

LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL



ADOPTED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2007

**LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CATHRACH LUIMNIGH**

Árus na Cathrach
Luimneach

11th December 2006

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

**Annual Budget for the year
1st January 2007 to 31st December 2007**

In presenting the Annual Budget for the year ended 31st December 2007 to Council, I wish to take this opportunity, to summarise the financial position of Limerick City Council at 31st December 2005. The Annual Financial Statement of Limerick City Council for the year 2005 shows that the accumulated Balance on the Revenue Account is a credit position of €25,481 at 31st December 2005 (compared to the accumulated Debit Balance on the Revenue Account at 31st December 2004 of €2,116,187).

Current outturn figures indicate that the Revenue Credit will improve during 2006.

I will now set out the proposals for Expenditure and Income for 2007.

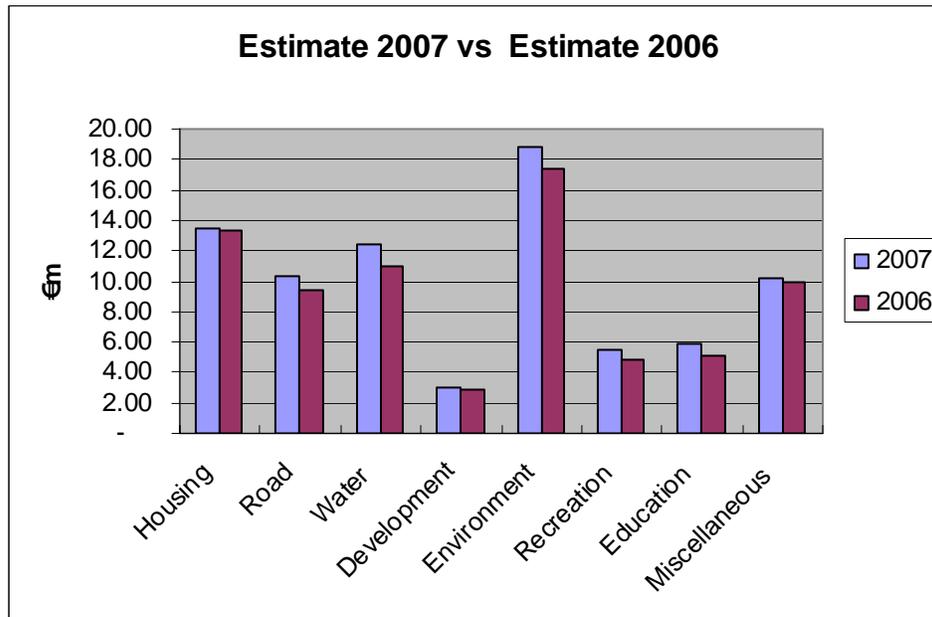
Expenditure – 2007

The Budget for 2007 provides for expenditure of €79.56 million. This represents an increase of €5.7million over the adopted Budget for 2006. The following table sets out the expenditure by Programme Group:

	Budget 2007	Outturn 2006
1. Housing and Building	13,444,077	12,318,584
2. Road Transportation and Safety	10,341,591	10,151,182
3. Water Supply and Sewerage	12,471,757	11,438,596
4. Development Incentives and Controls	3,015,987	2,771,967
5. Environmental Protection	18,826,615	16,776,555
6. Recreation and Amenity	5,467,156	4,706,042
7. Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	5,834,933	5,186,479
8. Miscellaneous Services	10,161,437	9,519,212

TOTAL	79,563,553	72,868,617
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The following graph depicts estimated expenditure by Programme Group for 2007, compared to 2006.



This increase in expenditure can be broken down as follows:

	2007 €million	2006 €million	Increase €million
Payroll and Pensions	39.60	37.01	2.59
Non Payroll	39.96	36.86	3.10
Total Expenditure	79.56	73.87	5.69

Payroll and Pensions

The cost for 2007 reflects an increase of 6.9% on 2006. This increase is sufficient to cover national agreements in relation to pay. In order to minimize the increase in payroll costs it is intended not to increase the number of employees, and to consider the necessity of filling any vacancies that occur in 2007 on a case by case basis.

