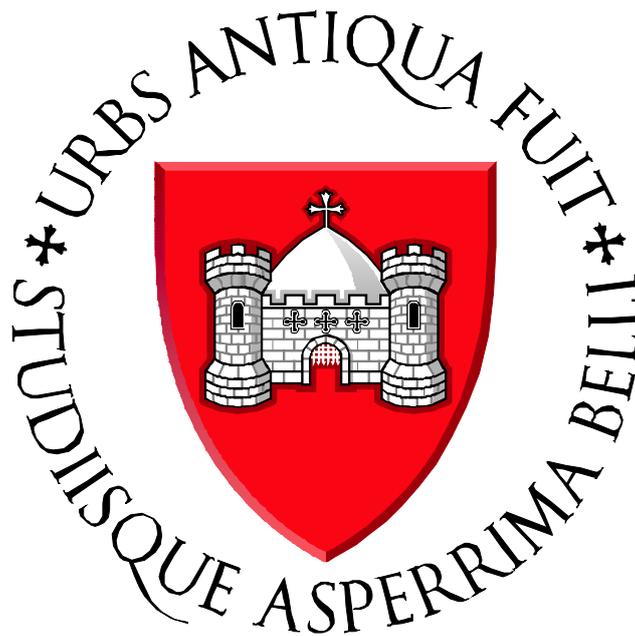


LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL



ADOPTED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2011

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**LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CATHRACH LUIMNIGH**

Árus na Cathrach
Luimneach

13th December 2010

TO: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR AND EACH MEMBER OF LIMERICK CITY
COUNCIL

**Annual Budget for the year
1st January 2011 to 31st December 2011**

Introduction

The recession in the Irish economy has continued to deepen during 2010, with a continuing fall in consumer confidence, stagnation of the property sector, businesses going into liquidation, examinership or forced to close down, rising unemployment, and dramatic fall in Government receipts from taxation. As per the National Recovery Plan 2011-2014, the gap between Government receipts and spending for 2010 will be €18.5 billion.

Austerity measures continued to be implemented during 2010 to stabilise the public finances and to commence a return to a sustainable fiscal position. For Limerick City Council some of these measures included:

- Ordinary Road grants reduced from €2.9m in 2009 to €2.78m in 2010. This compares to €5.58m in 2008.
- Non-Principal Private Residence (NPPR) charge (i.e. €200 per residential unit) was in place for its second year to partly compensate for reduction in Local Government Fund since 2009. The outturn for 2010 for NPPR charge is expected to be €1,240,000.
- Payroll cost reductions were applied from 1st January 2010 as set out in Minister Lenihan's 2010 Budget, with an average pay reduction of 8% being applied. For Limerick City Council this was estimated to be in the region of €1.3m. 35% of these payroll savings had to be given back to the Exchequer totalling in excess of €455,000 in 2010. The balance of the payroll savings enabled Budget 2010 for Limerick City Council to balance.
- Significant changes in payroll administration were introduced in 2010 in Limerick City Council, with fortnightly payroll introduced in the 1st quarter of 2010, and a new payroll system (CORE) implemented in the 2nd half of 2010. The further roll-out of CORE related system is continuing in 2011. This process has helped to free up some staffing resources.
- Staffing embargo has continued, and in exceptional circumstances the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government have the discretion to sanction any appointments for periods greater than six months in duration. The continued

reduction in staffing numbers has been made possible through the co-operation of staff, and defining more efficient and effective methods of delivering service.

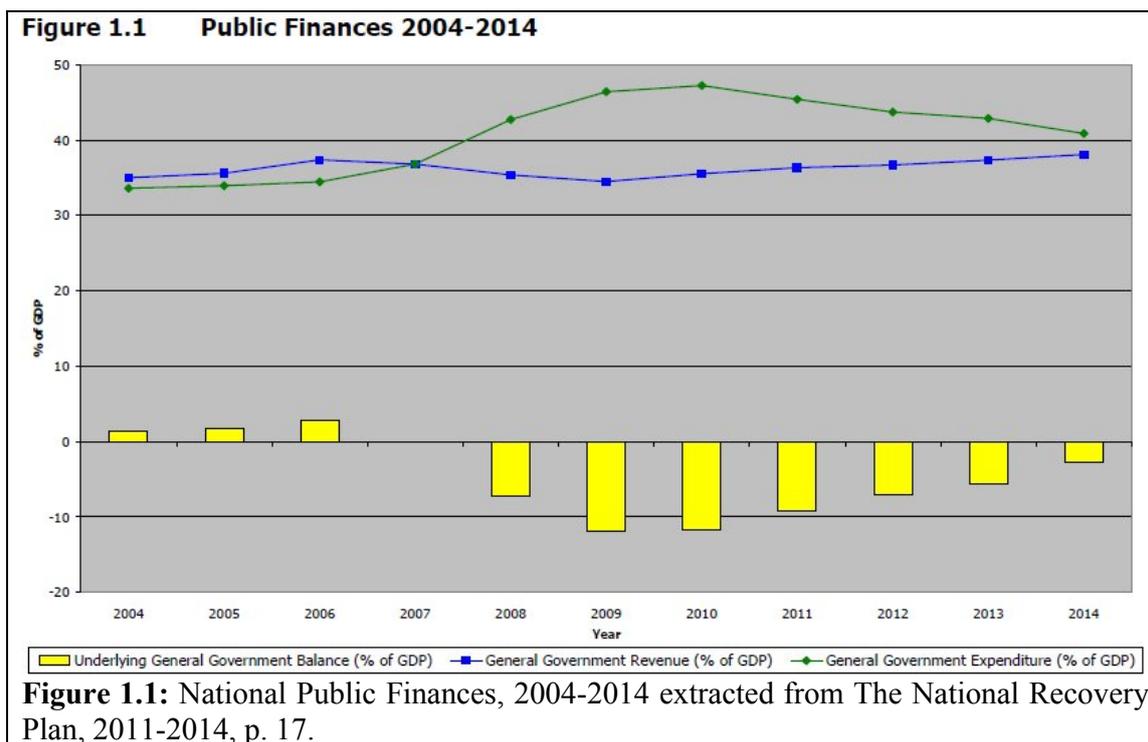
Other measures that are planned to be implemented in 2011 in order to introduce further efficiencies and value for money in Limerick City Council include:

- The introduction of a central customer service unit for handling the majority of queries from the public,
- The Croke Park Agreement contains a commitment to maintain the pay rates and employment status of existing public servants. It is recognised by all that there must be a reduction in the cost of the public service employment through the achievement of restructuring, flexibilities and reforms of existing work practices. Since 2003 the City Council has achieved a reduction in its overall employment level of 20%. The City Council will in 2011 continue a process of discussion and dialogue with trade unions under the terms of the Croke Park Agreement towards the overall objective of achieving a further reduction in employment levels through non replacement. In addition the Council will seek additional cost savings from existing staff through changes in current work practices and arrangements, and methods of service delivery. This objective is in line with comments made by Minister for Finance in his Budget speech on 7th December 2010 “Public servants, their unions and their managers for their part must abide by their commitments (under the Croke Park Agreement) to pursue flexibilities and reforms in every part and level of the public service”.

Economic Outlook

The short and medium term economic outlook points to a period of contraction. Ireland is a small open economy with consequent vulnerability to global market shifts. This harsh and difficult external environment has and will cause considerable pressure on the Irish economy. As outlined in the National Recovery Plan 2011-2014, the ratio of day-to-day expenditure as a percentage Gross National Product (GNP) – has jumped from 28% during the boom years to 44% in 2010 – which is unsustainable. It is also noted that “since 2007, Ireland’s national income (GNP) has fallen by 15% and Ireland’s tax revenues have reduced from over €47 billion to €31.5 billion and are now back to 2003 level. In these circumstances, the current level of public spending is unaffordable” (pages 10-11).

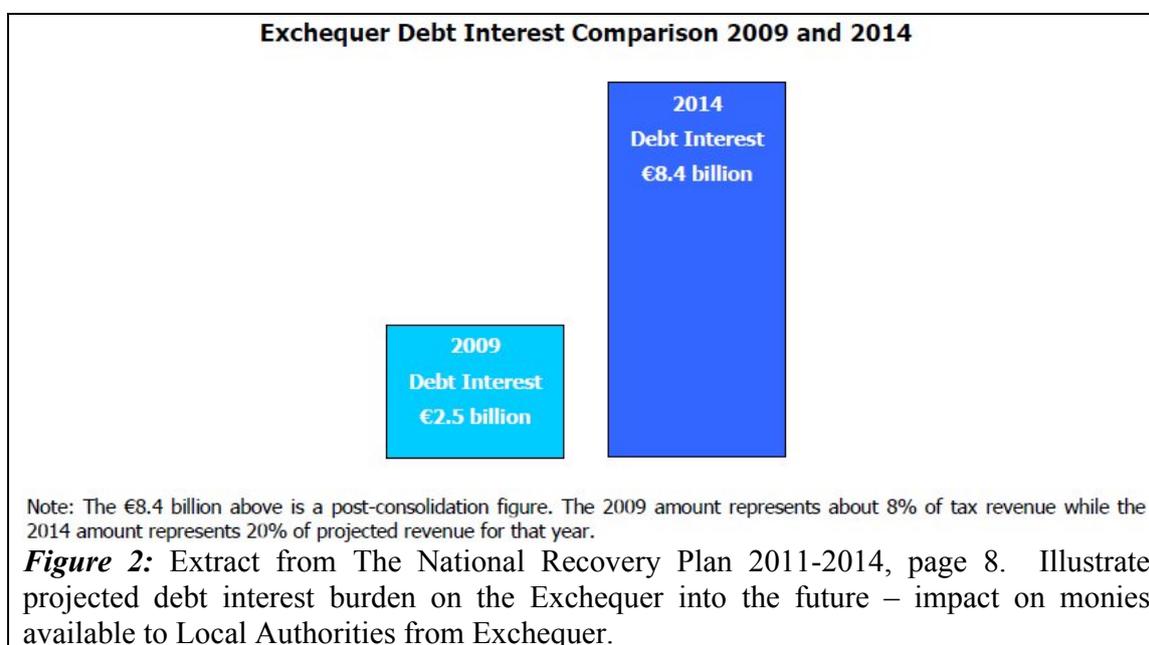
As illustrated in *Figure 1.1* below General Government Expenditure is ahead of Revenue (as a % of GDP) since 2007, and is not projected to converge until after 2014 i.e. there will be continuing national deficit until at least 2014, which is illustrated by the yellow bar chart. To achieve a narrowing of the deficit i.e. 3% of GDP by 2014/2015 will require significant cost reduction and alternative sources of income to be identified both locally and nationally, and therefore involve structural reform of public spending and additional taxation.



One of the most significant policy documents recently published that will impact directly on the finances of Limerick City Council is the National Recovery Plan 2011-2014 (“the Plan”). Some of the provisions included in this plan that will impact over the four year time frame include:

- Reduction in Local Government Fund expected over the four year plan. The reduction in contribution by the Exchequer to the Local Government Fund for 2011 is noted in Annex 8 of the Plan as €62m. Arising from this reduction in the Exchequer contribution to the Local Government Fund the reduction for Limerick City Council in 2011 in the LGF received is in the region of 9%.
- No increase in Income noted for 2011 for the local authority sector.
- Reference to introduction of *site value tax* to fund essential locally-delivered services.
 - Site-levy (property based tax) to be introduced in 2012 with initial flat-rate charge of €100, with a full value-based charge to be introduced in 2013.
 - The average charge is expected to be €200 in 2013.
 - Charge will be on top of 2nd home charge (non-principal private residence charge).
 - Commercial Rates will be moved to a site value basis also (page 98).
 - the “site value tax” is to “put the funding of locally delivered services on a sound financial footing, and the introduction of this tax will “have significant implications for the financing of local authorities, including a lower contribution from the Exchequer and from motor tax revenues” (p. 98).
- Motor Tax bands are to be adjusted in line with technological advances on 1st January 2013 (p. 98).

- Public sector pensions to be reduced by an average of 4% on the introduction of legislation. Expected to yield €100million in savings nationally.
- Grace-period for retirements under which pensions are calculated by reference to pre-cut rates of public service is being extended to end February 2012. This will have budgetary implications for 2012.
- Introduce a reformed pension scheme for new entrants to the public service and reduce their pay by 10%.
- Domestic water charges to be introduced by 2014 on a metered basis.
- “Significant change is envisaged for the local government sector over the coming years, as set out in the recommendations of the Local Government Efficiency Review” (page 69).
- Significant increased debt interest burden is projected over the next four years, which will reduce the Exchequer contribution to local authorities over this time-frame (see **Figure 2** below).



Budgets brought to you in previous years have been expansionary with service and works programme initiatives being developed year on year. The circumstances in which we operate have changed significantly as outlined above. We must reflect economic realities and have due regard for those who benefit from our services and those contributing to the costs of service in the preparation and adoption of Budget 2011.

Budget 2011

In presenting the Annual Budget for the year ended 31st December 2011 to Council, I wish to take this opportunity, to summarise the financial position of Limerick City Council at 31st December 2009. The Annual Financial Statement of Limerick City Council for the year 2009 shows that the accumulated Balance on the Revenue Account is a credit position of €260,192 at 31st December 2009 (compared to the accumulated Credit Balance on the Revenue Account at 31st December 2008 €178,404).

Current outturn figures indicate that it will be difficult to maintain the Revenue Credit in 2010, but every effort will be made to break-even. Limerick City Council had an accumulated deficit for every year from 1979 to 2005. The steady financial position since 2005 must be maintained and this will be done by a combination of cost management and measures as outlined above. The 2011 budget reflects the need to continue the strong financial management ethos while making every effort to meet the ever increasing demands on the services of Limerick City Council.

In framing the budget I have had regard to the demands that will be placed on this Council as a result of the Government decision to reduce the level of funding from the local government fund.

I will now set out the proposals for Expenditure and Income for 2011.

Expenditure – 2011

The Budget for 2011 provides for expenditure of €87,565,484 million. This represents a decrease of €835,879 over the Budget for 2010, a decrease of 0.9%. The following table sets out the expenditure by Division:

	Budget 2011	Budget 2010
1. Housing and Building	16,615,377	16,277,882
2. Road Transportation and Safety	9,585,188	10,716,849
3. Water Supply and Sewerage	14,549,312	14,704,617
4. Development Incentives and Controls	4,250,456	4,999,501
5. Environmental Protection	18,804,592	19,114,370
6. Recreation and Amenity	5,695,585	6,241,610
7. Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	9,130,032	7,521,899
8. Miscellaneous Services	8,934,942	8,824,635
TOTAL	87,565,484	88,401,363

The following graph (*Figure 3*) depicts estimated expenditure by Division for 2011, compared to 2010.

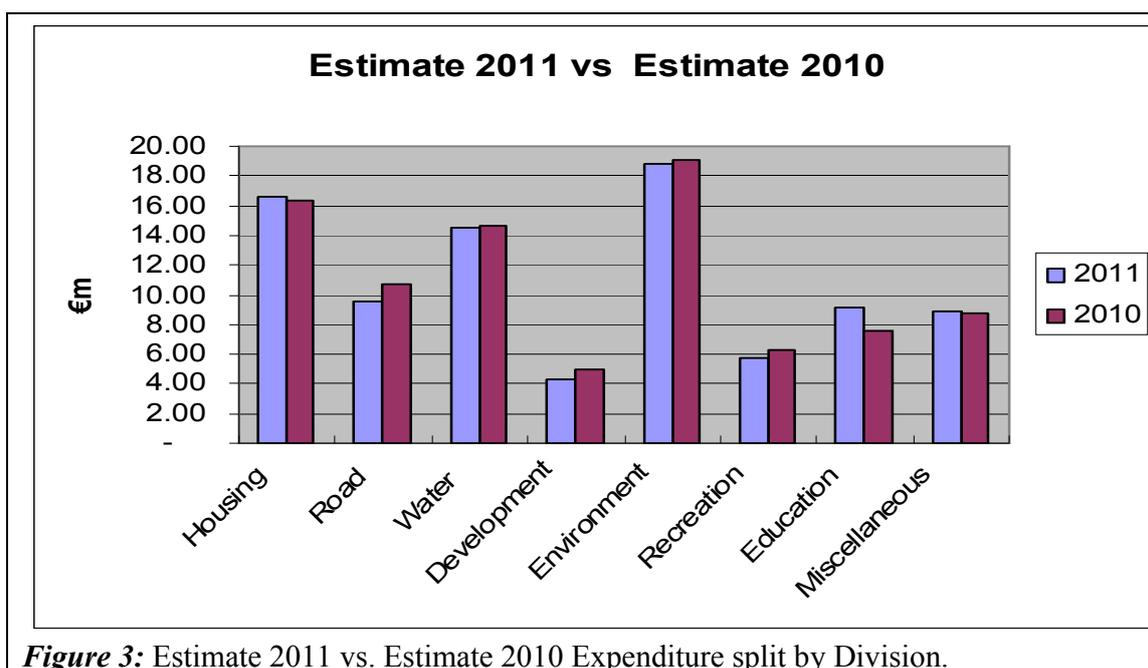


Figure 3: Estimate 2011 vs. Estimate 2010 Expenditure split by Division.

