week indoor physical activity course for children attending ‘special’ schools Sportshall Athletics – for children from primary schools. Six week course for six schools from Galway City and County culminating in them participating in the National finals in Athlone in April 2014.
- Park Run event began 10th May in Knocknacarra Park – average of 80 people take part each week.
- Bike Week events – 35 ‘cycling’ events in the city and county organised by Galway County and Galway City Council with Galway Sports Partnership.
- GSP ran one event during the Bealtaine festival, a six week physical activity programme for older adults in Lackagh. 15 participated.
- GSP ran four events as part of National Recreation Week in County Galway with young people
- GSP assisted in the set up of the outdoor gym equipment facilities in Rinville and Loughrea.
- Four new walking clubs set up in the county to date this year
- New MEN ON THE MOVE project started in Gort on 29th September
- Set up a new bocchia league for people with disabilities.
- GSP have launched a new initiative called FIT TOWNS,
- Establish a programme fund of €45k for clubs/organisations/ groups in Galway to increase participation in sport and physical activities through programmes across all sectors of the community.

Proposals for 2015

- Prepare and implement a new Strategic Plan for the Galway Sports Partnership.
- 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 2015.
- Continue to implement the core programmes of the Irish Sports Council – Buntús, Code of Ethics, Women in Sport, Meet & Train, walking clubs.
- Continue to 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.
- Assist with the coordination of the Bike Week and National Recreation Week activities for 2015 and implement activities in both.
- 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 pilot 'Men on the Move' fitness programme in 3 locations in Galway as part of HSE funded national pilot programme.
- Organise and oversee the implementation of the FIT TOWNS initiative throughout 2015.

Human Resource Activity

Indicative Activities in 2014:

- Twenty One recruitment competitions were held during the year, involving a total of 328 candidates being called for interview for the various posts. 39 appointments were made up to the end of October 2014.
- Galway County Council provided nine month work experience placements for 21 interns through the Job-Bridge National Internship Scheme
- Eighteen employees will have retired from the Council in 2014.
- Galway County Council is providing 44 work placements of 22 months duration under the Gateway Scheme.

- In excess of 3% of Galway County Council's Total Payroll Costs has been spent on Training and Development in 2014, with 2,634 training days provided by the 31st of October, 2014. Health & Safety training formed a considerable part of the 2014 Training Plan including courses as follows: Driver Certificate of Professional Competence Training, Signing, Lighting and Guarding Training, Safe Pass and Manual Handling Training.
- 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. Health Assured Ltd delivers this service on behalf of Galway County Council.
 - *Shorter Working Year Scheme*: 26 staff members availed of unpaid leave under the Shorter Working Year Scheme in 2014.
 - *Parental Leave Scheme*: 55 staff members availed of parental leave in 2014.
 - *Work Sharing Scheme*: 40 staff members availed of work sharing arrangements in 2014.
 - *Career Breaks*: 11 staff members availed of career breaks in 2014.
 - *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. 26 applications for participation in the Cycle to Work Scheme have been processed to date in 2014 for Council employees.
 - *Travel Pass Scheme*: There are currently 15 staff members availing of the TaxSaver Travel Pass Scheme.

Proposals for 2015:

- Recruit and deploy staff in an efficient and professional manner, and in accordance with Government policy.
- Devise and implement tailored training and development programmes which take into account individual and organizational requirements, and implement quality training standards to enable employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall accomplishment of the Council's goals and objectives. The 2015 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.

- Develop, implement and communicate appropriate human resources policies in line with existing and new legislation, and in keeping with best practice.
- Support and advise Line Managers on the implementation of workplace policies.
- Promote dignity at work, diversity and equality for all employees of the Council.
- Continue to promote a climate of good industrial relations and strengthen the partnership approach to joint problem-solving in the interest of employee and customer relations.
- Continue to progress actions as set out in County Galway Local Authorities Public Service Agreement Action Plan in conjunction with the various Departments.
- According to service records, a minimum of 13 staff members will retire in 2015

ENVIRONMENT & WATER SERVICES UNIT

Water Services Investment Programme

Indicative Activities in 2014

- On January 1st 2014 all of the water services responsibilities transferred to Irish Water and the Council since then operate the Capital programme as an agent of Irish Water. The Water Services Investment Programme as we knew it has been replaced by Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan. Those schemes that had contracts signed at 31/12/2013 were novated 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.

Proposals for 2015

- The Council, in conjunction, with Irish Water, will strive 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 2015 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.