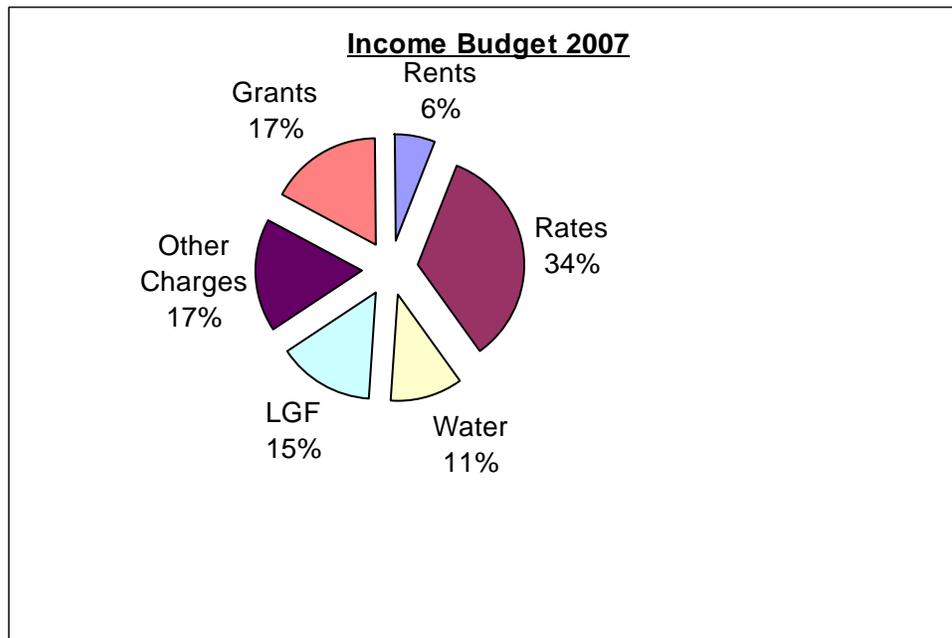
Non-Payroll Costs

There are a number of new costs and unavoidable increases in current costs facing the City Council for 2007. I have made every effort to maintain expenditure in critical areas.

Non payroll costs have increased by 8.4%. Details of proposals are set out in the following pages.

Many Members of the City Council have requested that we make provision for an increased level of investment in improving the environment for Local Communities. These improvements would include traffic calming measures, footpath repairs, public lighting and environmental enhancements. There is provision in the Roads and Environment budgets for such works and it is intended in the New Year to have consultation with the Ward Members in relation to how best to expend this provision.

Income Proposals - 2007



The effective valuation of €349,146 (2006) has increased by €12,465 to €361,611 for 2007. This represents an increase of 3.6%.

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.

If the City is to fulfil its full potential as the Gateway of the Mid-West, then we need to have a strong and vibrant City Centre. Many Councillors have brought to my attention in the last year the effect of the rates burden on the economic activity of the City. Consequently, and in order to encourage businesses to locate in Limerick City, I have included in the 2007 Budget a reduction in the Rate of one percent. As further support to this policy it is proposed to have no increase in the cost of parking discs.

I have included a sum of €11,721,449 in the Budget for 2007 in respect of the Local Government Fund. I have also included a contribution by the DoEHLG towards the domestic portion of the operational cost of the waste water treatment plant at Bunlicky. I have assumed that the operational cost of the plant will be fully funded by a combination of this contribution, waste water charges to non domestic customers in the City and charges to Limerick County Council and Clare County Council.

Conclusion

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

- The need to improve the City's competitive advantage.
- The need to pursue the objectives of our Corporate Plan in accordance with the principals of value for money and customer care.
- The need to continue a programme of investment and development of the City.
- The need to match spending programmes with resources.

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 Joe Leddin and his predecessor, Councillor Diarmuid Scully for their wholehearted commitment and support this year.

I also wish to express my thanks to the Directors, Mr. Kieran Lehane, Mr. Alan Wallace, Mr. Pat Dowling, Mr. Pat Dromey and their respective teams for their commitment and high quality work. I am very grateful to the staff in the Finance Department, in particular Mr. John Field and his team, for the many hours of work involved in the compilation of this Budget.