Payroll and Pensions

It must be acknowledged that staff in Limerick City Council has already made a substantial contribution to the necessary reduction in expenditure, namely through:

- The ***pension levy***, which has reduced their pay by an average of nearly 7 per cent (this money is retained by Limerick City Council, but it's deducted from the overall Local Government Fund allocation). This is noted in Table A as €1,300,000.
- Further pay cuts were applied on 1st January 2010 to all salaries and wages of public sector employees arising from central Governments Budget 2010. This resulted in an average pay reduction of 8% of which 35% had to be remitted to central Government in 2010 (€455k approx.).
- Overall staffing numbers have been reduced in-line with the staffing moratorium on an ongoing basis. There is a large number of staff expected to retire in 2011. There are nine individuals to retire in 2011 based on 'planned' retirement. There is expected to be a significant number of 'unplanned' retirements in 2011 (approx. 12 expected) due to the Government scheme of preserving pension entitlements to pay scales and rates prior to pay cut applied on 1st January 2010. This grace period will end on 28th February 2012, in order to avoid a destabilising rate of retirement among older public servants. There is also an ongoing requirement to provide for retirements based on ill-health grounds. The total provision made in draft Budget 2011 for pension gratuities is €1.7m. The consequent impact of those retiring is a reduction in Wages and Salaries costs, but an increase in Pensions & Gratuities. The Wages/ Salaries & Pension/ Gratuities costs are noted further below.
- The Minister for Finance outlined cuts in public service pensions in his Budget 2011 speech as follows:

Annual Public Service Pension (€)	Reduction Rate
First 12,000	0%
Between 12,001 and 24,000	6%
Between 24,001 and 60,000	9%
Balance above 60,001	12%

The impact of these pension cuts for Limerick City Council is a saving of approximately €150,000. This saving will partly off-set the increased burden of funding expected gratuities/ lump sums of €1.7m in 2011.

The details of payroll costs are noted below for 2011 and 2010:

Payroll versus non-payroll	Draft Budget 2011	Adopted Budget 2010
Wages & Salaries	26,311,525	27,133,496
Pensions	14,082,412	12,709,404
	<u>40,393,937</u>	<u>39,842,900</u>

To continue to minimize the increase in payroll costs in 2011 and to comply with the Government directive to reduce payroll costs a number of measures have been reflected in the Budget 2011. These include the non renewal of temporary contracts, non filling of vacancies that arise in 2011 along with the non filling of a number of vacancies that arose in 2010 and reductions in overtime and allowances. Payroll costs including non-core payroll costs and staff numbers will continue to be examined during 2011 in order to identify further savings where possible. This will be done in line with the Croke Park Agreement. In the National Recovery Plan 2011-2014 it has been noted that staffing number in local authorities in Ireland must be reduced further as outlined in the **Figure 4** below. It should be noted that Limerick City Council staffing levels contrast with the recruitment trends of local authorities nationally in the mid 2000's. Rather than increase head-count Limerick City Council continued to reduce its work-force in the mid 2000's through introduction of new and more efficient work practices as illustrated in **Figure 5** below.

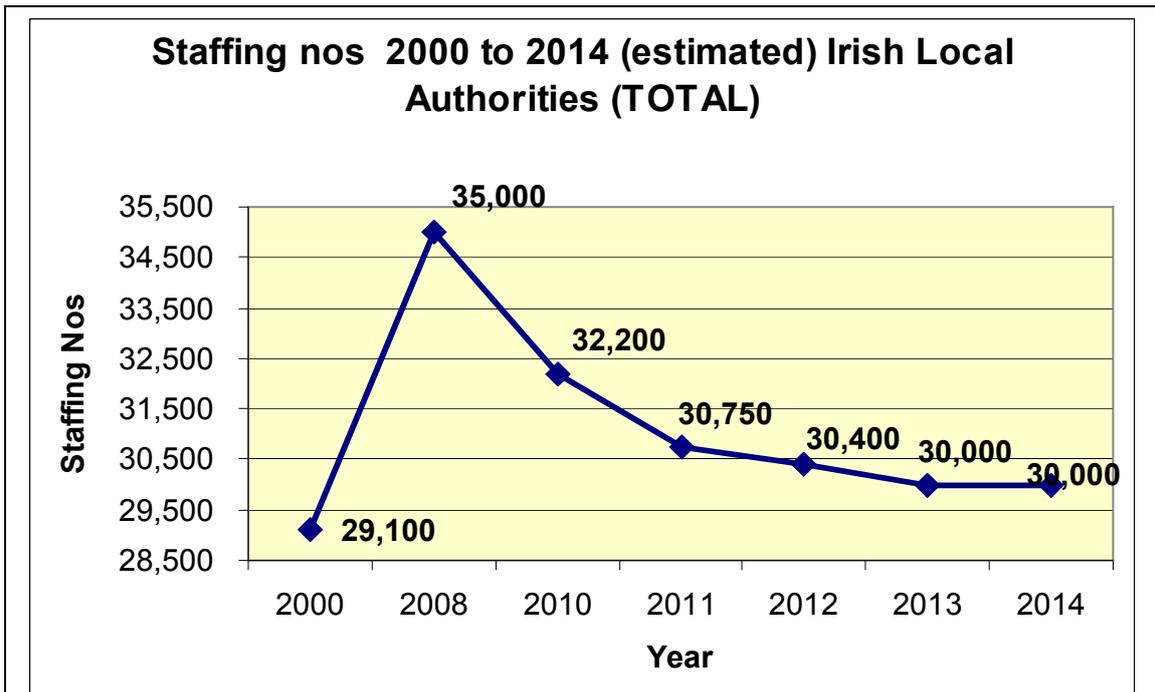


Figure 4: Staffing Numbers of Irish Local Authorities from 2000 up to 2014 (estimated), details extracted from The National Recovery Plan 2011-2014, p. 64.



Figure 5: Staffing numbers (WTE) Limerick City Council 2000 – 2014 (estimated).

Non-Payroll Costs

As per the National Recovery Plan 2011-2014, “data on prices, cost and productivity point to a sustained improvement in competitiveness over 2009 and 2010. **Table 1.1**

below shows Ireland’s ranking in a selection of key competitiveness indicators (extract from the Plan, Table 2.1).

Table 2.1	Selected cost competitiveness indicators
<i>Cost category</i>	<i>Rank among countries benchmarked</i>
Large energy user prices	6 th / 14
Waste disposal costs	9 th / 9
Water costs for industrial users	10 th / 16
Mobile telephone costs (high usage)	5 th / 13
Broadband low speeds (< 2mbps)	6 th /24
Broadband medium speeds (2-12mbps)	11 th /29
Broadband high speeds (12-32mbps)	10 th /29
Prime industrial rental	11 th / 13
Prime office space rental	8 th / 13

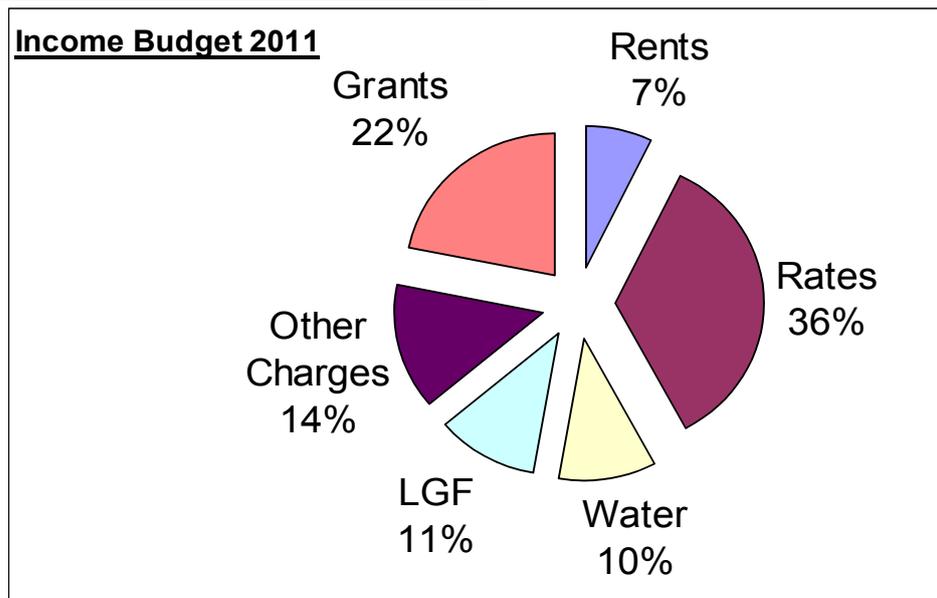
Source: National Competitiveness Council, Eurostat and OECD

Table 1.1: Extract from the National Recovery Plan 2011-2014 (the Plan): Table 2.1: “Selected cost competitiveness indicators”.

There are a number of new costs and unavoidable increases in current costs facing the City Council for 2011. I have made every effort to maintain expenditure in critical areas. In particular insurance, public lighting, energy, overdraft, loan financing and provision for rates refunds and bad debts provide a significant drain on resources. Details of proposals are set out in the following pages.

Limerick City Council has successfully tendered for electricity services in 2010 which will result in savings for 2011 in the area of public lighting, maintenance and general electricity costs. These savings have been reflected in Budget 2011.

INCOME PROPOSALS - 2011



The chart above illustrates the varying sources of income for Limerick City Council’s draft Budget 2011.

Local Government Fund

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have advised that Limerick City Council's Local Government Fund (LGF) Allocation for the year 2011 is €9,638,920, which is bringing the allocation to 2004 levels (see *Figure 6* below). The 2004 Local Government Fund allocation to Limerick City Council was €9.67million. The 2011 LGF allocation compares to the 2010 revised allocation of €10,595,040. The 2011 allocation therefore represents a 9% decrease (€956,120) from the 2010 allocation as set out in the graph below. The impact of the reductions in the Local Government Fund has not been offset by any new sources of income for Limerick City Council in 2011, and therefore has resulted in cost reductions to be sought across all Divisions.

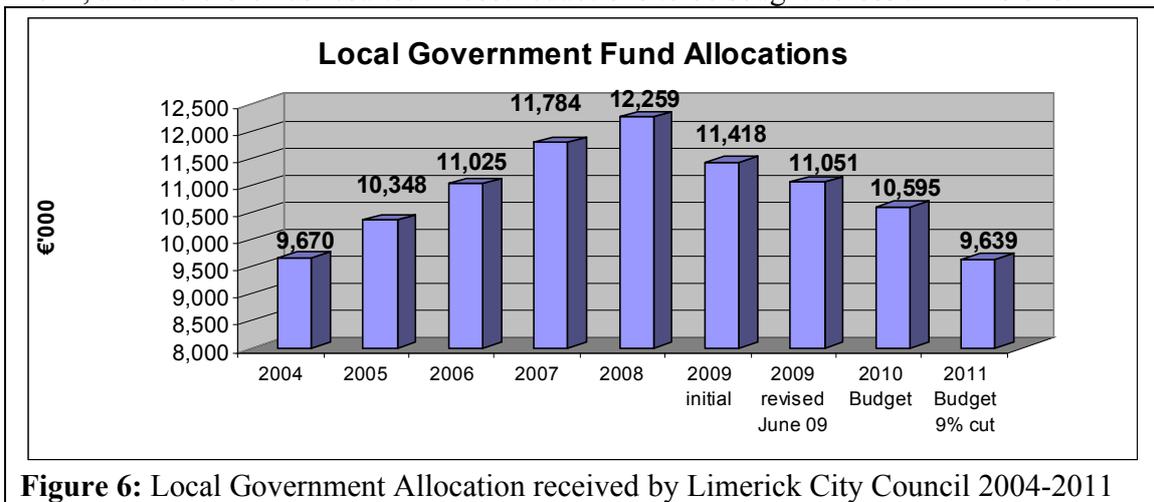
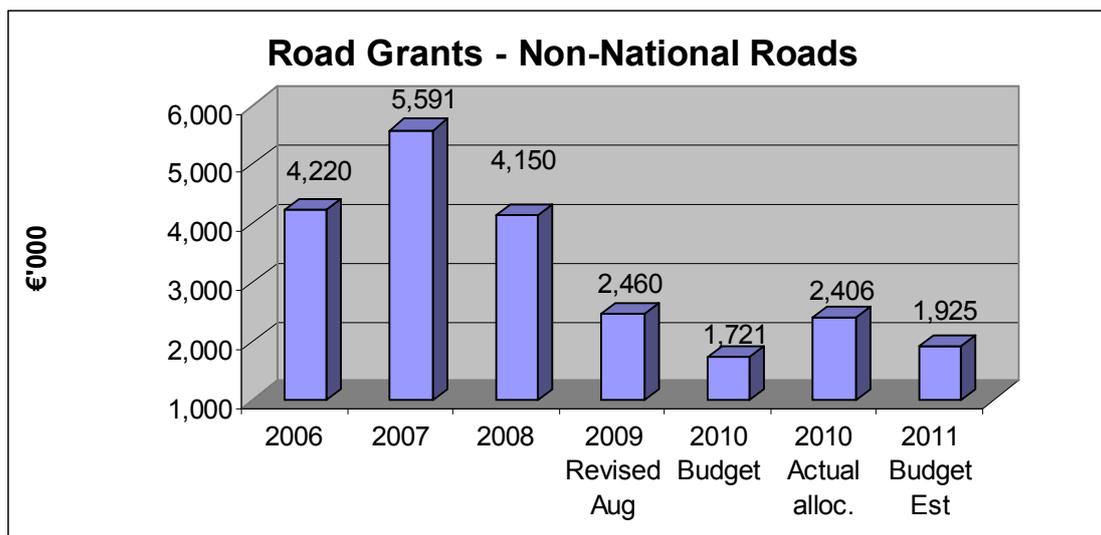
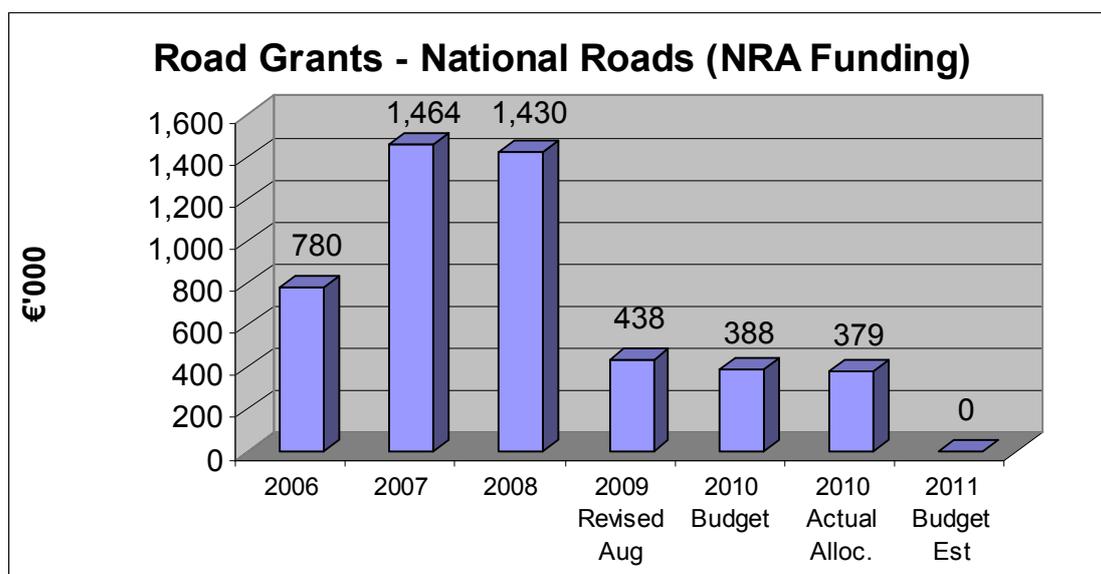


Figure 6: Local Government Allocation received by Limerick City Council 2004-2011

This reduced allocation arises through a reduced level of buoyancy in the Motor Tax yield and austerity measure introduced as part of the National Recovery Plan 2011-2014.

Road Grants

There has been a significant reduction in road grant allocation during 2009 and 2010. This trend is expected to continue for 2011. Details of the funding reductions during 2010 and the expected income figures for 2011 are noted below. Such reductions will impact on the roads programme Limerick City Council is able to deliver during 2011. It should be noted that due to the opening of the Limerick Tunnel, all national roads in Limerick City Council's area will be declassified, therefore not attracting NRA funding. It's uncertain if such funding will be replaced in funding for non-national roads. This has yet to be confirmed by the Department of Transport.



Commercial Rates:

The Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government has requested that local authorities exercise restraint in setting commercial rates and local charges for 2011, in order to support competitiveness in the economy, nationally and locally, and to protect the interests of communities. In line with this request and in recognition of the difficult trading conditions for Retailers/ Businesses in the Limerick City Council area, this draft Budget 2011 there is no increase proposed in the Annual Rate on Valuation.

For draft Budget 2011 there is no change reflected in the effective valuation of 401,035. This assumption reflects the current economic climate where further development of the city has stagnated. .

The year ahead is forecast as presenting continuing difficult trading conditions for all businesses. Consumer confidence is low, credit availability has lessened, along with the

presence of competition from external markets. As mentioned above the rates base is expected to hold next year with neither significant expansion nor contraction.