Management and maintenance of Water and Wastewater Schemes

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The responsibility for the management, operation and maintenance of the water and wastewater infrastructure has transferred 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.
- The Drinking Water Remedial Action Programme 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.
- 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 as they may 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 2015 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 2014

- 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 2. The county wide mains rehabilitation programme comprises Phase 3 of the programme and approval to progress to construction is awaited from Irish Water.

Waste Management Infrastructure

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Barna Waste has a 3 year contract to operate the three Civic Amenity Sites at Ballinasloe, Clifden and Tuam. This contract expires in September 2015.
- 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 Glasco. The Council has a partnership arrangement with Athchursáil Arainn Teo. to operate an integrated waste management scheme for the Aran Islands. A landfill and recycling service is provided for Inishboffin, fully funded by Galway County 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.

Proposals for 2015

- 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.

Environmental Monitoring & Enforcement Measures

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Details of enforcement notices, warning letters issued and initiated prosecutions under Environmental legislation in 2014 will be set out in the 2014 RMCEI (minimum inspection criteria for environmental inspection) returns which are due for issue by January 31st 2015.
- The 2014 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 2015

- The Council will set out all planned pro-active inspections of authorised facilities under various Environmental Legislation in the 2015 RMCEI Plan which is due for issue by January 31st 2015. The scale of Enforcement activity in 2015 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 be reviewed in early 2015.
- 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 2014

- Local authorities and other public authorities are incorporating the programme 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 an oil pollution preparedness exercise

Derelict Sites

Indicative Activities in 2014

- 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 10 sites on the Derelict Sites Register.

Proposals for 2015

- 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 2014

- 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 Ballynahown, Kilmurvey, Lettermorenacaille and the development of extensions funded at Carraroe and Cortoon.
- 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. A 2 tier grant was awarded to Committees in 2014 - €600 or €300 and the level of grant was determined by the works carried out by Committees. Grants were made to 155 committees in 2014

Proposals for 2015

- The Council will continue to progress extensions in conjunction with the local communities.
- Extensions will be advanced in partnership with local communities at Abbey, Annaghdown, Ballinafad, Ballygar, Bealadangan, Claregalway, Clonfert, Leenane and Quansboro as resources permit

Environmental Awareness & Education

Indicative Activities in 2014

- The awareness officers are involved in promoting environmental awareness through ongoing engagement with the domestic and commercial sectors
- Over 40 community awareness events have taken place focusing on waste management, waste prevention, food waste, home composting, household hazardous waste, energy conservation and water conservation
- Ongoing development and dissemination of information through local media, social media, libraries, schools, voluntary groups etc.
- Ongoing involvement with Tidy Towns groups
- Ongoing involvement in the Green Schools programme with over 90% of county schools involved
- Participating with and funding community based Anti Litter initiatives
- Delivery of WEEE, Mobile Hazardous Waste Collections, National Spring Clean initiatives
- Liaising with Community and Enterprise Unit, Heritage Officer, Biodiversity Officer on various environmental projects
- Participating in SEAI Energy Awareness Programme
- Ongoing implementation of the LAPN / Waste Prevention Programme.

Proposals for 2015

- The Awareness campaign will continue with particular emphasis on further enhancing partnerships with community and voluntary groups and the continued dissemination of information to all sectors using all suitable methods.
- Ongoing implementation of the Waste Prevention Programme.

Energy Efficiency

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Energy efficiency upgrades were completed in 836 local authority houses (of which 133 houses were in the 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 Kilrickle, Athenry, Ballygar, Ahascragh and Loughrea
- The heating system in Westside Library was converted to natural gas, lighting was upgraded to higher energy efficiency and further insulation was applied to the walls.
- Wall insulation and lighting upgrade was applied to the library in An Cheathru Rua.
- PV arrays generating electricity were installed on the roof of Loughrea regional office, Tuam regional office/library, Westside library and Arus an Chontae (additional to last year).

- A seminar on energy efficiency and energy saving was provided for the business community in Loughrea, followed with free energy audits where requested.
- An energy awareness campaign was launched for Galway County Council staff.

Proposals for 2015

- Install energy efficient LED street lighting in further towns and villages.
- Continue upgrading Council owned buildings with improved insulation and lighting.
- Install further PV arrays.
- Provide workshops/seminars for the business sector.