I believe that this budget demonstrates that we are serious about attracting investment to our City Centre.

I look forward to the full support of the Members at the Statutory Budget Meeting.

Tom Mackey
City Manager

SOCIAL POLICY & HOUSING

Action Plan for Social & Affordable Housing 2004 – 2008

The Action Plan for Social & Affordable Housing is the blueprint for the provision of housing within Limerick City Council's functional control for the period 2004 – 2008. The review of this Plan which took place in July 2006 has enabled Limerick City Council to re-assess its operations in light of targets set out in the original Plan. The following are the main priority areas for the Council for the remaining period of the Plan;

- Continued focus on regeneration and turnkey development in order to achieve revised capital targets
- Acute attention to our estates through the introduction of a Joint Policing Committee and Community Co-ordinator Scheme
- Focus on the attainment of targets under R.A.S. and Part V
- Strategic approach to the Voluntary and Co-operative sector based on Limerick City Council's housing needs
- Continued focus on improvement of traveller and homeless services

Regeneration

Tenders were sought in November for consultants to produce a report for the implementation of a neighbourhood regeneration programme for St. Mary's Park/Kings Island. It is expected that this report will be presented in 2007 for the approval of Limerick City Council and then forwarded to the Department of The Environment, Heritage and Local Government for consideration.

Preparatory work for the demolition and refurbishment of dwellings in Sarsfield Gardens/Hartigan Villas, Moyross was completed in 2006. This project was advertised for tender in November. Work is due to commence on site in early 2007.

Following considerable public consultation, funding of €2 million was granted for Phase 2 of the O'Malley Park Remedial Works Scheme. In parallel, Limerick City Council is currently finalising a brief to prepare a regeneration plan for the remainder of O'Malley Park and its environs. This plan will be completed in 2007.

Estate Management

Estate management in the Council's local authority estates remain the Housing Departments highest priority. Limerick City Council funded six estate management groups in 2006 and continues to employ three full-time Community Liaison Officers.

In order to address the growing challenges of estate management and to maintain and develop services within the estates it is proposed to provide an extra €36,697 towards housing estate management. Included in this amount is an additional €20,000 for the Social and Community Grant Scheme in 2007, increasing it from €170,000 to €190,000. Two inter-agency task groups have been established to co-ordinate effort and provide greater focus to estate management issues both on the Northside and the Southside of the city. It is anticipated that the work of these groups will increase during 2007.

A significant development in the area of estate management is the establishment of the Limerick City Community Safety Partnership which brings together key statutory bodies including the City Council, H.S.E., Gardai and Department of Justice. Under the Joint Policing Committee, which oversees this partnership, a scheme of Community Co-ordinators will be introduced in 2007.

The continued employment of a Tenancy Enforcement Officer, who deals with incidents of anti-social behaviour in our housing estates, is a clear reflection of the focus Limerick City Council has placed on improving the quality of life within our estates. Work is underway towards the recruitment of a second Tenancy Enforcement Officer, through the Housing Management Initiative Programme.

Traveller Action Plan

The publication of the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2005 – 2008 and an interagency plan for the provision of services to travellers in Limerick City have resulted in revised targets for traveller accommodation in the City. During 2006, a number of improvements were effected within the 6 halting sites, and work will continue on same during 2007. It is proposed to increase the budget allocation for Traveller support by €25,272 to €150,477.

Disabled Persons Grants

In 2006, 127 applications received provisional approval. The allocation for these grants is proposed to increase by €30,000 to €250,000 in the Revenue Budget for 2007, covering private houses. Local authority units are dealt with in the Capital Account.

Housing Maintenance

The Housing Maintenance Department services a housing stock of approximately 3,200 units. Services are provided to houses in the Northside of the city 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 200 new lettings per annum. The total budget for maintenance repair and improvement is budgeted to increase by €24,620. Included in

this increase is an increase of €50,000 by Limerick City Council to the Central Heating Programme.

350 houses are due to be completed in 2006 under the Central Heating Project at a cost of €2.6 million. It is planned to complete another 350 units in 2007.