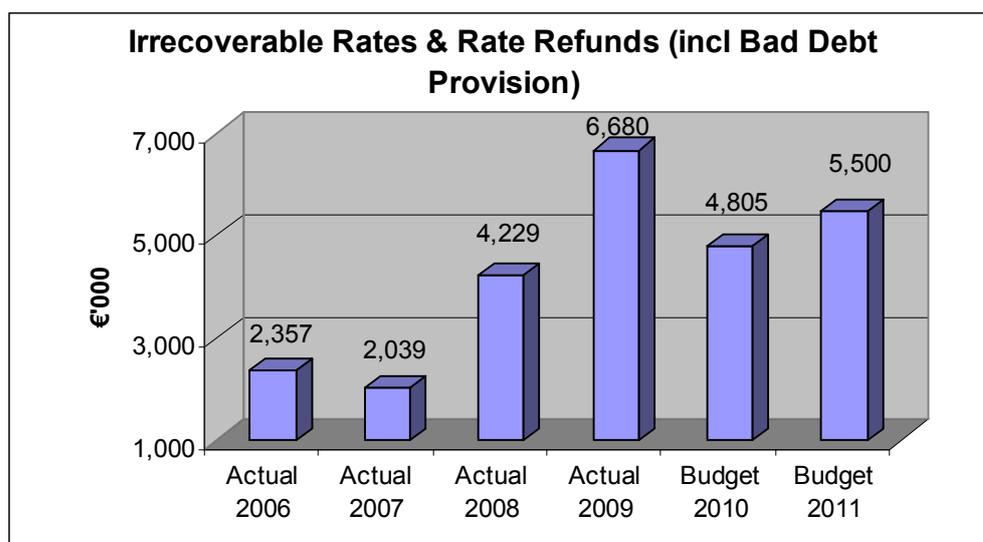
Limerick City Council faces cost pressures in the operation of its many services. For example we must support the disadvantaged parts of the City, continue funding of community groups, maintain appropriate fire cover, provide public lighting and maintain our high standards of street cleaning. Nonetheless, this draft budget has been constructed to limit inflationary pressures in the Limerick economy.

It is vitally important to the City's future that we maintain the optimum conditions to support and increase economic activity. Such activity provides employment and also generates the rates necessary to fund a significant proportion of the essential work of the City Council.

In 2010, Limerick City Council had the third highest Annual Rate on Valuation of the main 34 local authorities. This is despite Limerick City Council making considerable cost savings since 2004 to date, which would have been the period of the boom. This indicates the significant under-bounding of Limerick City Council's area and highlights the necessity of a boundary extension to be effected immediately.

Local Authority Name	2010
Kerry County Council	80.35
Wicklow County Council	76.78
Limerick City Council	76.46
Roscommon County Council	75.13
Cork County Council	74.75
Cork City Council	74.05
Clare County Council	72.99
Donegal County Council	72.23

This Council has demonstrated a commitment to the competitiveness of the City by being the first Local Authority to reduce the rates charge in adopting the annual budget for 2006. This initiative was continued in the 2007 and 2008 budgets. In Budget 2010, the Annual Rate on Valuation was left at the 2009 level of €76.4576. It is proposed to leave the Annual Rate on Valuation at the 2010 level for Budget 2011, despite the significant reduction in funding from the Local Government Fund for 2011, and the continuing level of Bad Debt provision required for Commercial Rates (as illustrated in the graph below). The Bad Debt provision is required due to the high level of vacancy in Limerick City (estimated to be 16%), and due to business closures in the city. There has been a slow turnaround in recent months, with a small number of these vacant becoming occupied, but such progress will be slow



Water/Waste Water Charge:

The Water/ Waste-Water Charge is defined under the Water Pricing Policy and the cost of operating this service can not be subsidised from any other service area. There has been significant infrastructural investment in the last number of years in this area to guarantee adequate processing capacity for Limerick City which is detailed further in the Water Services section of this report. Such infrastructure is partly funded by central government (for domestic customers) and the balance is funded through loan financing (for commercial customers). The cost of such loan financing has risen significantly in the last two years, and this has necessitated in the need to increase the consolidated water charge to €2.60 per m³ for 2011 (from €2.30 per m³ in 2009 & 2010), with the consolidated standing charge remaining at €300 per annum (2010 level). The following table compares the proposed increased charge for 2011 for Limerick City Council of €2.60 per m³ to the 2010 consolidated water charge for neighbouring local authorities of Limerick City Council.

Local Authority Name	2009 Consolidated	2010 Consolidated	2011 Consolidated
Clare County	€2.98 per m ³	€2.94 per m ³	€2.94 per m ³
Limerick County	€2.60 per m ³	€2.60 per m ³	€2.60 per m ³
Limerick City	€2.30 per m ³	€2.30 per m ³	€2.60 per m ³

Table: Water/ Waste Water consolidated charge comparisons

Retail Incentive Scheme

The current economic situation has resulted in an increase in vacancies in retail properties across the city. In an effort to encourage occupancy of these vacant units in the City Centre retail core, Limerick City Council is in the process of designing a scheme to offer incentives for the higher order retail uses of such premises. It is intended to ensure that any incoming use will respect and enhance the multifaceted character of the area and will allow and encourage a diversity of uses to increase its overall attractiveness for shopping, leisure and business purposes. It is intended that such a scheme will be cost neutral. Full details of the scheme will be brought forward in the New Year.

Conclusion

The draft Budget now presented to Members for their consideration reflects:-

- The need to maintain essential services despite reductions in Local Government Fund, and road grants compared to previous years.
- The need to limit cost increases to the users of our services.
- The need to continue a programme of investment and development of the City, albeit on a reduced basis compared to previous years due to limitations in funding & financing.
- The need to match spending programmes with resources.
- The fact that the economy is still in a general weakened condition with consumer confidence low.
- The need to support regeneration proposals for disadvantaged areas of Limerick City.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of Council for their assistance and support during the last year. In particular I wish to express my thanks to the Mayor, Councillor Maria Byrne and her predecessor, Councillor Kevin Kiely for their wholehearted commitment and support this year.

I also wish to express my thanks to the Directors, Mr. Kieran Lehane, Ms. Caroline Curley, Mr. Pat Dowling, Mr. Oliver O'Loughlin and their respective teams for their commitment and high quality work. I am very grateful to all the staff in the Finance Department, in particular Mr. Pat Murnane, Mr. Mark Connolly, Ms Irene Griffin, Ms. Angela Murphy and Ms. Deirdre O'Flynn, for the many hours of work involved in the compilation of this Budget.

I look forward to the full support of the Members at the Statutory Budget Meeting to be held at 2pm on Tuesday, 21st December 2010.

Tom Mackey
City Manager

SOCIAL POLICY & HOUSING

Housing Capital Programme in 2010

Government Housing Policy is “to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice”. Good quality housing is the bedrock of communities. The City Council is the housing authority for the city and has a strong tradition in the direct provision of housing as well as a range of housing options and services. While continuing with construction, the Council has in recent years also expanded its house purchase programme. During 2011 a number of schemes are planned to proceed to construction including:-

- (1) Pike Ave, Garryowen (8 homes under construction)
- (2) Cliona Park, Moyross (a mixed scheme involving 13 family homes and 20 apartments)
- (3) Vizes Court Phase 2 (29 apartments)
- (4) Lord Edward Street (in early stages of design)
- (5) Kincora/Carew Park (in early stages of design)

It is possible that there will be well in excess of 100 homes being built by the end of 2011 and this is very positive. It has been the expressed wish of the Council that there would be increased emphasis on construction in the capital programme owing to its greater economic benefits and job creation in the city. The City Council is unique in obtaining approval to have the above schemes in planning or underway, as part of its building programme and the support of the elected members is essential in this regard. It should also be noted that the Regeneration Agency is examining other possible schemes to be advanced.

The availability of capital is dependent on exchequer funding and the state of government finances. In the 5 year period 2005-2009, the Council spent c. €150m in capital housing services. This investment continued during 2010 with considerable capital resources being expended and the funding role of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is acknowledged. The estimated outturns on the principal exchequer funded programmes for 2010 are as follows:-

Housing Construction/Acquisition	€11.8m
Regeneration	€23.7m
Home Improvements/Grants	€2.3m
Capital Assistance Scheme	€0.8m
Energy Efficiency	€0.7m
Traveller Accommodation	€0.4m
Overall Total	€39.7m

Given the state of public finances generally, the delivery of this investment level is very welcome. This is a very necessary and high level of investment in housing services in the

city and the benefits that accrue to residents, applicants and the council are considerable. The various action plans, strategies and policies approved by the members of the council facilitate the drawdown of these funds. The staff of the Housing section will continue to work closely with councillors, the Limerick Regeneration Agency and the Department of the Environment to optimise investment in housing services.

Regeneration

The council has a team of 8 staff employed to facilitate Regeneration. Considerable and welcome progress has been made on the regeneration programme during 2010 in Moyross, Southill, Ballinacurra Weston and Saint Mary's Park. The total budget for Limerick Regeneration in 2010 was €35m of which €23.0m was allocated to the Council. The Council will spend more than this and indeed since the commencement of the process in 2007, has spent in excess of €55m on regeneration. This work will continue in 2011, again with the funding support of the Department of the Environment. The appearance of the estates has improved as physical regeneration proceeds with many vacant & derelict properties cleared and landscaped.

In June 2010 the Government announced support for 26 new regeneration projects in the City with a total investment of €337m. The commitment involves providing over 850 new and refurbished housing units at a total cost of over €160m in a period of 4 and a half years. This level of government commitment to housing services in the city at a time when public finances are severely challenged is a credit to the efforts of the Council and the Regeneration Agency.

Housing Needs Assessment

A statutory Housing Needs Assessment is due to be carried out in March 2011. The last assessment was carried out in March 2008 and revealed that a total of 1,928 households were considered to be in need of housing. There is a continuing high demand for council housing with many households turning to the Council for assistance. It is likely that owing to the deterioration in the economy that this growth in the waiting lists will accelerate. The Housing Department is currently considering how best to respond to this increased demand through a range of social housing options.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S.) and Housing Standards

The implementation of the Rental Accommodation Scheme has continued in 2010 with a total of 150 transfers completed. The Council has been very active in this area for a number of years with over 550 households now accommodated under the scheme. Expenditure in 2011 on RAS is estimated to be circa €3.7m and this is fully recouped from the state. The Scheme caters for the needs of persons in receipt of rent supplement for 18 months or longer and who have a long term housing need. The aim of the scheme is to provide good quality rented accommodation for qualifying applicants. It is anticipated that an additional 100 qualifying applicants will be catered for under the Scheme in 2011.

The target for inspections under the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 1993 in 2010 is 550. The Council is one of the most active housing authorities in this area in the country. This improved regulation coupled with transfers under RAS means the volume of occupied sub-standard accommodation in the city has declined greatly.

The Council has received funding from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to undertake an intensive programme of inspections in the Georgian quarter in the course of 2011 where most sub-standard accommodation is located.

Management and Maintenance of Estates

A Housing Inspector was appointed in 2008 and is responsible for ensuring that tenants comply with the terms of their tenancy agreements in relation to the upkeep of their homes and other matters. This official has carried out almost 500 inspections in 2010 to ensure that dwellings are properly maintained. Efforts will continue to recruit an additional inspector to strengthen this regulatory role.

The Council has a team of 3 staff dedicated to investigating and reducing anti social behaviour. Every year c. 250 complaints are received, of which 95% are closed through dialogue and mediation. In a small number of cases it is necessary to seek resolution through legal channels and thus far in 2010, 9 notices to quit have been issued and 5 court orders for possession obtained.

In November 2010, the Council adopted the Anti Social Behaviour Strategy as required under the 2009 Housing Act. This policy will strengthen the effectiveness of the Council's response to unacceptable behaviour. A free 'phone line (1 800 283064) was also introduced in 2010.

Expenditure in Estates

A sum of €374,000 is being provided in 2011 for Social/Community & Estate Management Grants in 2011. Works carried out directly by the council will also be funded from this budget. The Council is undertaking a review of the funding of community groups and a report will be brought before the Housing SPC in early 2011.

The Community Co-ordinators (6 no.) continue working in following areas, Kileely/Thomondgate, Watergate/St. John's and the Janesboro/Kennedy Park/Glasgow Park/Rathbane area. The project has been made extremely welcome in each of these communities as the staff has integrated with other groups within the community. Events such as the summer fun days, crime awareness for the elderly and the Halloween children's parties proved to be a great success, while the added visible presence in the areas has been welcomed by many elderly residents.

It is important to note that the funding for grants and the delivery of the above initiatives is dependent on exchequer assistance obtained through the regeneration process.

Housing Grants

As a result of a Government decision, responsibility for Housing Aid for the Elderly was transferred from the HSE to Local Authorities in 2008 and re-named Housing Aid for Older People. The Council now operates three types of housing grants, via: - Housing Adaption Grant, Mobility Aids Grant and HAOP. Councillors are aware that there is a very high level of interest and applications for all grants but HAOP in particular. The Council received an initial allocation of €1,525,000 for the above schemes in 2010 and was then notified of a supplementary allocation of €375,000 which will allow an overall

expenditure of €1,900,000 in 2010. This allocation has been fully utilised and will be exceeded. A sum of €350,000 is being provided from the council's own resources in 2011 to fund grants.

Housing Maintenance

The Housing Section services a rented stock of c. 2,800 units and maintains 7 halting sites. Services are provided to houses in the Northside from the Moyross Depot and in the Southside by the Rathbane Depot. A dedicated re-lettings crew operates from Garryowen, dealing with in excess of 50 casual vacancies per annum. The budget for maintenance, repair and improvement for 2011 will be €3.0 million. Over 1,600 requests for repairs are dealt with annually.

Homeless Services

In 2008 the Government launched “The Way Home: a Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness 2008-2013” which has the aim of eliminating long term homelessness and the need to sleep rough in Ireland by end 2010. The focus for the Council will be on the provision of units for the City’s homeless population with special regard to the needs of single persons. There will be greater inter and intra agency cooperation with all statutory and voluntary agencies. In 2009 the open access hostel moved from Bridgeland House to McGarry House and this transfer has facilitated the delivery of greatly improved services for homeless persons in accordance with the council's homeless strategy.

The Council is the lead authority for the Mid West Homeless Action Plan 2010-2013 and as part of the action plan a review of Homeless Services to ascertain effective delivery is now underway.

Housing Strategy

Arising from the Regeneration process and the fact that there is undue socio spatial segregation in the city, the Department of the Environment required that a joint Housing Strategy be undertaken by the City Council and the counties of Clare and Limerick. This strategy was adopted by the Council at its October meeting. Arising from this, a group of officials will be established to monitor the delivery of the targets and policies approved in the strategy.

Energy Efficiency Programme

This is a new programme introduced by the Department in 2009 and the Council received a capital allocation of €1.0m in respect of same. These monies can be used to fund improvements to the council's rented stock to deliver an energy efficiency rating of C1. This is a high rating level that is not easily achieved and a number of houses were improved during the year. It is estimated that 45/50 homes will have been improved in 2010. It is intended to continue with this scheme in 2011, subject to Departmental funding.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE – ROADS & WATER SERVICES

I ROADS & TRAFFIC

The Roads and Traffic section of Limerick City Council is primarily responsible for the design and construction of roads, maintenance of the existing street network, traffic management and safety, provision of public transport facilities, strategic transportation planning, regulation of street use and the management of public lighting. In addition to this the roads and transportation department are also responsible for the delivery of projects under the City Centre Strategy and the Riverside Strategy including Bedford Row, Thomas Street and Clancy Strand, O’Callaghan Strand and the Orbital Route. The transportation department is also playing a role in forward planning and are currently project managing studies such as The Mid West Area Strategic Plan and the public Transport Feasibility Study.

The public road network in the city is primarily comprised of local, regional and national primary routes with one national secondary route. The length of national primary route in the city area has reduced significantly with the construction of the Southern Ring Road and the reclassification of National Primary roads. Additional declassification of the National road network in the city is been finalised this year as a result of the opening of Limerick Tunnel. This provides challenges to the city council in respect of reduced maintenance grants from the NRA.

1. Southern Ring Road (Phase 2) – Limerick Tunnel

The Limerick South Ring Road Project consists of two phases:

- Phase 1: Connects the Dublin Road N7 to the Cork Road N20/21. Phase 1 was completed in May 2004.
- Phase II: This is the Limerick tunnel connecting the Dublin Road, N7 to the Ennis Road - N18.

The Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase 2/ Limerick Tunnel opened in July of this year having commenced construction during the summer of 2006. This circa €800 million scheme is part of the Limerick city bypass connecting the Dublin Road, N7 to the Ennis Road - N18. The Limerick Tunnel consists of the 9.75km of two lane dual carriageway, 2.3km of single lane dual carriageway, 675m long tunnel under the River Shannon, 750m causeway across Bunlicky Lake, 11 Bridges, 6 Underpasses and 8 Culverts and 2 Toll Plazas.

Limerick Tunnel is capable of handling up to 40,000 vehicles per day at full capacity and currently caters for around 17,000 per day. Removing this many vehicles from the city centre will contribute to reducing traffic congestion, improve air quality, lower CO2 emissions, allow for further pedestrianisation of the city centre as well as construction of bus corridors. The Tunnel also improves access times for commuters to the various industrial estates as well as access to Shannon Airport, Galway, Dublin and Cork.

The contracting consortium is Direct Route and they have won a 35-year concession from the NRA to build, maintain and operate this road. The Tunnel part of the scheme is currently tolled.

2. Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road

Limerick City Council appointed Malone O'Regan McGillicuddy Consultant Engineers for the design of the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road which includes a link road to Moyross. This road will open up the north side of the city, is a vital component for the regeneration of Moyross, and may form part of an overall Northern Distributor Road of Limerick City. Progress on the scheme has been good during 2010 with the constraints study, route selection process and site surveys now complete. The EIS for the scheme was submitted to An Bord Plenala in September this year and a decision is due in March 2011. Limerick City Council is proposing the construction of a dual-carriageway to high quality urban standards with at-grade junctions. The scheme will involve the construction of two new rail bridges and the upgrading of Knockalisheen road back into Watchhouse Cross. This scheme, subject to funding and approval by the Department of Transport and a favourable outcome from the EIS process should be fully designed and tendered by the end of 2011 with construction starting in 2012. The estimated cost of this scheme including land Acquisition is circa €40 million.

3. Road Maintenance

In 2010 Limerick City Council carried out in excess of 100,000m² road surface overlay and strengthening works at various locations throughout the city including major resurfacing works at;

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Greenfields Road | 2. Clonmacken Road | 3. Coonagh Roads |
| 4. Laurel Hill Avenue | 5. Quinn Street | 6. Gerard Street |
| 7. Barrington Street | 8. Inagh Drive | 9. Sheelin Road |
| 10. Stenson Park- Sexton St, North to No 10 and Glenview Gds to No 27 | | |
| 11. Elm Drive | 12. Cherry Avenue | |
| 13. Roseville Gardens | 14. Park Gardens Corbally | |
| 15. Moyross Road | 16. Hartigans Hill | 17. Rheboughe Road |

A number of schemes listed for completion in 2010 will have to be delayed until 2011 as a result of the Contractor who won the tender for the works going into liquidation in late 2010 before completing all the works.

In addition to the above almost 15,000m² footpaths were reconstructed throughout the city. The ongoing programme of road and footpath restoration will be continued in 2011. Again priority will be given to the reduction and minimisation of risk with specific road works to be carried out in a number of areas in accordance with the funding that is expected to be allocated to Limerick City Council by the NRA and the Department of Transport in 2011. It is worth noting that Road Maintenance grants provided by the NRA and the DoT were reduced in 2010 resulting in less road pavement renewals been carried out. These grants are not expected to be increased during 2011 and are most likely to be further reduced.

As a result of the very cold spell over Christmas 2009 and into January 2010 the road network suffered significant deterioration manifesting in a large amount of potholes which required significant investment in repairs.

A roads programme will be brought before the Council in early 2011 in line with available funding. This program will take into consideration all requests for road improvements received from members during 2010.

4. City Centre Remodelling Project

The regeneration of the City Centre area to create a high quality public realm is a priority for the Transport and Infrastructure department. In this respect several projects are currently being progressed and these include:

(a) Limerick City Centre Orbital Route

Arup Consulting Engineers working with the Roads Engineering staff of Limerick City Council have developed plans for an Inner Orbital Route in Limerick City that will facilitate the introduction of substantial remodelling and pedestrian priority works on O'Connell Street thus creating a high quality pedestrianised public space in Limerick City centre. This Inner Orbital Route will facilitate the extensive re-modelling of all the streetscape of O'Connell Street and William Street providing wider modern footpaths and new street furniture.

A significant milestone on this scheme was reached during 2009 when contracts commenced for the reconstruction of Sexton Street and the construction of a new Link Road at Cathedral Place and this scheme was completed in early 2010. These junctions form Junctions 8 and 9 of the new orbital route

A contract commenced in September 2010 to upgrade Clare Street between Abbey Bridge and Lelia Street and to install controlled Junctions as designed as part of the Orbital Route. The Lelia Street Junction is designated as junction 1 on the Orbital route.

Extensive consultation has been carried out with all stakeholders over the past number of years, to create plans that best reflect the type of city centre the citizens of Limerick city will desire in the future.

(b) William Street/Sarsfield Street Remodelling

A contract for the complete remodelling of William Street was awarded to McGinty & O'Shea Contractors and work commenced in August 2010. Phase 1 which included the complete remodelling of Sarsfield Street and upper William Street has been substantially completed during 2010 and the remodelling of William Street will be completed during 2011.

5. Public Transport

Limerick city centre like other cities suffers from traffic congestion at peak times as a result of our over dependence on car based transport. Several initiatives at reducing our level of dependency on cars are currently being promoted including the improvement of Public Transport Facilities and the provision of Bus Lanes. These initiatives will help reduce bus journey times and result in an increase in the frequency of service thus offering choice and a better service to people choosing to use public transport and encourage a modal shift to public transport thus reducing congestion in our city centre.

Mulgrave Street

The construction of a green route between The Pike and Cathedral place along Mulgrave Street was completed in spring 2010. Mulgrave Street has benefited from improved footpaths, public lighting, surfacing and pedestrian crossings as part of the scheme.

Condell Road

Construction work was completed on the extension of the Green Route and Cycle Paths on the Condell Road out to Clonmacken Roundabout. This route has enhanced access to the city for buses coming from Shannon and Galway. This route will also provide access to the city from a further Northside Park & Ride facility. An extensive footpath has been provided as part of this scheme along the entire length of the road as has improved controlled pedestrians crossings to improve pedestrian and road safety.

Childers Road

Limerick City Council is currently working on designs for the widening of Childers Road between the Parkway Roundabout and Carew Park Link Road to accommodate bus lanes and improved capacity junctions. It is envisaged that an EIS for this scheme will be completed in early 2011.

Southern Green Route – Ballinacurra Road

A scheme for the provision of an inbound Bus Lane on Ballinacurra Road was designed and tendered in 2010.

Public Transport Feasibility Study

Limerick City Council is required by the department of transport to carry out a public transport feasibility study to look at the infrastructural requirements of the city for the next twenty years. This study is examining the feasibility of providing Light rail service; bus Rapid Transit systems, High quality Bus Corridors and Park and Ride facilities for Limerick Commuters. This study should be completed by April 2010.

Walking & Cycling Strategy

Limerick City Council with assistance from the Smarter Travel unit in the department is currently preparing a walking and cycling strategy for Limerick City and its Environs. The aim of this ambitious strategy is to create plans for an extensive network of high quality safe routes that can be used by people for commuting and leisure trips on foot and by bicycle. Part of the strategy will also look at ways of promoting cycling and walking as alternatives to the car. This strategy is aimed at reducing traffic congestion and promoting healthier lifestyles.

Smarter Travel

To support the Governments' Sustainable National Travel Policy, Smarter Travel (www.smartertravel.ie), a national competition was established to deliver outstanding examples of sustainable travel in urban areas. This competition was aimed at supporting a comprehensive demonstration of how sustainable transport principles can be successfully applied to an area, such that it can become an example of best practice in integrated and sustainable transport. This will involve developing soft and hard measures to promote the use of sustainable travel modes (walking, cycling and public transport) in an area while working closely with local businesses, educational facilities, communities, etc. Limerick City Council prepared an extensive submission and submitted this to the Department of

Transport during 2010. We are still awaiting an announcement from the Minister of Transport on the result.

6. Riverside Strategy

The Riverside is one of the most important natural assets of Limerick City and this is recognisable by the substantial new development investment currently taking place along the riverside. To complement these initiatives by the private sector Limerick City Council has prepared a riverside strategy that aims to re-evaluate the potential of this important public area to create a high quality amenity area that compliments and reinforces the Riverside City image. In this respect several schemes are currently being advanced and these include.

The Quays

A scheme for the full upgrade of the riverside promenade between Shannon Bridge and Sarsfield Bridge along Bishop's Quay, Howley's Quay and Harvey's Quay was advanced during 2010. The proposals were submitted for funding and we are still awaiting a decision.

7. Traffic Management

Continuing investment in effective and efficient enforcement of all traffic and parking regulations is important to maintain the city as a vibrant retail, economic and social centre. Conscious of the ongoing requirement to reduce congestion and to promote business and commerce in the City Centre the following proposals were developed during 2009.

a) Parking Control & Park Magic

On street parking management in Limerick City is provided under the disc parking system. This system was first introduced in 1983 and has proved over the years to be an efficient, effective and acceptable control method to provide shoppers and visitors to the city with, suitable and reasonably priced on street parking facilities.

In 2006 Limerick City Council commenced a programme of providing 'added value to the disc parking customer. The objective is to make payment of disc parking fees and the use of the disc parking system more convenient. Following an open tender process 'Park Magic' were contracted for a period of 3 years to provide disc parking customers with a convenient choice of payment methods that include payment by credit card, mobile phone, fixed line phone and internet. The Park Magic system permits Limerick City Council to improve management of the disc parking system, "reward" system users and to promote business and commercial activities in the city. A recent review of the contract indicated a very high compliance with contract requirements and large-scale acceptance by the public of the system. UTC System. This scheme has continued to operate successfully during 2010 and now accounts for over 25% of all paid parking transactions in the City.

In May 2010 a significant reduction was applied to the cost of parking in the city centre when the City Council changed all the one-hour parking zones in the city centre to two-hour zones effectively reducing the cost of parking from €2/hour to €1/hour. At the same time Pay by Stay parking was introduced for customers using the pay by phone system where they could pay for a minimum of 30 minutes parking for 50 cents in the core city centre. Customers can now pay for the exact number of minutes they wish to park for using this system.

b) Limerick UTC

The UTC System was further expanded during 2010 to improve safety and traffic flow for all modes of traffic in the city centre. As part of this expansion new junctions are being added to the system at;

- Lower Shelbourne Road/Condell Road Junction,
- Clare Street/Lelia Street & Clare Street Locke Quay Junctions
- Sexton Street North

These new junctions will significantly increase safety for vulnerable road users including pedestrians and cyclists and allow local communities fair, reasonable and safe access onto main routes from side roads offering all road users a quality and safe level of service.

c) Road Safety

The promotion of road safety awareness at every conceivable opportunity is a priority of the City Council Traffic Department. A major crash scene simulation was carried out this autumn in collaboration with the emergency services and Limerick County Council where secondary school students were able to observe the often terrible consequences of speeding and dangerous driving. The Life Saver Project was delivered at 4 City and 4 County sites during 2010 in cooperation with our road safety colleagues in The County Council and An Garda Síochána. This road safety awareness policy will be continued and expanded, using modern technology, in the coming year. In accordance with the need to consistently review the operation of all services, the School Warden Programme as presently delivered will be examined in detail in the coming year with a view to delivering enhanced value for money across this service. In 2011 we intend to expand our collaboration on road safety educational and awareness programmes with Limerick County Council.

Advisory Speed Monitors have been introduced at a number of key sites at Condell Road and Black Boy Road which will contribute to road safety.

d) Anti-Skid Surfacing

Anti-skid surfacing was installed on the approaches to a number of key junctions in the City during 2010. This surfacing should help to reduce the impact of rear end collisions and pedestrian accidents and the program will be continued during 2011.

8. Traffic Calming

In respect of engineering measures to provide and enhance road safety, the City Council is committed to an extensive roll out of traffic calming measures and traffic management initiatives at locations, which warrant appropriate works. The City Council will continue to collaborate and work in tandem with the Garda Síochána, the traffic authority, in the installation of the new speed detection camera installations within the city, which commence November 2010. The City Council spent in excess of €120,000 on traffic calming measures in the three electoral Wards during 2010 in agreement with the Councillors. In 2011 we are proposing to continue the budget for member's discretionary traffic calming measures in each ward area to reflect the requirement for traffic calming measures in our housing estates.

9. Taking in Charge

The following estates have been taken in charge during 2010

Springfield , is a residential estate of 23 no. properties, comprising of semi-detached and Terraced Houses. The estate is serviced via a single road through the commercial development of Springfield, Old Singland Road, Limerick.

Stenson Park is a residential estate of 60 no. properties, comprising of terraced and semi-detached Houses with ancillary car parking. The estate is serviced by a road accessing the Public road via. *High Road, Thomondgate, R508*

Farran Villas is a residential Estate of 10 no. properties, comprising of terraced and semi-detached Houses with ancillary car parking. The estate is serviced by a road accessing the Public road via. *High Road, Thomondgate, R508*

Stenson Close is a residential Estate of 8 no. properties, comprising of terraced and semi-detached Houses with ancillary car parking. The estate is serviced by a road accessing the Public road via. *High Road, Thomondgate, R50*

Churchfield Estate, St. Patrick's Road, Limerick – Roads Description.

Churchfield Estate is a residential estate of 37 no. properties, comprising of semi-detached Houses and ancillary car parking. The estate is serviced by a single road. Access to the estate is from the Public Road no. 206A – *St. Patrick's Road*

The following estates have been significantly advanced for Taking in Charge and are likely to be brought before Council early in 2011

- **Meadow Lands Close** off Old Cork Road, Limerick.
- **Butterfield Close** off Old Cork Road Limerick
- **Castlewell Estate** off Courtbrack Terrace
- **Shannonvale** off Old Cratloe Road
- **Meadow Springs** Estate off Ennis Rd
- **Aspen Gardens** of St Patricks Road
- **The Hermitage** off Mill Road Corbally

Discussions have commenced with the developers of the following estates

- **Spring Grove**, off Mill Rd Corbally
- **Meadowbrook** off Mill Road Corbally
- **Silverbrook** off mill Rd Corbally
- **Log na gCapall** off South Circular Road

10 Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP)

Limerick City Council acting as lead authority on behalf of the four Mid-West Local Authorities continued work on The Mid-West Area Strategic Plan during 2010 and now have this advanced to first draft stage. The need for the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan is to:

- Strengthen and enhance the functionality of the Limerick / Shannon Gateway and Ennis Hub, as identified in the National Spatial Strategy 2002 - 2020

- Provide guidelines for the promotion of sustainable development in existing urban centres and rural areas within the region
- Identify the regions strategic requirements for the next 20 years
- Inform authorities of future social, physical, educational, economic infrastructural spending programmes as well as upcoming local authority development plans
- Inform future National Development Plan (NDP) reviews and the future Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) and National Spatial Strategy (NSS) reviews.
- Aid in identifying and securing National Government funding

The output of the Strategy is not intended to be an ‘end-state’, but rather the first substantial step in a rolling strategy that shall help shape the future of the Mid-West Region. It is currently expected that the study will be completed around April 2011.

II WATER SERVICES

The Water Services Department, incorporating both water and waste water continues to manage a significant capital and revenue programme ranging from the Limerick Main Drainage Civil Engineering Project and ongoing water conservation programme to the Design, Build and Operate contract for the improvement of the Clareville Water Treatment Plant. The efficient provision of water and wastewater services while ensuring a reduction in the amount of unaccounted for water in the city remains the priority within this department.

Clareville Water Treatment Plant

The Clareville Water Treatment Plant is now under the operations of a private contractor under a Design Build Operate type contract. The commencement date for this contract was April 2007 and this will see the operator in place until April 2027. An increase in capacity from 50MLD to 87MLD was made available in April 2010. The strategic development of this water production facility will lead to a doubling of the capacity of the plant in the longer term and safeguards the provision of potable water to the City and County for that period. This increased capacity is predominantly to meet the needs of Limerick County and will be recouped accordingly.

Water Conservation / Water Distribution Network

Limerick City Council is committed to the implementation of its five-year Water Services Strategy as approved by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government. The strategy provides for the strategic provision, rehabilitation and maintenance of the water production, distribution and conservation systems within the city area. A proposal for restructuring the infrastructure in public open space to facilitate the elimination of common looped lead mains is with the DEHLG for their approval.

Limerick City Trunk Mains

The development of a new ring water main for the city to support present and future development is almost completed. New ring water mains have been laid along the course of the Southern Ring Road, the Monaleen Road and from Rosbrien to the Dock Road. The provision of a new water main from the Dock Road to Caherdavin including a river crossing will be completed in the coming year. Although scheduled to be completed

2010, this work was not carried out, due to unavailable funding from the Department in 2010.

Over 800 metres of the existing Distribution Water Main were replaced during 2010. Additional valving works were carried out in the City to improve the water supply system and to minimise those areas affected during periods of works or shutdown.

The leakage detection programme in the city mains system continued during the past year with in excess of 500 leaks identified and repaired resulting in additional savings in the supply of water.

Non Domestic Metering Project

The non domestic metering Project is now complete and non domestic customers are now receiving bills for both water and waste water services based on metered volumes.

Limerick Main Drainage

This scheme, the largest civil engineering project ever undertaken in the city is now complete. The city now has a modern up to date fully integrated drainage system, which is already providing substantial benefits in the improved quality of the water in the river Shannon and provides adequate capacity for the development of the City and its environs for the foreseeable future.

The rehabilitation of city centre sewers to obtain the maximum benefit from the installation of the Main Drainage Scheme needs to be undertaken as a Phase 2 development of the Limerick Main Drainage Project. This Phase involves:-

1. Reduction of infiltration
2. Reduce and separate surface water
3. Extend the distribution system to cater for future development

A proposal to appoint consultants to advance Phase 2 has now been completed and is awaiting final approval of the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government.

Tenders have been received for a long term (20years) operate and maintain contract for the treatment works and a contractor was appointed in May 2010.

Flood Alleviation

The Water Services Department is currently operating a proactive gully cleaning programme whereby all gullies in the City will be cleaned at least once a year. Again the City Council performed admirably during the recent severe cold spell and only a small number of isolated properties were without water.

Public Toilets

There are two new state of the art wheelchair accessible public toilet facilities in Limerick City. The first facility is near the entrance to the People's Park. The second facility has recently been installed on Lower Bedford Row to replace the older model that had been in service for sixteen years.