Animal Control & Welfare

Indicative Activities in 2014

- Animal welfare cases involving dogs, cattle, sheep and horses were investigated where appropriate 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. Structural improvements were made to Ballinasloe Pound. The Council veterinary service liaised with Housing in the implementation of the Control of Horses Act including tendering processes.
- The Council continued to implement the Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010 which requires the registration, and compliance with standards, of all premises coming under the definition of a 'dog breeding establishment'.
- Under the Control of Dogs Act, increased compliance with dog licensing was achieved by targeting resources.

Proposals for 2015

- The Council will continue to provide pound services and hope to carry out further improvement works to Ballinasloe Pound.
- Ongoing improvements to the efficiency of the Dog Control service will be implemented during the year to include continuing targeting of resources 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 2014

- The Council provided a Veterinary Public Health Inspection Service under the terms of its 5 year service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- There are 11 local abattoirs in the county which are approved by the Council under Irish and EC legislation. These premises slaughter cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and now poultry under Council supervision.
- 3 new abattoirs commenced business in the county following approval by the Council veterinary service to process poultry, cattle, sheep and goats.
- The Council also supervises 10 approved or registered meat processing premises in both the city and county. Another premises is registered to slaughter and supply their own poultry on-farm in the county.
- Provision of training: Specifically required welfare training was organised for staff of Galway abattoirs. Training in labelling was provided to Council supervised food businesses.

Proposals for 2015

- Developments in the area of national shared veterinary services will be responded to.
- It is proposed to organise further training for Food Business Operators and veterinary inspectors in 2015.
- Continued operation of Food Safety compliance activities to standardised procedures.

**REPORT ON
THREE YEAR CAPITAL
PROGRAMME**

2015 – 2017

ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

The completion of the following projects is subject to the appropriate departmental sanctions, the availability of the necessary funding and compliance with all appropriate legislative and regulatory provisions.

In addition to works on Major Inter Urban routes, a full programme of Pavement and Minor Improvements Works, Safety Measures and Bridge Improvement Works shall continue to be undertaken on the National Primary & National Secondary Road Network. This Programme is dependent on annual allocations from the National Roads Authority and as such the programme of works shall be presented to the Council on an annual basis in the context of the Annual Roads Programme.

NATIONAL ROADS (including Major Inter Urbans):

Project:	Status:
N6 Galway City Outer By-Pass	The ECJ ruled that the approval given for the GCOB scheme was not in compliance with the Habitats Directive EO 92/43. Funding has been provided for the development of a new planning application and the procurement process for the lead consultant for the scheme has commenced and is expected to be completed by the end of November 2013. A section 85 Agreement has been agreed between Galway City and County Councils and the County Council will act as the lead organization in the development of the scheme. ARUP Consultants have been appointed for the Galway City Outer ByPass and are based in the Project Office in Ballybrit. Emerging Preferred Routes are planned to be available for Public Consultation in Qtr 1 2015.
N18/ N17 Gort to North of Tuam	Contracts have been signed. The contract is between the NRA and Direct Route. Major works will commence in Qtr 1 2015.
N17 Tuam – Claremorris	Preliminary design is now complete and the scheme is ready for publication of the C.P.O. and the E.I.S. However further progress is not envisaged in the short term.
N59 Maigh Cuilinn Bypass	Contract Documents are being prepared for the N59 Moycullen ByPass. Works are planned to commence on the Moycullen Online section in November 2014.
N59 Clifden to Oughterard	Maam Cross to Oughterard has been granted Planning Approval and Advanced works are programmed for Qtr 4 2014.

	Clifden to Maam Cross has been published and we are now awaiting An Bord Pleanala decision on holding an Oral Hearing.
N17 Carrownurlaur to Ballindine	Part VIII Planning was approved by Elected Members at the Council Meeting of 24 th October.
N84 Luimnagh	CPO is confirmed and Advance Works and Land Acquisition is now in progress.
N63 Annagh Hill to Abbeyknockmoy	Part VIII Planning is scheduled for the consideration of the Elected Members at the December 2014 Council Meeting.
N67 Kinvara to Ballinderreen	A CPO for the Section of road approaching Kinvara from Galway is to be published in 2015.
N83 Forty Acres	Fencing works have taken place. The remainder of the scheme will be completed when funds are made available.

The advancement of the above projects is dependent on the availability of funding and where required the availability of the necessary internal resources to advance the projects.