Over 1,200 Council houses have to date benefited from the Windows & Doors Programme. Contracts for Phase 6 of this Programme were signed in September 2006 which will complete the programme. This phase involves the completion of 203 houses in Craeval Park, Pineview Gardens and Delmege Park, Moyross. The loan charge relating to the Windows and Doors Programme is budgeted at €650,000 for 2007. Approval has been granted by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to fund these loan charges from capital receipts.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S.)

The rollout of the Rental Accommodation Scheme was significantly progressed in 2006 with a total of 116 transfers completed to date. The Scheme caters for the accommodation 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. The roll-out of the scheme will seek to reduce and ultimately eliminate the level of sub-standard accommodation in Limerick City. It is anticipated that an additional 120 qualifying applicants will be catered for under the Scheme in 2007.

Dedicated personnel will be in place in early 2007 to carry out inspections of the private rented sector in accordance with the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004.

Homeless Persons

Discussions have commenced with the H.S.E with regard to the relocation of the Direct Access Hostel, and with Limerick and Clare County Councils in relation to the provision of shared services. Limerick City Council has approximately 270 beds of accommodation between emergency and transitional units. A new Action Plan is currently being developed which is due for completion in 2007.

Community & Enterprise

- Review of Limerick City Development Strategy

In accordance with Local Government Circular LG 2/05A a comprehensive review of the Limerick City Development Board's Strategy for Economic Social and Cultural

Development 2002-2012 was completed, and adopted by the Board in December 2005. The Board is currently monitoring the implementation of the key priority projects earmarked for completion over the next three years.

- The Interagency Plan for Travellers Services

Limerick City Development Board facilitated the drafting of the Inter-Agency Plan for Traveller Services, this is a two-year action plan designed to improve the range of services delivered to travellers across the city. A working group was established by the Board and this group is overseeing the implementation of the action plan and reporting to the Board.

- City of Learning

There are two key, interdependent purposes to establishing Limerick as a Learning City. The first is to support social and economic regeneration, by promoting awareness and understanding of how Limerick is changing and how the different elements of city life can interact more effectively in order to shape its future. The second is to support Lifelong Learning in Limerick, by encouraging individuals, groups, employers and institutions to involve themselves in learning throughout their lives. A data base on learning in the City will be completed in 2007. Consultation will commence on drafting a Strategy for Limerick as a City of Learning.

Social Inclusion Unit

The SIU has been involved in the following projects during the last year:

1. Drawdown of Disability Funding:

SIU compiled LCC's submission for National Disability Funding resulting in the receipt of €660,000 in 2005 and €600,000 for 2006 from the DOEHLG to help improve access to LCC buildings and services for those with disabilities. This funding is the first part of a five year programme. Practical Service Improvements to include:

- Upgrade entrance to Council Office, the installation of ramp at rear entrance to City Art Gallery
- Works to improve accessibility for those with disability in Limerick City Fire Station
- Installation of Handrails, upgrade lifts & internal stairs, installation of loop systems in City Hall.
- Installation of a disabled toilet in Bedford Row, Peoples Park and Istabraq Hall
- Renovation works to the Belltable Arts Centre
- IT web access project

2. Development of a Tenant Profile:

The Social Inclusion Unit in conjunction with the Housing Department commissioned Des McCafferty of Mary Immaculate College to develop a comprehensive socio-demographic, income and spatial analysis of Limerick City Council (LCC) tenants and to assess the current conditions in Council housing estates. This study presents a profile of 2,460 households (88% of the total renting from LCC) and 6,439 individuals accommodated by Limerick City Council during 2004.

3. Establishment of a Community Safety Partnership and Community Warden Scheme

SIU undertook research on behalf of the Housing Department into best practice in community regeneration. This involved arranging a study visit to the UK where the HSE, LCC and An Garda Síochána had an opportunity to view community regeneration schemes in operation. Following this visit LCC proposed the establishment of a Community Safety Partnership for Limerick City. SIU made a submission to the DOE to fund a Community Warden Scheme in Limerick City. The submission was successful and recently we received notification that the Dept is willing to fund €1,000,000 to establish the first pilot programme of this type in Ireland.

4. Literacy & Plain English Guidelines

The SIU have recently completed a Literacy and Plain English Guide for staff. The aim of the guide is to help staff develop documents that are easy to read and easy to understand.