A third facility is available at Arthur Quays Shopping centre. Limerick City Council provides for the cost of maintenance and upkeep from within our own resources.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planning Related Policy

Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016

The Planning and Economic Development Department of Limerick City Council formally commenced the review of the City Development Plan 2004-2010 in December 2008

- The initial stage of consultation took place up from 20th January to Monday 16th February 2009. Approximately 200 people attended 13 meetings which were held throughout the City, a total of 88 submissions or observations were received from a broad range of individuals, voluntary groups, property owners, interested groups and state agencies.
- The draft City Development Plan was published in December 2009.
- A further period of consultation took place in February 2010, 6 public meetings were held and 104 submissions were received.
- The Members of Limerick City Council by resolution resolved to amend the draft Development Plan on the 29th June 2010. The draft Development Plan was put back out to public consultation from 19th July 2010 to 27th August, a further 30 submissions were received.
- The Development Plan 2010-2016 was adopted on the 25th November 2010. The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the City for the six-year period 2010-2016.

Regional Planning Guidelines

The Mid West Regional Authority has undertaken a review of the existing regional planning guidelines that will provide a strategic basis for the development of the region till 2022. The guidelines will be incorporated in the City Development Plan 2010-2016.

Mid West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP)

MWASP is 20 year strategic plan for the mid west region being undertaken on behalf of the Mid West Regional Authority and the administrative areas of Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council and Clare County Council. It will provide the basis for infrastructural programme over the coming 20 years.

Retail Strategy

A review of the Mid-West Retail Strategy 2010-2016 was undertaken on behalf of the Mid West Regional Authority and the administrative areas of Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council and Clare County Council.

The review took place in the context of substantial retail development in the region over the last number of years and the decline of the city centre.

The strategy will provide guidance on the scope and the location of retail developments in the region. The strategy has been incorporated into the Regional Planning Guidelines and the City Development Plan 2010-2016.

Housing Strategy

A regional housing strategy has been prepared on behalf of the Mid West Regional Authority and the administrative areas of Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council and Clare County Council. The preparation of a housing strategy is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended and is unique in that it is being prepared for the region as opposed to a single authority. The strategy will provide guidance on the scale of housing demand in the region and the anticipated levels of demand for social housing. The strategy will also provide guidance on how the demand for social housing should be allocated across the region.

Regeneration

The Regeneration Agency received the approval for the construction of a mixed residential scheme at Cliona Park Moyross in October 2010. It is anticipated that further development proposals will be presented in the course of 2011. In addition it is expected that implementation plans for the coming 5 years will be presented to the Council for approval for each of the areas.

Planning Operations

Conservation of Protected Structures

In April of 2007, Minister John Gormely wrote to Limerick City Council requesting that more than 700 buildings be added to the Record of Protected Structures following the completion of an inventory of architectural heritage in the City by the Minister's Department. From a preliminary analysis it would appear that some 300 are already on the RPS. The City Development Plan 2010-2016 have included 133 additions to the Record of Protected Structures.

In the course of 2010 the Planning Authority distributed €41,000 of conservation grants to owners of protected structures to carry out works.

Planning Applications

The Council will receive approximately 250 planning applications in 2010. Amongst the significant developments received during 2010 were:-

A five storey office and residential development in Broad Street.

The development of the northern elevation of the Parkway Shopping Centre to a private medical facility.

Provision 11 two storey 3-bedroom houses on the Ballysimon Road.

The development of a medical facility and pharmacy on the Island Road.

Work has progressed in 2010 on the implementation of a scanning system for planning files. The system has been set up and is now operational. This facilitates the viewing of current planning files on the City Council's website.

Significant Development under construction

The development of a new greyhound racing stadium on part of the former Limerick Racecourse lands at Greenpark was completed in 2010 and is opened to the public.

Enforcement of Planning

The council received in excess of 150 complaints in respect of unauthorised development in the course of 2010. A number of these complaints have resulted in prosecution in the course of 2010.

Casual Trading

Limerick City Council is charged with the control of casual trading in the city. This is done by the enforcement of the casual trading by-laws. In the course of 2010 a fulltime dedicated markets inspector was appointed to ensure compliance with the existing by-laws. It is intended that the existing by-laws will be reviewed in 2011 with a view to extending the scope of casual trading within the city.

Event Management

In the course of 2010 Limerick City (Thomond Park) hosted two outdoor concerts which required the granting of an Event Management Licence under the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. These events make a substantial contribution to the local economy. It is anticipated that in the course of 2011 that a number of similar events will be held in the city and will require an event management licence.

Economic Development (incorporating Property Management)

Limerick City Council (Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road) Compulsory Purchase Order 2010

Limerick City Council commenced the process for the making of a compulsory purchase order in respect of the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road. A notice for the making of the compulsory purchase order was published in late 2010 and has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála for confirmation. The compulsory purchase order provides for the compulsory acquisition of lands in the townlands of Caherdavin, Clondrinag, Clonconane, Ballygrennan, Ballynanty Nore, Monabraher, Killeely and Knock in Limerick City and Gortgarraun and Knockalisheen in County Clare.

As part of the compulsory purchase order process notices of the making of the compulsory purchase order were served on 92 landowners/reputed landowners and occupiers/reputed occupiers. The compulsory purchase order if confirmed provides for the compulsory acquisition of 114 separate map references/landholdings.

Regeneration

The Economic Development Department continues to work with the Regeneration Agencies in identifying suitable sites for redevelopment. Significant progress has been made in identifying sites for redevelopment in the Nicholas Street/Athlunkard Street areas.

National Spatial Strategy Gateways & Hubs European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Grant Scheme

As part of the National Spatial Strategy Gateways & Hubs European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Grant Scheme Limerick City Council was successful in securing funding of €3m for public realm works and other associated works at Sarsfield Street, William Street and Upper William Street.

The initial grant application was made for public realm works in Sarsfield Street, William Street and Upper William Street. It is anticipated that the cost of these public realm works will be significantly lower than originally anticipated given the current value for money that exists in the competitive tendering process for such works.

Having regard to the above a further supplementary application was made to the National Spatial Strategy Gateways & Hubs European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Grant Scheme to extend the scope of the enhancement works to Limerick City Centre to include remodelling of John's Square, Limerick.

This grant scheme is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2007-13.

City Centre Strategy

Over the past 2 years a significant number of actions contained in the City Centre Strategy 2008 have either been advanced or completed. It is hoped to review the City Centre Strategy in the coming year having regard to the practicalities of advancing all identified strategic sites in the current economic climate.

City Centre Strategy – Georgian Quarter

Limerick City Council is continuing to advance plans for a pilot demonstration project for the Georgian area of Limerick. Two buildings have been identified in the Mallow Street area of Limerick City for the advancement of this pilot demonstration project.

Parks Atlantic Project - Interreg IVB Territorial Atlantic Area Programme

The Mid-West Regional Authority (MWRA) in conjunction with Limerick City Council made an application for E.U. funding in 2009 under the Interreg IVB Territorial Atlantic Area Programme. The application was based on developing Urban Parks in the Atlantic Area of Europe. We were advised by the MWRA in February 2010 that the Park Atlantic project application was successful. The main objective of this transnational cooperation project is to capitalize on the value of urban and suburban parks and enhance their Atlantic contribution to sustainable urban development. As part of this project it is intended to undertake a study of a total of 5 urban parks with a more detailed sociological study of 3 of these 5 parks. This sociological study will examine users of the park, reasons why people use the parks and possible improvements that could be made to the park.

Marketing of Limerick City Centre

A group comprising members from Limerick City Council, Shannon Development, Limerick Co-Ordination Office and Limerick Chamber have developed and rolled-out a marketing campaign for marketing Limerick City Centre in the Mid-West region during the Christmas period. This marketing campaign is focusing on key actions as follows:-

- Focused marketing campaign for city centre for Christmas period promoting city businesses
- Animation of streets with trees, carol singing and Christmas related entertainment activities
- Provision of Santa experience in City Centre

Limerick City Council is the leading contributor in this Christmas Marketing Campaign.

Creative Limerick

Creative Limerick – Connect to the Grid has successfully continued to further occupy vacant retail units that are between lettings. A number of new landlords have offered their buildings for this initiative and it is anticipated that a further number of identified buildings will be included early in the New Year. The success of this initiative has largely been driven by the business community who have given buildings for free while they are between lettings and the creative graduates who have inspired us with their artistic work.

Derelict Sites

The current economic climate has seen an unprecedented rise in the number of complaints that are arising in this area. A total of 40 notices were served during 2010 and 10 sites were taken out of dereliction.

Property Management

The Property Management Unit of the Economic Development Department continued to advance a significant number of matters under this area of responsibility during 2010 including settlement of outstanding CPO compensation claims, land acquisitions/disposals, evaluation of strategic land holdings/opportunities, leases, licences, requests for wayleaves, putting in place legal documentation (Deed of Charge) for drawdown of Access II funding for artists apartment in John Square and the Art Gallery, land ownership queries, queries on rights of way, adverse possession issues, perfection of legal title on land, collection of rents owing, site inspections, maintenance of sites, Part V, trespass/squatters etc

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & EMERGENCY SERVICES

During 2010, the Environment Department has continued to make every effort to maintain the physical environment of Limerick City and where possible to make improvements with the support of local communities and businesses. In doing so at operational level a street cleaning service on a 365 days per year basis is maintained while on this service, at a strategic level, a revised Litter Management Plan for the period 2010 to 2014 has been adopted.

At national and regional level Limerick City Councils Environment Department continues to deliver on the objectives of the Regional Waste Management Plan and on the provisions of the Waste Framework Directive.

Bring Banks

The number of bring banks for recycling in the city has been increased to 21 with new bring banks located at O' Callaghan's Strand and St Mary's Park. To increase service efficiency the maintenance and servicing of bring banks has been outsourced during 2010 with the resultant staffing rearrangements enhancing the city centre cleansing crews.

Street Cleaning

The number of street bins in the city has also increased with the total number of 196 street litter bins now in Limerick City. Also in order to augment this service the Council

procured 1 no litter bin servicing vehicle and 2 no mechanical mini sweepers. During the year the process of the introduction of GPS Tracking Mechanisms on all environment vehicles has commenced. The maintenance of environment and street cleaning vehicles has also been tendered for and outsourced during 2010 with resultant cost efficiencies.

In conjunction with the Planning Department an evaluation of the waste management and street cleaning service in support of the weekly Milk Market also took place during 2010. As a result, a recycling depot specifically for Market Casual Traders has been established at Carr Street which operates on Saturday mornings in accordance with best practice in re-use and recycling with an increased focus also on the enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act. The outcome of this process has resulted in an 80% reduction in illegal dumping in the vicinity of the Milk Market.

Longpavement Remediation Project

The remediation of Longpavement Landfill site will conclude in December of this year. This project has cost €5.98m. Final landscaping on the site is currently in progress. The site will continued to be monitored in the coming months with gas and leachate levels being evaluated by mechanical and electrical equipment on site.

Baggott Estate

Phase one of the Baggott Estate improvement scheme commenced in June 2010. Limerick City Council in conjunction with the Office of Public Works and the National Parks and Wildlife Service has redeveloped approximately 20 acres of wetlands in the Baggott Estate area. The Environment Department in conjunction with property management has committed to develop improvements to the Baggott Estate during 2011 to the value of €200,000. This work will entail development of recreational walkways, improved access points and installation of CCTV and ecological signage. The project to date has involved close liaison with local community groups and local councillors through the formulation of a discussion document. It is anticipated that proposals will advance through Part 8 of the 2001 Planning and Development Regulations early in 2011.

City Hall Waste Management System

Limerick City Council has developed and implemented a revised waste management system in City Hall. The revised system implemented in conjunction with Corporate Services recognised best practice in waste reduction, re-use and recycling and includes an organic waste bin having regard to the provisions of the Food Waste regulations 2010. The system was tendered for in June and the successful applicant was Clean Ireland Recycling who now operates the process.

Regional Waste Management Plan

Limerick City Council continues to support the Regional Waste Management Office for the region as it co-ordinates the Regional Waste Management Plan 2006-2011. The Council contributes financially to the cost of implementing this plan and participates fully on all technical operational and policy fora. The Regional Office in conjunction with Limerick City Council's Environment Department delivered numerous initiatives in Limerick City during the year including a seminar on the 2010 Food Waste Regulations, Thomond Park Waste Monitoring Initiative, European Recycling Week and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment initiatives.

Waiver Scheme

The Council continued to provide a waiver scheme for low income families and old age pensioners during 2010. This service will continue in 2011 and is currently availed of by approximately 3500 households in the city. All lifts are subject to a maximum weight provision of 12 kg per lift.

Litter Pollution

The Environmental Enforcement Team continued to work closely with individuals, local communities, the HSE and the gardai to prevent littering and dumping in the City. Overall, there has been a decrease in reports of fly-tipping, although the number of households who do not have a bin service is on the increase which affects street bins and dumping of domestic rubbish. New approaches to estates with ongoing problems were piloted including intensive door-to-door surveys, modifications to estate design, installation of CCTV and the serving of various statutory notices. During the lead in to May Eve individual households were visited and served notices for goods which appeared to be stored for the bonfires and overall the number of illegal bonfires in the city was reduced.

In the city centre, the 'bin your butts' initiatives continued including patrols with members of the Garda Siochanna, dispensing of ashtrays to premises which have cigarette litter and distribution of personal 'bin your butt's ashtrays. Dog patrols have also taken place on popular dog walking routes to dispense 'poop scoop' bags and remind dog owners of their responsibilities.

There has been a notable intensification of the serving of statutory notices to commercial premises in line with the recommendations of the IBAL report under the Litter Pollution Act to ensure that business owners understand their responsibilities for keeping their general areas clean. Fines under the presentation of waste bye-laws have been issued to businesses who fail to store and secure their bins and ensure they do not contribute to litter in the city. The Environmental Inspectors have also worked closely with local promoters to ensure the removal of illegal fly-posting and it is hoped to develop alternative means of advertising in 2011.

It is expected that storage of domestic waste and illegal dumping by households who do not have a service will continue to be a challenge in 2011, particularly in private No. of Area Meetings rental accommodations where there is a high turnover of tenants.

Parks

The Parks Department continued their Spring, Summer and Winter bedding planting programme including the popular 'Bridges in Bloom' as well as caring for over 330 acres of open space in the City. New flower tiers were installed on O'Connell Avenue which provided a city centre floral display and the Market Quarter area worked closely with the Parks Department to ensure a display of hanging baskets throughout the Summer.

New play equipment was installed in O'Brien Park, Clare Street in May of this year.

The Autumn/ Winter focus has been on tree pruning and planting, with a higher demand for callouts following the high winds in November while the newly purchased wood chipper has also been used to dispose of household Christmas trees throughout the city.

At a strategic level Limerick City Council adopted the 2010 Parks Bye-laws in September.

Focusing on the parks as play and recreation spaces throughout 2010 led to successful May Music in the Parks over four consecutive Saturdays in May, a popular Halloween

Treasure Hunt and Christmas Family events including a Christmas decoration hunt and a puppet show in November/December.

An outdoor play initiative was piloted in Lee Estate and the Watergate flats in conjunction with the Limerick Community Safety Partnership to encourage use and ownership of the outdoor play areas through teaching traditional activities and games including hula hoops, skipping and hopscotch.

The Parks Department also participated in pilot as part of the Local Authority Prevention Network examining how parks practices could be made more sustainable. This has included the installation of water collection butts in the new machinery shed in the Parks nurseries and the examination of alternatives to peat compost.

In 2011 a major challenge for parks will be the maintenance of green areas and open spaces throughout the city as further areas are taken in charge and redeveloped, extending the grass-cutting area. In this regard a strong effort will be initiated to encourage community groups to enter the National Tidy Towns competition in tandem with the distribution of the City Councils Community Environment grants.

Environmental Awareness and Education

Limerick City Council continues to work towards delivering on the principles of waste management in accordance with the Replacement Waste Management Plan 2006 – 2011 with particular emphasis on waste prevention. The Council also continues to actively support the An Taisce Green Schools Initiative and encourages the use of home composting and correct waste management for householders.

Litter awareness continues to be a key focus and a number of city centre awareness initiatives were delivered during the year.

The support of Council members in relation to the City's Fairtrade status was very much in evidence during 2010.

Control of Horses

Up to the end of November 2010, 166 horses were impounded by Limerick City Council. The cost of these impoundments was €212,820. The full cost of this service is recoupable from the Dept. of Agriculture.

Cemetery Services

Limerick City Council will continue to build on successful initiatives during 2009 and 2010 to carry out further improvements to Mount St Oliver and Mount St Lawrence cemeteries. The award by Chambers Ireland for Best Use of Technology recognising the online burial records service was followed this year by the compilation and installation of the Heritage Information Panels at Mount St. Lawrence

These panels provide an insight to the historic significance of Mount St Lawrence and are favourably commented on by many visitors to the cemetery.

The heritage value of Mount St Lawrence will continue to remain a priority for the Environment Department and a number of further initiatives will be considered in this regard during 2011.

Improvements to the footpaths, walkways and access points in each of the cemeteries will take place during 2011 with National Disability Strategy Funding to the value of €90,000.

Grants to Community and Voluntary Groups

This scheme was introduced in 2003 to assist local community groups with the enhancement and upkeep of their communities. This year over 30 groups availed of this funding for a variety of community projects including grass cutting, flower planting, tree pruning and maintenance of green areas. This scheme will continue during 2011.