PLANT ACQUISITION / RENEWAL & WINTER MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES:

Project:	Status:
Purchase of replacement items of plant to facilitate the continued operation of the Machinery Yard and to meet essential operational requirements.	It is intended to proceed with the Plant Acquisition Programme within the limits of available funding with a particular emphasis on the renewal of essential plant and equipment. The cost of replacing essential plant will be met by means of charge-out, in accordance with Machinery Expense Account procedures. The Council will be seeking much needed funding for plant replacement to satisfy OHSAS and Health & Safety requirements.
The replacement and acquisition of necessary equipment and the development of salt barns to facilitate the delivery of the winter service plan.	It is intended to replace existing and acquire additional winter maintenance equipment and construct additional salt barns (<i>Sandy Road & Conamara</i>) subject to the availability of the necessary funding from the National Roads Authority.

FLOOD RELIEF/MITIGATION SCHEMES:

Project:	Status:
To directly advance and assist in the advancement, as appropriate, of Flood Relief/Mitigation Schemes including the Dunkellin River Flood Relief Scheme, Clare River Flood Relief Scheme and South Galway.	The Council will continue to work with the Office of Public Works through the Joint Working Group and Steering Group and other stakeholders to advance appropriate flood relief/mitigation schemes in compliance with all appropriate legislative and regulatory provisions and within the limits of available resources.
Dunkellin/Aggard Flood Relief Scheme	This scheme has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála and will continue to be advanced in 2015.

STRATEGIC PIERS & HARBOURS PROGRAMME:

Project:	Status:
Inis Oírr Pier Improvements	The proposed development at Inis Oírr comprises the following main elements: the construction of an attached breakwater to the seaward side of the pier, the construction of a pier extension including additional berthage and limited dredging works to provide a safe approach channel. The project estimated to cost €8 million is subject to the availability of funding.
Caladh Mór Harbour Phase III	It is proposed to submit a Planning application to An Bord Pleanála under the Strategic Development Act 2007 in the future. This project is linked to the Inis Oírr Harbour development where rock from Caladh Mór will be recycled for constructing Inis Oírr Harbour.

GALWAY FIRE SERVICE

Please note all projects are subject to Department Of Environment Community & Local Government Funding and specific approval by project.

Fire Appliances

- There is a very limited national capital budget for appliances/equipment in 2015.

Fire Stations

Subject to DECLG funding as outlined above, Galway County Council intend to:

- Progress Galway City Project - new HQ station i.e. site selection and progress planning - following outcome of the review of the Fire Services and external consultants report
- Endeavour to progress new Fire station project in Tuam, Co. Galway approved in 2008, with, full working drawings were submitted to Declg in Dec. 2010. Now seeking approval to go to tender.
- Make a case to DECLG to Procure & Appoint design consultants for a new fire station in Athenry. Site has been acquired and approval in principle was given by the Department in 2008.
- Make a case to DECLG for approval in principle for a new Fire station in Loughrea
- Ballinasloe Fire Station Extension Project –application lodged with DECLG in 2008. We will continue to make a case to DECLG for an interim project for Ballinasloe Fire Sation.
- Mountbellew Fire Station Project – continue to make case to the Department for the project. An application was lodged with DECLG in 2009.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Progress was achieved under the last programme in the delivery of Outdoor Gyms in Rinville Park and Loughrea under the Sports Capital Programme. Capital investments over the next three years will focus on completion of projects which have been given previous commitments under the Recreation and Amenity Framework and Playground Policy. External funding will be sought to advance proposals for the regeneration of Loughrea Town Hall and other priority projects identified as part of an Historic Assets Strategy.

Investments will also result in the delivery of the new Library facility in Ballinasloe and reconfiguration of the Council Chamber at Áras an Chontae to facilitate the expanded Council, established in 2014.

Progress on all projects is however, subject to continued availability of internal and external funding together with necessary statutory and legislative approval as appropriate on a project by project basis.

Project	Budget	Sources of Funding
Ballinasloe Library	€4,000,000	Galway County Council and the Department of Environment Community and Local Government
Construction of Council Chamber at Áras an Chontae	€500,000	Galway County Council
Playground Projects (Limited to existing commitments)	€90,000	Development Contribution Scheme
Walking Routes and Passive Recreation	€67,000	Limited to meeting existing commitment under the Recreation and Amenity Framework
Clarinbridge Cowpark Amenity Development	€95,000	Development Contribution Scheme - Recreation and Amenity
Loughrea Town Hall Regeneration	€650,000	External Grant Aid and Galway County Council

HOUSING

House Construction:

- As the Members are aware with the downturn in the economy there was a shift away from the traditional house building and acquisition programme since 2008. It is however, anticipated that with the introduction of the New Social Housing Strategy that there will be increased investment in a new Housing Construction/acquisition programme.
- Nationally provision has been made for works under the regeneration, remedial and energy efficiency programmes. The housing unit will prepare schemes in anticipation of funding opportunities for construction on its own land bank and also regeneration type projects.
- The Council currently has a number of applications under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF). The Department have granted approval for 13 units at Letterfrack, Connemara. It is anticipated that construction will commence on these units in September 2015. Approval was given for 12 units at Dunloe Hill, Ballinsloe and it is anticipated that construction will commence in early 2015.