5. Social Inclusion Handbook

The SIU have recently completed a Social Inclusion Handbook for staff. The aims of the handbook are: to introduce staff to the concept of social inclusion, to increase awareness within staff of how they can personally contribute to including marginalised people in society and to provide staff with information on issues of equality, poverty and inclusion. This booklet covers a wide variety of topical issues acting as a useful resource for staff when dealing with the public. Topics covered include literacy, disability, interculturalism, homelessness, elderly and poverty.

Limerick City Childcare Committee

Limerick City Childcare Committee was formed in 2000 under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme and is made up of representatives from the statutory agencies, the social partners (including the Community and Voluntary sectors), childcare providers, parents, local development companies, and the National Voluntary Organisations. Various workshops have taken place to date.

Funding through EOCP:

Limerick City Childcare Committee (LCCC) has been allocated €20,000 plus grant assistance in respect of two projects of €16,000 and a total budget of €94,000 for 2006. Limerick City Childcare Committee has received one of the largest budget allocations in the country for a region of its size.

Projects in Limerick City have received €4.6m since December 2004 including:

- €1.2 million to Our Lady of Lourdes
- €1.2 million to Moyross Community Childcare Centre
- €1.2 million to St Munchin's Family resource centre
- €1 million to Mary Immaculate College
- €16,000 to Distillery View Childcare
- €15,000 to Local Enterprise Development Park (LEDP)

Limerick City Childcare Committee also work in partnership with various organisations to ensure that training for the childcare sector is affordable, and such courses have included the "Competency Development Programme", "Supervision in Childcare" and "After School Support Skills".

School Age Childcare A Training Video and Manual for School Age Childcare was designed for providers titled "School's Out"

RAPID Programme

In 2006, the RAPID Programme has played a central role in securing various funding streams for Limerick City, including:

Direct Funding

Leverage Fund

- Housing Estate Enhancement Scheme (€300,000)
- Traffic Calming measures (€300,000)

Dormant Accounts Fund

- Dormant Accounts Social & Economic Strand "Additionality Measures" (€900,000)

Integrated Area Plan

The RAPID Programme is currently assisting LCC in the identification of priority projects in the 3 RAPID areas in Limerick. To date over €200k has been allocated under the Social Policy & Housing Directorate for a number of projects of a community/amenity nature.

Total Direct Funding to date in 2006: €1.7m

Indirect Funding

Community Based CCTV Scheme

The RAPID Programme co-ordinated and part-financed a research project undertaken by the SIM Group which developed a framework for the successful establishment of community-based CCTV systems in Limerick City. The following grants were awarded to two Limerick applicants under this scheme:

- Moyross Community Enterprise Centre (€200,000)
- Our Lady of Lourdes Community Services Group (€90,000)

Equality for Women Measure

In excess of €350,000 was allocated to three projects in Limerick:

- PAUL Partnership
- Limerick Women's Network
- One Parent Family in conjunction with the LES (South Limerick City as part of a National Consortium Bid)

Sports Capital Programme 2006

A total of €252,000 under the Sports Capital Programme was allocated to projects in RAPID areas. Limerick City Council was allocated €150,000 from Dept. of the Environment Community Grant Scheme. This was for the enhancement of the Ballananty Entrance.

“The overall aim of the Transportation and Infrastructure Department of Limerick City Council is to continue to maintain and improve the road network within the City, promote and encourage an integrated sustainable public transport system with due regard for the safety and amenity of all, and to provide the appropriate infrastructure to support and sustain the economic and social development of the City”.

The Council’s Corporate Plan contains a number of key strategies that this Department is advancing. Amongst these are:

- Accelerate the physical re-development of the city centre to improve its streetscapes, appearance, facilities and accessibility
- Drive the economic development of the city to maximise investment potential using the City’s strategic location and connections to the transport network
- Work with the National Roads Authority in the delivery of the roads and associated elements of the National Development Plan
- Enhance the character of the city and range of amenities and facilities

Roads and 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, regulation of street use and public lighting.

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.