In this regard also it is the Council's intention to advance a concerted effort in the National Tidy Towns Competition run by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The Council will work closely with community groups to encourage their participation in this competition in order to encourage community pride in local areas.

Shannon River Basin Management Plan

2010 saw the adoption of the Shannon River Basin Management Plan by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Limerick City Council will focus on the implementation of this plan during 2011 in association with the co coordinating authority.

Allotments

The Councils Environment Department in conjunction with the Property Management Section is currently progressing the development of an allotment policy in Limerick City. Significant interest has been expressed following a recent advertising campaign and the advancement of the policy will progress through the Strategic Policy Committee during 2011.

Southill Multi Use Games Area

With funding from the Rapid Programme the Council's Environment Department project managed the construction of a multi use games area in the Southill Area Centre at O' Malley Park, Southill at a cost of € 70,000.

Waste Collection Permit Regulations, 2007, (as amended)

Under the Waste Management (Collection Permit) Regulations 2007, as amended, a total of 52 permits (25 Multi-regional), have been issued to waste collectors in the Limerick, Clare and Kerry region. 529 Waste Collection permits were issued under the previous 2001 regulations and 19 Collection Permits have been issued to collectors whose principal place of business is based in Limerick City. To date 11 no permit holders have been audited by Limerick City Council staff.

Roadside checkpoints were carried out during the year with Garda assistance at 2 locations in the City. The purpose of these checkpoints was to check for compliance with the Collection Permit Regulations and to increase awareness amongst the public on the obligation to comply.

Waste Management (Waste Facility) Permit and Registration Regulations 2007 as amended - Waste Site Facilities

There are currently 10 no active permitted sites for waste processing in the Limerick City area. The waste types and methods of processing are varied. During 2010, 2 no new site permits were granted and 1 no certificate of registration was issued of the 10 permitted sites, 8 have been audited. There are currently 2 no review permit applications on hand and 1 no new application on hand.

EMERGENCY SERVICE

The Service has four broad areas of activity that are mutually supportive in the delivery of an integrated service to the public.

- Fire & Emergency Operations
- Fire Prevention, Building Control and Dangerous Buildings
- Major Emergency Management
- Fire Service Mobilisation and Communications
- Civil Defence

Fire & Emergency Operations

Achievements for 2010 include:

- The service successfully attended 1,433 incidents from 1st January to 1st December, 2010. Of this number, 1,086 were fire incidents. The average turnout time to 1st December, 2010 is 1 minute and 28 seconds.
- Training courses were provided for staff in the following areas: Cardiac First Responder, Hazardous Materials, Aerial Ladder Platform Operator, Compartment Firefighting Techniques Refresher, Swift Water Rescue Technician, various Senior and Junior Officer Training Courses and Seminars.
- All operational crews undertook and completed three days of intensive training to prepare to respond to incidents in the Limerick Tunnel.
- The duty roster system was consolidated and all Firefighters and Junior Officers now operate on the 9/15 split shift.
- Health and Safety awareness and competency was enhanced by the conduct of Safety Information Sessions which were attended by Senior & Junior Officers and Firefighters, respectively.
- The Safety Statement was reviewed and updated.
- An open-plan office project was completed consolidating the technical and administrative areas of the Operations, Fire Prevention and Major Emergency Management departments in the main Fire Station building.
- Service and maintenance contracts were put in place for fire engineering equipment, pumps, fire lockers and winches.
- The programme of pre-fire planning was expanded for high risk premises within the Service's operational area.
- The programme of Fire Station upgrading and maintenance continued with the installation of new gas boilers to supply the central heating system in the main Fire Station building.
- New personal protective equipment was purchased to improve the safety of fire personnel responding to water-related incidents.
- A development committee was established to review and implement a suite of national Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs)
- Approval was received from the DoEHLG for the purchase of a new Water Tanker and tenders were received and evaluated for the purchase of two new Water Tenders.
- A recruitment competition for recruit Firefighters was completed.

Plans for 2011 include:

- To conduct annual block training.
- To further enhance the training regime within the Fire Service.
- To maintain and improve on standards of Health and Safety.
- The purchase of two new Water Tenders.
- To prepare specifications and tender documents for the procurement of a new Emergency Tender.
- To purchase new structural firefighting kit.
- To continue the development of the pre-fire planning programme.

Fire Prevention, Building Control & Dangerous Buildings Department.

The function of the Fire Prevention, Building Control & Dangerous Buildings Department is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of people who occupy or use buildings, through ensuring the reduction of fire risk, proper means of escape, the access for people with disabilities and the conservation of fuel and energy. To achieve these, a summary of the duties of this department are:

- Fire Safety Certificate applications are assessed pre commencement of construction of buildings.
- January 1st 2010 saw the introduction of the Disability Access Certificate. These are applied for pre occupation of a new building, and the applications are assessed by this department.
- Both commercial and Domestic buildings are inspected for deficiencies in relation to Fire Safety, and actions are taken to improve Fire Safety where required.
- Complaints regarding dangerous buildings are investigated, and appropriate actions taken to eliminate the risk posed to the public.
- Community Fire Safety talks are given to all members of the community, particularly to school groups and the elderly.

Major Emergency Management Section

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

Achievements for 2010 include:

- The update and issue of the Major Emergency Plan Appendices.
- Completion of both Onsite Co-ordination and Information Management training courses.
- The development of a Major Emergency Management Training Plan.
- The development of a Local Co-ordination Centre Activation Plan and the provision of access for visitors from other agencies.
- The development of a procedure for use of the Environment UHF radio network as a communications back-up.
- The selection of a vehicle and procedure for responding to the scene of a Major Emergency with required Onsite Co-ordination Centre equipment.
- The provision of Role Cards to assist staff members listed in the Major Emergency Plan.

- Successfully implementing the response and co-ordination function of the inter-agency Onsite Co-ordination Group (OSG) and the associated Information Management system during the severe cold weather event in January and proceeding to the recovery phase upon the threat subsiding.
- Successfully implementing the response and co-ordination function of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and the associated Information Management system during the period of flood risk and subsequent period of severe cold weather in November and December.
- The introduction of an SMS based mobilisation and information sharing system which has been successfully used to coordinate Crisis Management Team activities.

Plans for 2011 are:

- To provide a system of resources and staff which may be used to receive and provide public information via a call centre during a crisis.
- To further develop Limerick City Council's capacities for Flood response and to develop a procedure for notification of ESB activities affecting Limerick City.
- To further improve communication systems between the incident site and the Local Co-ordination Centre.
- To issue updated Major Emergency Plan appendices.
- To organise and complete an inter-agency table-top exercise involving the Crisis Management Team and Local Co-ordination Group.
- To complete further Onsite Co-ordination training courses.
- To improve the awareness of Major Emergency Management within all areas of Limerick City Council.

FIRE SERVICE MOBILISATION AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Munster Regional Communications System:

The Munster Regional Communications System (MRCC) is located at the City Fire Station. The MRCC Project was set up to improve the speed of response and efficiency of the call-out system for the fire authorities in Munster and became operational in December, 1992. Limerick City Council is the contracting Authority for this system and provides the service on behalf of the ten member Fire Authorities in Munster.

The Centre currently mobilises 66 retained fire stations throughout Munster and 4 full-time stations in Limerick City, Cork City and Waterford City.

In 2010, achievements included:

- Munster Regional Communications Centre handled in excess of 30,000 emergency calls from the public in the Munster Region.
- Maintenance and improvement on high performance standards in terms of the accurate and efficient despatch of Fire Service resources within the Munster Region.
- Ongoing development of geographic information systems in MRCC
- There have been significant developments of management information systems in accordance with the requirements of the MRCC and the participating fire authorities.

- Re accreditation to ISO 9001:2001 has been achieved over all business areas. The system has passed its annual systems audit with the NSAI during which the MRCC's quality management systems were found to be excellent and without fault.
- On-going development of telecoms and Radio Communications Systems
- Continued development of regional mobile data project
- Full implementation of all internal and external training programs including National Incident Command and Major Emergency Planning training.
- Development of Major Emergency Helpline training programs for the member Fire Authorities.
- Development and integration to the new Emergency Call Answering Service (999/112) in co-operation with the other blue light services, BT Ireland and CommReg.
- Management and development of national digital linking systems to the new BT ECAS systems on behalf of the DoEHLG and Fire Services.
- Management, development and implementation of systems for the activation of DoEHLG crisis management teams in the event of Local, Regional or National Major Emergencies.

CIVIL DEFENCE

The Civil Defence provides emergency relief and support, when called upon by Limerick City Council and other civil authorities and helps to ensure the continued operation of vital services and the maintenance of public life during emergencies.

Activities for 2010 included:

Occupational First Aid Course	X 20	Search Techniques Instructors	X 2
Cardiac First Response Course	X 20	Cardiac First Response Instructors	X 2
Emergency First Responders	X 7	Emergency First Responder Instructor	X 1
Basic Firemanship Course	X 20	Radio Communications Instructors	X 2
Radio Communications – Level 1	X 4	Level 2 Coxswains	X 13
Radio Communications – Level 2	X 24	VHF Marine Radio Licence Holders	X 12
Pump Operators	X 9	Manual Handling Courses	X 30
Basic Search & Rescue Course	X 25	EMT Students	X 3

Upgrading of Civil Defence HQ – ongoing, Second Mercedes Sprinter Ambulance purchased in February 2010, Water Unit for Coxswains – all equipment now mobile for rapid response to searches, new livery on all Civil Defence Vehicles equipment now completed. Hepatitis A and B and Tetanus programme started, will continue into 2011, hosted Civil Defence Regional Competitions in May 2010, and participated at the JP McManus Pro Am Golf Classic.

Plans for 2011 include:

Continue the upgrading of the Civil Defence H.Q, Continuation of the enhancement of training programme across the services, Recruitment freeze lifted, Information night for potential new volunteers held in HQ on December 8th 2010. New volunteers will start

their Basic Training in March 2011. Continually raising Limerick City Civil Defence's profile within the City and nationally.

Training for 2011.

New Volunteers to start Basic Training in March 2011.

Training for Existing members.

Emergency First Responder training.

Welfare Service up and running

Kayaking Service up and running.

Water Awareness training.

Patient Handling training.

Search & Rescue Course – Intermediate Level

Rope Rescue Instructor to be trained.

6 to 12 volunteers to be trained as Level 2 coxswains

6 volunteers to be trained to Level 3 coxswains

1- 2 new Occupational Instructor

1 - 2 new Welfare Instructors

Train the Trainer Courses.

**RECREATION AND AMENITY – PARKS, LIBRARY
SERVICE, CULTURE, SPORT, COMMUNITY AND
ENTERPRISE**

Limerick City Council provides a range of arts and cultural services through its combined support for the Arts Service, Limerick City Gallery of Art, the Library Service and the Museum Service. Together these services provide programmes of activities that create an access for all approach to service provision.

Jim Kemmy Municipal Museum

2010 is on course to be the second busiest year in the museum's history. At the time of writing (15-11-10) 14,200 people have visited the museum. While this is down considerably on last year, the reason is that this year we did not have the extended summer opening hours which boosted the 2009 figures. The underlying figures are broadly similar to 2009. The museum participated in Open Night when we had over 500 visitors and over 100 people on the walk around the city walls. The Museum's online site, which for many people is their first point of contact with Limerick, should register about 1,150,000 hits by year end. The museum received a grant of €12,000 from the Dept. of Tourism, Culture and Sport to develop its online presence. Part of this is a contribution towards development of the History Portal of the new www.limerick.ie site. The remainder is towards the changeover to a new cataloguing system which should enhance the museum's online presence, allowing multiple images to be viewed as well as PDF downloads. Once the latter is up and running we anticipate a major jump in website hits. To date there have been 279 additions to the collection in 2010; these include an 18th century map of part of Kilkeedy, three pieces of Limerick lace, a 1937 Limerick Junior Football Championship winners medal, a 1973 all Ireland Hurling Final programme plus 75 other sporting programmes, and two early Limerick newspapers.

In 2010 the museum has provided illustrations for 9 books, 6 journal articles, 3 websites, 2 TV programmes and 1 museum exhibition. The Museum has items on loan to the Georgian House and Thomond Park. "Seen but not heard" an exhibition of childhood prepared by the Local Authority Museums' Network was on view at the museum from January to July. The space was then offered to Limerick City Gallery of Art for its use while Pery Square is closed for redevelopment. To date there has been an exhibition of prints, which is expected to change in the near future. The gallery has use of the space to at least May 2011. The museum has continued to provide supervised access to material in its own collection that is in storage. It has also provided supervised access to material held by Limerick City Archives. To date the museum has received 76 such visitors, of whom 20 have consulted material in the City Archives.

Lectures

In the course of the year museum staff presented lectures at the Hunt Museum and the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Dublin.

Publications

Three articles should be published by year end, on the Medieval Vicars Choral in Limerick, The Royal Humane Society's medal to Richard Lee, and the identification of the medieval walled town of Garth, Co. Limerick. Help has been given with the production of this year's volume of the Old Limerick Journal. The museum has continued as the base for the conservation of the city walls. A grant of up to €10,000 was received through the Irish Walled Towns Network, to remove the vegetation from the Island Road section of the city wall, to record the wall and to prepare a method statement for proposed work in 2011. This work has now been completed. Two recently discovered items, a stone axe and an iron spear, were sent to the National Museum by Limerick museum in its role as a designated museum. The stone axe was returned and it is now on display. The Limerick Leader carried an article about its discovery by two boys and their grandfather. During the year the museum provided work experience for one transition year student and one third level student studying in the tourism field.

Limerick City Gallery of Art

Exhibition Programme:

In 2010, prior to the gallery moving off site to facilitate the Phase II expansion programme, the following exhibitions and events took place in Pery Square:

- Noughties but Nice, 21st Century Irish Art.
- Abundance I, selections from the Permanent collection.
- Abundance II, Selections from the Permanent collection.
- EV+A 2010 (Young EV+A events).
- Sustainable Futures.
- National Drawing Day, seminar delivered by Niamh McGowan.
- Following the move from the Carnegie building, LCGA presented the AIB award winning exhibition Still life with... by Anne Cleary and Denis Conolly at the Hunt Museum, at Istabraq Hall (City Hall, Merchant's Quay) and at the Limerick school of Art and Design.

Istabraq hall has become the hub of the gallery's off site programme with two significant shows presented there since September:

- The Woods exhibition opened on September 9th and continues until October 29. Curated by Shinnors scholar Mary Conlan, the exhibition is selected from the

- National Collection of Contemporary Drawing and Creative Limerick.
- DPRK, photographic work from North Korea presented by the French artist Philippe Chancel. The exhibition continues in Istabraq hall until late December.
 - The Six Memos project continues as part of the research being developed by the Shinnors scholar Mary Conlon. Two offsite projects were realised in 2010 as part of this project:
 - Paperplanes presented work by four younger artists, in the Occupy Space Gallery in Thomas Street.
 - Method C, a solo exhibition of sculptural, film and sound work by Karl Burke is presented in the historic context of King John's Castle until late November.

Limerick City Gallery Permanent Collections Exhibitions and Loans

- Limerick City Gallery of Art continues to present works from the Permanent Collection at **The Hunt Museum** on Rutland Street.
- The Gallery is also presenting artworks from the municipal collection at the Jim Jemmy Municipal Museum.
- Work from the permanent collection has been loaned to the Glebe Gallery Donegal, Draiocht Arts Centre in Blanchardstown and the Model Niland Arts Centre in Sligo.

Culture Night

- Culture night was celebrated in September with late opening at all venues and a considerable throughput of visitors.

Education

- The Connolly/Cleary exhibition featured numerous events and workshops that involved young people of all ages and selected artists' groups who assisted in the fabrication of the artwork.
- Several artists' talks took place throughout the year and included presentations by Anne Cleary and Denis Conolly, Alice Maher, Alan Keane and Philippe Chancel.
- In late October curator Vaari Claffey and artist Karl Burke addressed technical and conceptual aspects of Karl's project in King John's Castle
- Two significant seminars took place in May and September: Species of Space looked at spatial aspects of contemporary art practise and involved both local and international participants. The seminar Drawing: Starting Point or Finishing Line addressed new methods and directions in contemporary drawing practise.
- The Carnegie Reading Circle continues as part of the Six Memos research project
- Workshops continue with family and school groups.
- Numerous guided tours have been given to schools, third level colleges and community groups.

Limerick City Gallery on Tour

- From January to April the Noughties but Nice exhibition travelled to three venues in Letterkenny, Navan and Carlow.
- In October twenty nine pieces from the Limerick City Gallery collection travelled to the Gemald Galerie in Dachau, Germany for the exhibition 'Impressionen von der Grunen Insel' (Impressions from the Emerald Isle).

Audience Numbers

- Between January and October visitors to the gallery at Pery square and Istabraq hall totalled over 12,000. Considerable additional numbers engaged with LCGA work and projects presented in other venues such as The Hunt Museum and King

John's Castle. By the end of the year it is anticipated that close to 30,000 visitors will have encountered visual art emanating from the gallery's programme or via the dissemination of its collection.

- Awareness of Limerick City Gallery, its programme and events, is significantly enhanced by the LCGA website, the e-news bulletin and the weblink to Limerick.ie

Heritage Council Museum Standards Accreditation

- Interim museum accreditation was granted to the gallery in May 2010. The aim is to achieve full museum status by 2012 depending on specific criteria being met in relation to building standards and care of the collection.