House Purchase Loans:

- Loans up to the approved limit of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will be issued to eligible purchasers under the various loan schemes operated by the Council. Funding is sourced by way of borrowing, the debt servicing of which is met by repayments from loanees.

Social Housing Investment programme Estimated Capital Funding 2015 to 2017

Description	2015	2016	2017
Main Construction/Acquisition Programme	€3,000,000.00	€3,000,000.00	€3,000,000.00
Capital Assistance Scheme	€3,700,000.00	€3,500,000.00	€3,000,000.00
Traveller Accommodation	€ 500,000.00	€600,000.00	€650,000.00
Remedial works	€250,000.00	€500,000.00	€200,000.00
Energy Efficiency/Voids Retrofitting	€1, 550,00.00	€1,000,000.00	€1,000,000.00

Please note all projects are subject to Department Of Environment Heritage & Local Government Funding and specific approval by project

APPENDIX A

Increase in Annual Rate on Valuation 1977 to 2014

	COUNTY COUNCILS	€ RATE IN 2014	€ RATE IN 1977	% increase 1977 to 2014
1	MEATH	69.62	8.32	837%
2	KILDARE	68.95	9.02	764%
3	WICKLOW	76.78	12.02	639%
4	CLARE	72.99	11.43	639%
5	WEXFORD	71.52	11.34	631%
6	CARLOW	65.80	10.67	617%
7	LAOIS	64.63	10.54	613%
8	SLIGO	64.43	10.65	605%
9	CORK	74.75	12.61	593%
10	LOUTH	55.36	9.35	592%
11	WESTMEATH	52.27	9.02	579%
12	ROSCOMMON	72.16	12.58	574%
13	KERRY	80.35	14.28	563%
14	MONAGHAN	56.20	10.03	560%
15	OFFALY	56.77	10.18	558%
16	LONGFORD	65.35	12.02	544%
17	LIMERICK	59.92	11.03	543%
18	KILKENNY	52.05	9.62	541%
19	GALWAY	66.59	12.48	534%
20	SOUTH TIPPERARY	56.77	11.12	511%
21	LEITRIM	62.15	12.49	498%
22	NORTH TIPPERARY	56.77	11.52	493%
23	CAVAN	56.85	11.68	487%
24	DONEGAL	69.70	15.54	449%
25	MAYO	68.76	16.51	416%

ABOVE TABLE EXCLUDES SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL, FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL, DUNLAOIRE COUNTY COUNCIL & WATERFORD COUNTY COUNCIL AS THEY HAVE MOVED TO A REDEFINED VALUATION BASIS & ARE NOT DIRECTLY COMPARABLE

APPENDIX B

Annual Rate on Valuation 2014

	COUNTY COUNCILS	€ RATE IN 2013
1	KERRY	80.35
2	WICKLOW	76.78
3	CORK	74.75
4	CLARE	72.99
5	ROSCOMMON	72.16
6	WEXFORD	71.52
7	DONEGAL	69.70
8	MEATH	69.62
9	KILDARE	68.95
10	MAYO	68.76
11	GALWAY	66.59
12	CARLOW	65.80
13	LONGFORD	65.35
14	LAOIS	64.63
15	SLIGO	64.43
16	LEITRIM	62.15
17	LIMERICK	59.92
18	CAVAN	56.85
19	NORTH TIPPERARY	56.77
20	OFFALY	56.77
21	SOUTH TIPPERARY	56.77
22	MONAGHAN	56.20
23	LOUTH	55.36
24	WESTMEATH	52.27
25	KILKENNY	52.05

ABOVE TABLE EXCLUDES SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL, FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL, DUNLAOIRE COUNTY COUNCIL & WATERFORD COUNTY COUNCIL AS THEY HAVE MOVED TO A REDEFINED VALUATION BASIS & ARE NOT DIRECTLY COMPARABLE