1 Southern Ring Road (Phase 2)

Construction of Phase 2 of the Southern Ring Road commenced during the summer of 2006. This circa €400 million scheme involves the construction of a tunnel under the River Shannon at Bunlicky and the construction of over 10km of new dual carriageway linking the N18 in Coonagh with the N20 at its existing junction with the John Carew Park Link Road. Construction work is expected to last for 4 years and when completed this new river crossing is expected to remove over 20,000 vehicles per day from Limerick

city centre. The contracting consortium is Direct Route and they have won a 35-year concession from the NRA to build, maintain and operate this route.

2. Corbally Link Road

Construction work on phase 2 of the Corbally Link Road commenced in September 2006. The scheme involves the construction of 1km of a single carriageway road linking Grove Island with Park Road and involves the construction of a new bridge over the Park Canal, high quality footpaths and cycle paths, public lighting, new watermain, sewers and associated utilities. Construction work is currently being carried out by Sorenson Civil Engineering Limited and should be completed by May 2007. This contract costing €4.5 million is part funded by a Grant from the DoEHLG.

3. Road Maintenance

In 2006 Limerick City Council carried out in excess of 50,000m² road surface overlay and strengthening works at various locations throughout the city including major resurfacing works at O'Connell Street, Mallow Street, Cecil Street, Sexton Street North, Ballysimon Road, Kileely Roundabout, Moyross, Pery Street, Pery Square, Merchants Quay, Hymees Boreen, Kenyon Avenue, Garryowen Road, Mill Road, St. Patrick's Road, St. Marys Street, Highfield, Mulgrave Street and on the North Circular Road adjacent to Dawn Dairies.

In addition to the above almost 10,000m² of new footpaths were constructed throughout the city and 7000m² of existing footpath was provided with an Eco-flex thin surface overlays to extend its life span.

The ongoing programme of road and footpath restoration will be continued in 2007. 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 DoEHLG in 2007. Among the schemes currently proposed for 2007 and subject to the confirmation of grant aid are:

- a) Dublin Road (R445) resurfacing from Crannog to the Parkway
- b) Mulgrave Street (R527) resurfacing from Cathedral Place to St. Johns Avenue
- c) O'Callaghan Strand resurfacing
- d) Watch House Cross – Junction Upgrade / Provision of Traffic lights
- e) Rhebogue Hill to Hymees Boreen Junction – resurfacing works
- f) Sarsfield Street – resurfacing works
- g) Sunville Avenue – resurfacing works
- h) Dock Road – resurfacing works

A detailed roads programme will be brought before the Council in early 2007. The draft budget has provided for an increase in the investment in road upkeep from €4.0m to almost €5.0m

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) Bedford Row

The remodelling of Bedford Row to create a high quality pedestrian street was substantially completed during 2006. Work will be completed during 2007 when the Savoy Retail & Hotel development is completed.

(b) Thomas Street/Augustinian Lane/Little Catherine Street/Little William Street.

Works commenced in August 2006 on Thomas Street to create a high quality pedestrian street and works are now substantially completed on the section between O'Connell Street and Little William Street. Paving works have also been substantially completed to Augustinian Lane. In January 2007 works will resume with remodelling works to Thomas Street between Little William Street and Little Catherine Street, on Little William Street and on Little Catherine Street. These works are scheduled to be completed by June 2007.

(c) Upper Thomas Street/Foxe's Bow/Catherine Street (between Thomas St. and Roches St.)

Plans are now reasonably advanced for remodelling works on Upper Thomas Street, Foxe's Bow and on Catherine Street between Thomas Street and Roches Street as per Part 8 plans for the city centre adopted in 2003. It is hoped to advance these projects to tender during the first quarter of 2007.

(d) 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 full pedestrianisation of O'Connell Street between William Street and Roches Street thus creating a high quality pedestrianised public space in Limerick City centre. This Inner Orbital Route will also facilitate the extensive re-modelling of the remainder of the streetscape of O'Connell Street and William Street providing wider modern footpaths and new street furniture. A number of different options on the Orbital Route were presented to the Transportation & Infrastructure SPC in November of 2006 and detailed plans are currently being prepared for both the Orbital Route and the remodelling of O'Connell Street and William Street so that this major scheme can be advanced to the Part 8 public consultation phase during the first quarter of 2007. Extensive consultation will be carried out with all stakeholders during the first quarter of 2007, to create plans

that best reflects the type of city centre the citizens of Limerick city will desire in the future.