Capital Project, Limerick City Gallery Phase II

- Work continues on the building project in Pery Square with phase II of the Capital project scheduled for completion by March of next year. This is a very exciting development for the gallery and for Limerick. The newly expanded gallery and facilities will significantly improve the city's cultural profile, creating the potential for more ambitious historic and contemporary exhibitions and attracting larger visitor numbers to the gallery. The refurbishment will also make the Gallery more accessible for all users and the new café/restaurant will serve as an additional social focus for the gallery as well as for the People's Park and Pery Square.

Staff Changes at Limerick City Gallery

- In late September Marian Lovett took up the temporary position of Curator/Director (Acting) at the LCGA, as Pippa Little commenced her maternity leave.

Plans for 2011

- Research is ongoing for the exhibition programme to continue at Istabraq Hall from January to April with plans for the off site programme intended to enhance public awareness of visual art activity led by the gallery through out the re-development.
- Plans for 2011 include a vibrant programme that will effect a balance between local, national and international representation and which will bring some of the best of Irish and international art to the gallery's extensive audience.
- A marketing and development strategy is planned that will focus on how best to augment both audience and resources for the newly upgraded Limerick City Gallery in these challenged economic times.
- Partnerships and collaborations with other organisations and institutions will feature significantly in the gallery's forward planning as a mechanism to ensure the gallery achieves high quality and broad appeal in all its activity.

The Arts Service

Limerick City Council provides a range of arts and cultural services through its combined support for the Arts Service, Limerick City Gallery of Art, The Library Service and The Museum Service. Together these services provide a varied programme of activities that create an access for all approach to service provision. Limerick City Council was one of the first local authorities to jointly fund, with the Arts Council the position of Arts Officer in 1988. To mark this 25 year partnership, and under the auspices of a relationship with the County and City Managers Association, the Arts Council and the Association of

Local Authority Arts Officers, together a conference on local arts development was organized for November 2010 to take place in Limerick. The Limerick Integrated Arts Strategy outlines six strategic action areas that set out to achieve an inclusive and co-ordinated approach to arts provision in the city.

- Public planning and support for the arts
- The Creative City
- Public access and participation
- The individual artist
- Infrastructure and facilities for the arts
- Collaboration and partnership

The following are the range of services provided by The Arts Office of Limerick City Council in 2010;

1. Information and Advice

Support and advice for people in the arts community and those interested in engaging with the arts as well as inquires for the individuals and members of the public.

2. Supporting and developing The Arts Infrastructure of the City

- Recommendations on revenue funding for established arts organisations
- Recommendations on Grants under the Arts Act
- Facilitation of development of cultural infrastructure through partnership
- Management of Limerick Artists' Studios
- Membership of the boards of management committees of a number of events, organisations and institutions.
- Delivery of the Dockers Monument % for art project

3. Support for the Individual Artist

- For residencies, travel bursaries and specific originated arts interventions

4. Arts Programming

- Annual events such as The Kate O'Brien Weekend, e v+ a, May Music in the Park, Cuisle Limerick City International Poetry Festival and Culture Night

5. Art form development

- support for festivals as part of the annual cultural calendar
- support for organisations involved in art forms such as theatre, dance, visual art, music, literature, architecture, community arts

6. Art and Education

Each event organised by The Arts Office of Limerick City Council endeavour to provide an educational aspect to allow younger audiences to participate fully in the yearly programme of events. The Cuisle Young Poet of the Year Competition, organised as part of the Cuisle Poetry Festival, extends this opportunity to a national audience.

2010 Programme of Events

Unfringed Festival @ Belltable , Limerick Atlas -IRISH HISTORIC TOWNS ATLAS
The Kate O'Brien Weekend, OPEN / INVITED e v+ a 2010, Love: Live Music – National Music Day, May Music in the Park, International Dance Day, The Dockers Monument, RTE Vanburgh String Quartet, FLiC – Film Limerick in the Community, Schools Transformation Project, Culture Night, Cuisle, Limerick City International Poetry Festival, The Stony Thursday Book, Gravity and Grace, Dance Festival, 25 | 25 Conference on Arts and Culture in Local Development.

Capital Projects: The Belltable Arts Centre, and Artists' Apartments, John's Square

Limerick City Library & Information Service

Since 1855, Public Libraries have had a powerful role to play in society. From very small beginnings, libraries have grown and expanded beyond all expectations. In July, the Daily Telegraph stated "Libraries civilise us all. The very nature of books is the realm of possibilities they open up." The day anyone can prove anything better than the library to make knowledge available to all still has not arrived, internet or no internet. The Public Library is the only place many homeless individuals can relax in peace (they read and long for a sense of peace). Limerick City Library Service endeavours to meet the needs of the community in innumerable ways:

- By providing information for everyday living
- As a gateway to local events and organisations
- As a local meeting space and resource centre
- Through exhibitions, author events and other activities
- Help users find and interpret information through skilled staff

STATISTICS	2010	2009	% INCREASE
Membership	14,170	13,221	3.0%
Issues	313,791	305,033	7.5%
Internet Sessions	33,191	29,242	13.5%
Visitors	254,542	240,048	6.0%

A total of 7 exhibitions and 9 lectures were held in the Granary during 2010. There are 4 book clubs taking place each month between the Granary and Watch House Cross and the Gramophone Circle meets in the Granary each month.

A new Community Choir commenced in Watch House Cross Library in March and has 38 members to date. The choir has performed on two occasions and was involved in a workshop with Anúna, the well known Irish Group, together with members from other choirs. The workshop, which was free, included Voice Production, Vocal Technique, Projection, Performance Posture, Volume Control and Dynamics etc.

In October 2010, instead of posting Notices for books overdue, members were notified by Text Message to return their overdue books. Based on the figures so far, there should be a savings in Limerick City Council's Postage Bill of €16,800. It is also possible that the savings will increase as more members of the public provide their Mobile Numbers to the library. However, there will be an added cost in the library budget to purchase text messages.

Children of lesser-educated Parents benefit most from having books in the home.

The staff at Watch House Cross Library in co-operation with the Northside Education Hub is planning "The Big Read" again with children from the surrounding areas.

A study carried out by Ms. Evans, her colleagues at Nevada University and Australian National University is one of the largest and most comprehensive studies ever conducted on what influences the level of education a child will attain. Their findings show that children of lesser-educated parents benefit the most from having books in the home. This is an inexpensive way of helping these children succeed. The researchers were struck by

the strong effect having books in the home had on children's educational attainment even beyond such factors as education level of the parents, the country's GDP, or the father's occupation. The title chosen for "The Big Read" is "The Giggler Treatment" by Roddy Doyle.

Reference & Local Studies Department

The following resources were made available on the library website during 2010:

- Obituaries, death notices, etc. from The Limerick Chronicle for the years 1886-1891 and 1905-1906
- Calendar of wills in the Diocese of Limerick, 1615-1800
- The Guilds of Limerick, October 1840
- Séamus Ó Ceallaigh's Great Limerick Sportsmen (biographical profiles of more than 200 Limerick sportsmen, mainly athletes and GAA players)
- Owners of Limerick-registered motor vehicles, 1912-1914

Examples of feedback during the year:

-19/01/2010 11:17:11 <http://www.limerick.ie/library/localstudies/> - **Helpful** I have yet to explore it all but there seems to be a wealth of information on this site. It is a credit to all those involved in its development. (dmanj@hotmail.co.uk)

-15/01/2010 08:21:56 <http://www.limerick.ie/Library/LocalStudies/> - **Helpful** I was so thrilled to come across your website, almost by accident... Your site is a truly marvelous facility and it is a big pity that other places like Cork etc. don't follow your good example! I was so impressed too to get such a speedy response when I requested information. Many many thanks for your help and assistance, and I am truly grateful to you. Orla de Cogan

For 2011 we envisage continuing the project on the Obituaries feature of the website. This feature is unique among websites in Ireland and has garnered much positive comment both from professional Historians and the general public.

We will also be embarking on a new and very exciting Digitisation Project in 2011. We have a massive collection of files on subjects of local interest and we are planning a project which will involve the creation of a database index and scanning of the files. The idea is when a user finds a subject of interest in the index, clicks on the word, all the articles, photos, etc. relating to that subject which are in our files will be displayed on screen. This will be an immense resource, effectively becoming an encyclopedia of Limerick which will be equivalent to thousands of pages of printed material. This may, however, be restricted to in-house use as there may be copyright issues involved in making this resource available on the internet.

Grant from D.O.E.H.L.G.

With a grant of €15,500, the library will have a Self Service Issue and Return System installed by year end. This should realise certain efficiencies in the library service, where members of the public will check in and out their own books, C.Ds etc., thus allowing staff to give a better and more efficient service to borrower queries. In addition, the grant will cover the installation of Wi-Fi, thus allowing members of the public access to work with their own laptop while carrying out research. Two additional P.C's will be purchased together with a new Projector.

Training Courses provided for Library Staff in 2010

- There was a total of 25 library staff attendances and participation in the following training courses in 2010:
- “Challenging and Developing a Book Club “organised for library staff during Ennis Book Club Festival.
- Dealing with Difficult Customers organised by the IPA, City Hall.
- Management Development Training for Asst. Librarian Grades organised by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, Dublin.
- Impact Training Workshop, Limerick.
- Advanced Publisher Course, City Hall.
- AED Training, City Hall.
- First Aid Refresher Training, Red Cross, Limerick.
- Frontline Library Promotion's Training organised by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, Dublin.
- Open Office Training, City Hall
- Dealing with Difficult Behaviour in the Library organised by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, Dublin.
- Child Protection Training for Deputy Child Protection Liaison Officers, City Hall.
- Intercultural Awareness Training, Doras Luimni.
- “Recommending with Confidence for Children” seminar organised by the Youth Library Group of the Library Association of Ireland.

New Central Library & Headquarters

In 2011, we are hoping that Limerick City Library Service will get Approval-in-Principle for a new Central Library and Headquarters. The original application was submitted in 2008 at a cost of €12.5m. Since then, the cost has come down to €4.5m. This project will most likely run over a period of three years. Therefore, with Approval-in-Principle we could proceed with the Planning Process in 2011.

New Library System Software

Limerick City Library will be the first library in Ireland and the U.K. to move to OPEN SOURCE/KOHA Library Software. This software which is already in use in other parts of the world will be installed in Limerick City Library by mid 2011. As the pilot library for this system in Ireland, there will be no charge for the conversion, installation and staff training. In addition, there will be a 12% decrease in maintenance costs for 2012 and onwards.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Municipal Golf Course

Following redevelopment and upgrade works to Rathbane Municipal Golf Course, the course was re-opened by the Mayor of Limerick, Cllr. Kevin Kiely in June 2010. The redevelopment works included the following; construction of 25 new bunkers rebuilding of tee boxes incorporating a new irrigation system, construction of a short game facility including a chipping and new putting green, realignment of the 9th hole to incorporate a lake and new practice greens.

Limerick City Council will continue to ensure for 2011 and onwards that the Municipal Golf Course in Rathbane continues to fulfil the role of a major public access facility in the Mid-West Region.

Great Limerick Run

The first Great Limerick Run took place on Sunday, 2nd May, 2010. Some 6,000 participants took part and had a choice between doing a full marathon, a half marathon or a 10 km run or walk. The second Great Limerick Run is scheduled for Sunday, 1st May, 2010. As in 2010, the Community and Enterprise Department will facilitate the co-ordination of Limerick City Council's public service support for this event.

Skateboard Park

Two new CCTV cameras which monitor the Steamboat Quay Skatepark and the surrounding area were installed and have been fully operational since 31st August, 2010. The cameras are compatible with the existing Garda CCTV system and are linked directly to Henry Street Garda Station. The installation of the CCTV facilitates the safer enjoyment of the Skatepark and complements patrols by the Gardai, the City Council's Park Rangers and Environmental Inspectors of the waterfront areas.

European Mobility Week 16th to 22nd September, 2010:

'*Travel Smarter Live Better*' was the theme of 2009 European Mobility Week. (EMW). To celebrate EMW, the Community & Enterprise Department organised a series of free events over the week, aimed at assisting people to increase their physical activity by walking or cycling. Saturday 18th was the highlight of EMW with Community and Enterprise organising on-street family entertainment and a fitness and health exhibition at Bedford Row. It is hoped to run similar events in 2011.

Special Olympics Ireland – 9th to 13th September, 2010

Approximately 1,900 Special Olympics athletes participated in the 4 day residential games held in Thomond Park and other venues across the City and County. The Community and Enterprise Department provided financial and other support.

Skyfest

The National Lottery Skyfest took place on Saturday, 13th March 2010 and King John's Castle provided the backdrop for the main fireworks display.

Limerick – European City of Sport 2011

The European Capital Cities of Sport Association – ACES was founded in 2001. In June 2010 a delegation for ACES designated Limerick as a European City of Sport – one of seven cities throughout Europe which will be Cities of Sport in 2011. The City of Sport designation will be an opportunity for Limerick in 2011 and onwards to;

- Attract more visitors
- Attract more sports events
- Secure more conferences
- Enhance the image of the City
- Employ sport as a key tool for regeneration and social inclusion
- Create major new sporting products for the City
- Create a positive lasting sporting legacy for the City

A number of events have already been identified for 2011, including the European Duathlon Championships due to be held in April.

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE

The Community and Enterprise Department is charged with achieving a co-ordinated and integrated approach to the social and cultural development of Limerick City via Limerick City Development Board and related programmes, and to support Limerick City Council which is charged with leading the process.

Joint Limerick City/County Economic Development Committee

The Joint Limerick City/County Economic Development Committee which was established in 2009 following publication of the Indecon Report Recommendations in 2008 and the subsequent receipt of Guidelines for the establishment of Economic Development Committees from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, continued its work in 2010. The Committee met on a number of occasions in 2010, and oversaw the establishment of the following subgroups and preparation of associated work plans;

Education and Training	Tourism
Enterprise	Infrastructure Development
Renewable Energy	

November 2010 saw the fulfilment of a priority action for the Joint City/County Economic Development Committee, i.e. the launch of the limerick.ie website. A Website Co-ordinator was appointed to this project in 2010. The project has been funded through the co-operative efforts of agencies represented by Limerick City and County Development Boards and by the L.E.D.P. Limerick. The Economic Development Committee was also invited to submit a project under Innovation Funding to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in October, 2010. The project finally submitted sought funding in respect of Limerick City of Sport 2011. As the sub-groups of this committee become more established, further outcomes are expected in 2011.

Social Inclusion

The European Commission designated 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. To mark Social Inclusion Week, Limerick City Council organised the following events;

- Living with Dignity: Seminar Promoting Social Inclusion in Limerick
- Older Persons Bingo and Afternoon Tea Event
- Promoting Positive Values Through Music and Song – Musical Event with City Schools
- Information Session for Members of the Travelling Community
- Youth Event – Comhairle na n-Og

Given the success of the events in 2010, Limerick City Social Inclusion Measures Group hopes to expand activities for Social Inclusion Week in 2011.

The Annual Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place Awards:

Pride of Place is an initiative of the Local Authority all-island Steering Forum. The forum is hosted by Co-operation Ireland, a charity which has been involved in promoting peace-building activities North and South for the past 30 years. The Pride of Place Awards recognise the selfless work being done all over the island of Ireland, by local community & voluntary groups to create caring, viable, vibrant and visible communities. Judging of the Pride of Place (Cities) Competition 2010 took place in July 2010. Two judges from Co-operation Ireland met with the 5 groups, nominated by the City Council, and rigorously assessed their work. The groups were:

- Southside Adult Education Network, Childers Rd.
- Southill Area Centre, O' Malley Park
- The Northside Learning Hub, Killeely
- ALJEFF Treatment Services, Fairgreen
- St. Mary's Park Housing Estate

The All-Island Pride of Place Awards ceremony took place on Saturday 13th November 2010 and all of the above groups were represented. In keeping with the success of previous years for Limerick City entries, The Northside Learning Hub and St. Mary's Park groups were awarded runner up prize in their respective categories.

Integration

The Limerick Integration Working Group (IWG) operates under the Social Inclusion Measures Committees of both Limerick City and County Development Boards. The IWG was established with the aim of bringing together statutory, community and voluntary bodies to address integration needs of migrant and host communities in Limerick. 2010 saw the launch of 'Integrating Limerick' - Limerick City and County Integration Plan 2010 – 2012. The Plan contains a number of actions under 5 thematic areas aimed at enhancing the lives of all who live and work in Limerick, challenging discrimination where it occurs and celebrating the diversity that is now part of everyday life in the city and county. Following receipt of an invitation, an application for funding was submitted to the Office of the Minister for Integration for projects which have been identified for 2011. These projects include: Language Fair, Intercultural Week, Strengthening Limerick Interfaith Network and Ethnic Women's Forum Training

Africa Day

The Community and Enterprise Department facilitated the Irish Aid division of the Department of Foreign Affairs in staging Africa Day at City Hall on 30th May, 2010. The event was very successful with people of Irish and African backgrounds enjoying African food, music, dance and discussions. The Community and Enterprise Department looks forward to working with the Department of Foreign Affairs again on a similar event in 2011.

Youth

Limerick City Comhairle na n-Og is a local youth council, which gives young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies. Limerick City Development Board with the support of key partner Limerick Youth Service is responsible for the delivery of the Comhairle Na n-Og programme as part of implementing the National Children's Strategy at local level. The following are the main activities for 2010;

- Participation in Dail Na n-Og – National Youth Parliament in Croke Park
- Questions and Answers Evening with representatives from state agencies and political representative
- Creative Arts Workshop
- Liaison with Doras Luimni on One World Week
- Comhairle na n-Og Annual General Meeting

The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has urged each Comhairle to increase their focus on decision making structures with a view to understanding the issues which affect them both locally and nationally. A programme of work is being developed for 2011 which will increase the strategic focus of the Comhairle and encourage members to become more aware of their role in shaping their future.

Limerick City Childcare Committee

Limerick City Childcare Committee strives to ensure that a balanced mix of sustainable childcare provision is available in the City through the effective co-ordination of resources and supports by relevant service providers. The following demonstrates some of the work carried out in 2010;

- Training Grant Schemes
- Support Childcare Providers in receipt of Community Childcare Subvention Scheme funding
- Provision of support to existing and new Parent and Toddler Groups
- Support to Childcare Providers/Parents in relation to the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme
- Support of Implementation of Siolta Framework
- Expo In Thomond Park

A Local Implementation Plan has been developed for 2011. Various networking facilities will enable providers, workers and parents to contribute to the on-going identification of needs in the context of local and national policy frameworks and emerging debates.

Limerick City Children's Services Committee

Since its inception, Limerick City Children's Services Committee, (CSC), has been directed in its thinking, planning and strategising by the national Agenda for Children's Services and the need to provide effective service coordination for Children's Services in Limerick. The original work plan of the CSC was developed in line with the Limerick Regeneration Agencies' Master Plan. The Committee has committed to engage in a year of reflective practice. The purpose of this will be to assess the outcomes and the impact of the work to date. This work in 2011 will include reflection on the results of the Research Framework being undertaken in 2010 and a planning process to ensure that the future work of the CSC is outcome-focused and developed in accordance with identified needs. Work continued in 2010 in relation to the following;

- Development of the Limerick Assessment of Need System (including a Sharing Information System and a Common Assessment Framework, CAF). Training in the CAF was developed and delivered to over 75 participants. An external project evaluator has been appointed and the evaluation has begun.
- CSC Research Framework: Funding has been secured from Atlantic Philanthropies and Limerick Regeneration for the first three strands of the

- project. Fieldwork portion of research has been completed. Draft report should be available early in 2011.
- Development of a Restorative Practice Programme: A sub-group has been formed. The purpose of the sub group will be to develop and implement a pilot programme in Restorative Practice across the health, justice and education sectors.
 - National Early Years Access Initiative: This is a new funding initiative managed by Pobal. The Initiative will fund a maximum of 13 innovative local inter-agency demonstration projects nationwide. A consortium was formed to develop an expression of interest. In October, 2010 the Consortium was informed that it was successful in the initial round and requested to submit a full application.

Work in relation to all of the above strands will continue in 2011.

Limerick City of Learning

Limerick City Development Board reaffirmed it's commitment to the City of Learning Framework in 2010 through the endorsement of a revised committee representative structure. A Lifelong Learning Facilitator has been assigned on a part-time basis to co-ordinate the work of this committee in 2011.

FAS (EGA) Internship Framework

The need for an Internship Programme arose in response to the layoffs which occurred in the Mid-West Region in 2009 when a major multi-national computer manufacturer decided to close down its manufacturing operations in the region. The need for a flexible training programme to assist persons made redundant to gain new skills through structured work experience in sectors which have current and future employment potential was identified by the Mid-West Task force. The government secured funds from the European Globalisation Adjustment (EGA) fund to help employees made redundant in Limerick re-train and re-skill to find new jobs and careers. The Community and Enterprise Department has co-ordinated the Internship Programme within Limerick City Council. This Programme provides a training intervention combining certified training modules in addition to periods of structured workplace learning. Six interns are due to commence work placement for a period of six months in December, 2010. It is hoped that a further four interns will be available for placement in the City Council in February 2011.

AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE, CORPORATE SERVICES

ICT DEPARTMENT

In line with the strategic requirements for Limerick City Council the ICT department continues to support, recommend and provide the computer infrastructure, applications and systems required for all sections of Limerick City Council. The ICT service desk system offers comprehensive support to end users, councillors and libraries of Limerick City Council dealing with over 4,115 support request in 2010.

The ICT Department continues to focus on efficiencies and cost reductions initiatives. In 2011 the ICT section reduced the annual operational ICT costs by an overall of **€175,000** as detailed below.

Reduced Licensing costs - Open Office

Following the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement buy-out in 2009 and the introduction of Open Source technologies in 2010 the annual licensing costs have been **reduced by €120,000** (or €600,000 over 5 years). In a strategic move, Open Office – an office management suite - has been deployed with the objective to give Limerick City Council alternative options to Microsoft software. This will place the Council in a better negotiating position with Microsoft and thus further reducing licensing costs by an estimated €300,000. As Open Office is based on an Open Source licensing model, it comes free of charge. Training has been provided so far for 50 users and it will continue in 2011.

Reduced Phone System costs - Upgrade to VoIP

Between June and September 2010, an upgrade of the phone system to VoIP technologies has **reduced the maintenance costs by €25,000 per annum** (€125,000 over 5 years) without incurring any capital costs. As part of this project, a new phone system has been installed in the Fire Station. This phone system is fully integrated with the existing system in City Hall thus allowing staff members to communicate in a seamless manner with all Limerick City Council offices.

Reduced Mobile Calls costs

The deployment in July 2010 of the Government VPN has reduced the mobile calls costs by 50% or an estimated **€30,000 per annum**.

Reduced Printing costs - Printing Policy

By developing a Printing Policy, the ICT Department aims to reduce the costs associated with printing and copying in Limerick City Council by:

- reducing the number of printers by 40% (from 90 to 54);
- consolidating the types of printers/copiers from 52 models and 9 makes to 5 types of devices thus enabling the purchase of toner in bulk, at a competitive price;
- setting all printers to duplex (double sided) and increasing the number of multifunctional devices with printing/copying/fax and scanning features in order to promote the scanning and electronic delivery of documents;

The Printing Policy has been adopted in June and a tender for cost and energy efficient printers has been advertised in October 2010.

Infrastructure Upgrades. New Systems.

None of the projects mentioned above would have been possible without the continuous upgrades of the existing systems and infrastructure. In 2010 the ICT Department upgraded the Wide Area Network to allow for faster and more reliable communications between Council offices. Also, communications to central government networks has been improved by deploying resilient (dual) communication channels. This will allow high availability for shared services such as the new Human Resources Management system (CORE).

In April 2010, during the Data Centre consolidation project the entire infrastructure deployed for the delivery of core ICT services has been reviewed and/or replaced. This project was key to ensure high availability of ICT Services especially in the context of reduced staffing levels.

Working with the Water Services Section the ICT Department deployed a Weather Station which will allow accurate measurement of temperature, rain and river levels. This information is essential during Major Emergency.

All the PCs used in the public libraries The Granary, Watch House Cross have been replaced or updated in 2010.

Limerick.ie - The official guide to Limerick, Ireland- Limerick.ie -

A new all inclusive on-line voice for Limerick with comprehensive information on visiting, doing business and living in the capital of the Mid-West has been launched on 15th of November 2010. The ICT Department in Limerick City Council developed the website with the support of the Community and Enterprise Department.

The need for a single Limerick internet portal to establish Limerick as a destination of choice for both the national and international market has led to a number of local agencies coming together to develop the new website. It is envisaged that Limerick.ie will:

- Be the first option available when searching the Internet for information on Limerick;
- Have relevant and up-to-date website content containing information on all aspects of visiting, studying and living in Limerick;
- Showcase all of Limerick's unique selling points in an impartial manner
- Give up to date information on all festivals and events.

Development costs for the new site were minimal as:

- No external consultants were used;
- Existing technology - Content Management, Hosting, Maintenance, Infrastructure, and Geographical Information Systems - was utilised without extra investment;
- In-house editorial and technical skills were also already available.

In 2010 The ICT Department mapped over 700 amenities and published over 350 events. Limerick.ie will continue to evolve in 2011 with the support of the participating agencies and the local community.

Limerick.ie is supported by Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council, Shannon Development, Limerick Co-Ordination Office, Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership, Limerick Chamber, Limerick Regeneration, Integrating Limerick Working Group, Limerick City Enterprise Board, PAUL Partnership and Limerick City and County Development Boards.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources/Payroll/Superannuation Information and Processing (CORE)

The Core computer system project has a range of functionality covering human resources, payroll, superannuation and time and attendance amongst others. Limerick City Council went live with organisation structure module, the payroll module and time and attendance module for outdoor employees in 2010. We will be progressing with time and attendance for indoor staff early 2011 on a two phased basis. This module will also contain an employee self service (ESS) capabilities called Core portal with appropriate security and access control facilities for different categories of user, i.e. HR staff, managers and individual employees. Once time and attendance for indoor staff goes live, we will be progressing with the superannuation, recruitment and Central Statistics Office (CSO) modules. These modules are scheduled to be live by mid 2011.

Work will then commence on Phase 11 of the project covering training, health and safety and PMDS. The project should be completed fully by end of the first quarter 2012.

Partnership

City Council continues to have in existence a strong and committed Partnership Team. In these challenging times the Committee members have examined various issues facing the Council and together looked at how services can be enhanced and delivered more efficiently, while maintaining a focus on staff issues. Partnership also undertook a number of projects, e.g. Annual staff briefings, Grapevine publication, Managing Difficult Behaviour, Return to Learning and Pre-Retirement.

Performance Management Development System (PMDS) and Staff Training

PMDS is pivotal in clarifying roles and responsibilities within all Departments. The Team Development Plans (TDP's) assist in prioritising activities/tasks and setting targets in-line with our objectives in the Corporate Plan. Personal Development Plans (PDP's) clarify roles and also identifies both individual and team training needs which informs the Training Programme. Priority is given to essential training which has been identified by staff and line managers in the PDP as necessary for the job being done by each individual employee. Applications for Further Education courses will be considered having regard to available resources. City Council will continue to use a combination of internal and external providers to meet the training requirements.

Retirements/Resignations 2010

During 2010, sixteen Officers/Employees retired from Limerick City Council, twelve were due retirement on age grounds and four were due to ill health retirements.

The value of the lump sums paid out is as follows:

Gross Lump Sums paid	€1,097,562.29
Deductions made	<u>€ 89,415.82</u>
Net Lump Sums paid	€1,008,146.47

Five Officers/Employees resigned from Limerick City Council, one with an entitlement to a non pensionable gratuity and four with entitlements to preserved benefits at retirement age.

For 2011, there are nine planned retirements.

Recruitment

In accordance with Government restrictions, the level of recruitment has decreased significantly on previous years. However the Council did carry out a number of recruitment processes for personnel with specific expertise.

Register of Electors

The 2010/2011 Register was published on the 1st February, 2010 and came into force on the 15th February, 2010. Work commenced in the summer on the preparation of the Draft Register for 2011/2012 that was published on the 1st November, 2010.

Higher Education Grants

608 applications have been processed to date this year (up to and including 7th December, 2010) an increase from 479 over the same period in 2009.

Official Receptions and Meetings

Details of Meetings, Civic Receptions and Mayoral Receptions for 2010 are as follows (the following figures cover the period up to and including 30th November, 2010):

No. of Council Meetings (including Special Meetings)	25	No. of Civic Receptions	4
No. of Area Meetings	4	No. of Mayoral Receptions	56
No. of SPC meetings	22	No. of Tender Openings	25

INTERNAL AUDIT & THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Internal Audit is an independent function, attached to Corporate Services which reviews the systems, procedures and internal controls in place throughout the Council. It carries out audits and reviews through its annual audit plan, which is drawn up in conjunction with the Management Team and the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee consists of 3 external members, one former Councillor and the Mayor. It has an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting, internal control and risk management. Internal Audit interacts with the Audit Committee and the Local Government Auditor in promoting good accounting practices, and value for money throughout the organisation.

Proposals for 2011

- Preparation of the 2011 Audit Plan
- Completion of Audits and Reviews on areas as outlined in the Audit Plan
- Completion of 3 year Strategic Audit Plan

ARCHIVES

The records of Limerick Quakers, held by the Society of Friends were microfilmed, digitised and made available online on Limerick City Council's website. A launch was held in April 2010 in the Quaker Meeting House which received national coverage in the media. In a joint project with the Environment Department a series of information panels in limestone outlining the history of Mount St Lawrence was installed in the cemetery. Signage explaining how to find a grave using the location system was also installed. A brochure was printed by the archive section and an online PDF made available on the City Council website. A central electronic filing system was developed for Transportation and Infrastructure using Sharepoint and business classification scheme. The paper filing system has been reconfigured as a mirror image of the electronic system. Users have been trained in using the system and a major move of files off the F drive and U drives has been undertaken.

The papers of Cecil Mercier were acquired by the City Archives. These relate to Ranks Flour Mills and a reception of former workers was held to commemorate the impact that Ranks had on Limerick as an industrial city. This received very positive media coverage. Seventeen new collections have been added to the Digital Archive. These include the records of Limerick Christian Brothers Schools, The Pery Square Tontine, Limerick County Infirmary, Limerick County Militia, Limerick Harbour Commissioners, Limerick

Waterworks, a family collection- Lloyd Papers. It also includes the following collections from Limerick City Council: Register of Motor Vehicles, Register of Successful Vaccination, Turf Production, Franchise and Elections, Limerick Police Force, Financial Management, Allotment Schemes, Public Health and Property Management. The papers of the O'Donnell family, a prominent Limerick family who achieved high rank in the British Army, were catalogued and the list made available to the public.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The provision of safer systems of work improves efficiency and ensures good health.

Key activities during 2010 were as follows

- Formation of a new Management Safety Advisory Committee as part of the Safety Management System. Four meetings were held
- Management review of all (23) of the Council's safety statements and the update of the eleven of them
- Election of Safety Representatives to consult with line management on H&S issues. Six meetings of the safety representatives committee were organized.
- Safety Training was provided including: SafePass, First aid, CFR, MMH, Driver CPC, VDU, Safety Representatives, SLG and Working at Heights training
- Safety seminars, toolbox talks and safety inspections were provided
- Organisation of Safety Week 2010 with activities to improve health and safety awareness particularly in the area of Safe Maintenance
- Safety Inspections
- Accident investigation and reporting
- Introduction of safer systems of work

The programme for 2011 plans to build on the previous years' progress and complies with the statutory provisions in relation to H&S in the workplace.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The Finance department will continue to focus on improving the delivery of financial information to all relevant stakeholders.

The Finance Department continued to work closely with its customers in 2010. Given the current economic climate the City Council is more than aware of the difficulties that City Centre Business faces. Payment plans have been agreed with those having difficulties in meeting payments due to Limerick City Council. It should be noted that such arrangements simply spreads the payment of a current charge to ease short-term cashflow difficulties for businesses. It must be made clear however that there is no question of reducing rates outstanding by city business – all that the Council can do for business is to be flexible in defining the timelines by which rates obligations must be discharged. It must be made clear that all rates must still be paid in full. This is imperative in order for Limerick City Council to maintain and protect its income stream. There is no doubt that the collection of monies due to it will be challenging for Limerick City Council in 2011. The total expected collection percentage for Rates is expected to be approximately 70% for 2010 (for 2009 percentage collection was 70%).

The Accounts Receivable Department is constantly striving to give improved customer service and has a system in place that allows customers pay their traffic fines on line (e-payments) and automatically over the phone 24 hours a day. It is planned to introduce

further enhancements to the billing systems in 2011. An updated Debtors Management System is to be implemented in early 2011 which will streamline the management of Limerick City Council's management of monies owed to it.

2011 sees no change to rates of the Non Principal Private Residence Tax (NPPR). This form of income introduced in 2009 has been very successful and is expected to generate circa €1,200,000 in income for Limerick City Council this year, which is reflected in Budget 2011. This goes some way towards negating the reduction in its income that the Council has been subject to in recent years. The recently published National Recovery Plan 2011-2014 commits to the introduction of a Site Value Tax in 2012 initially charged at €100 per household. Such a tax will go towards financing local services. It is currently envisaged that it will be the responsibility of the Finance Department to ensure that this tax is collected in an efficient & effective way for Limerick City Council.

Further efficiency improvements to payment processes were implemented in 2010. There is a continued focus on the use of electronic forms of payment where feasible. Fortnightly pay was introduced in January 2010. This has resulted in increased efficiencies in the processing of all payroll for Limerick City Council.

The full implementation of a new payroll, superannuation and human resources system is expected to be completed in 2011. Local authorities require a human resource, payroll and superannuation system to provide an integrated solution – replacing disparate spreadsheets, databases and applications – and offering greater efficiencies, not just at a local level, but at a national level by having commonly agreed processes. This approach also makes it possible to move towards a full shared services model in the future. The new system has been procured by the Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB) and has been rolled out to two pilot authorities in 2009. LGCSB have chosen to implement software from Core International, a fully configured and integrated personnel system to meet the requirements of all local authorities. Limerick City Council will continue to roll-out other elements of the system during 2011.

There will be a continued emphasis on cash flow management in 2011. Unfortunately in 2010, the average cash position during the year was disappointing. A number of factors gave rise to this including a slowdown in the amount and the timeliness in which Limerick City Council is securing payments from its customers. However, in the current economic environment the securing of all payments to the local authority will be challenging and all directorates will maintain a strong focus on cash flow management in 2011.