5 Public Transport

Work has continued during 2006 and many hours have been spent in consultation with Stakeholders to achieve consensus on the provision of Green Routes on the major transport corridors into Limerick City. Observers of infrastructure works in the city environs will have noted that Limerick County Council completed work on a Green Route in Raheen during 2006 which is showing substantial savings in journey times for buses on the route and that construction work has commenced on a Green Route in Caherdavin between the Coonagh Roundabout and the Jetland Shopping Centre. The continuation of these routes into Limerick city centre would further reduce bus journey times and result in an increase in the frequency of service thus offering choice to people travelling into the city and facilitate a modal shift to public transport thus reducing congestion in our City Centre. It is important that Limerick city avail of the enhanced capital funding programmes currently being provided by the Department of Transport for the provision of such Green Routes and for the provision of high quality Park and Ride facilities on the outskirts of the city once Green Routes have been provided. The provision of a high quality sustainable public transport network must be a priority for Limerick City.

6 Cycle Routes

As with Green Routes it is now national policy to provide more sustainable methods of local transportation and with this in mind a Cycle Strategy for Limerick City was approved in 2004. The first major cycle paths in Limerick city were completed during 2006 with almost 2km of new cycle path constructed on the Childers Road between the Kilmallock Road roundabout and the Parkway roundabout. In addition to this a new cycle path was constructed along the banks of the restored Park Canal during 2006. In 2007 new cycle paths will be completed along the route of the new Corbally Link Road and it is also hoped subject to funding to extend the cycle path at the Parkway roundabout to the county boundary along the old Dublin Road to link up with the University. It should also be noted that Green Routes are designated routes for cyclists as well as buses and taxis.

7 Park Canal Development

Phase 1 of the Park Canal Project was completed during 2006 and involved deepening and cleaning of the Canal and the provision of footpaths and cycle ways. It should be noted that the Canal is currently closed to facilitate the safe construction of the Corbally Link Road Bridge but will open again in early 2007. Phase 2 of this project should commence during 2007.

8. Riverside Strategy

The Riverside is one of the most important natural assets of Limerick City as 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 plans are currently being advanced and these include.

a) Clancy Strand

Limerick City Council is currently at tender stage for a project to build new footpaths on Clancy Strand and to provide new high quality lighting. In addition to this substantial new paving works will be carried out around the Treaty Stone and a new riverside park will be created adjacent to the Curragour Park to maximise the riverside views and enhance the experience of the falls. Included in the park will be two new access ramps to the river in support of the kayaking and angling activities. Works are expected to commence in March 2007.

b) O'Callaghan Strand

Plans to create a promenade on the Riverside at O'Callaghan Strand and to upgrade the roadway are at an advanced stage. The Part 8 process was completed in November 2006 and the scheme is now at the detailed design stage. The Council expects to go to tender in February 2007 with construction scheduled to start circa May 2007.

c) Other Riverside Projects

Plans are currently being developed for other schemes along the riverside including:

- Full upgrade of the riverside promenade between Shannon Bridge and Sarsfield Bridge along Bishops, Howley's and Harvey's Quay.
- Boardwalk at King John's castle
- Survey of other potential riverside walks within the city area.

These two schemes will be advanced to Part 8 during the first half of 2007.

9. 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 2006.

a) 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.

b) Delivery Strategy

In tandem with the additional traffic management undertakings with respect to re-modelling of city centre street project, the development of City Centre Orbital Route and Limerick Tunnel Project, the City Council has identified a clear objective to better manage and control H.G.V's and commercial vehicle activity within the city. In consultation with the elected members, the Garda Siochana, the representatives of the bus companies and commercial community within the city and environs the City Council intends to introduce more loading bays, mandatory loading times between 7.00am and 11.00am and after 18.00 hrs. Monday to Sunday inclusive.

The City Council intends through consultation to expand the Delivery Strategy to provide for regular control of vehicle weights and vehicle emissions.

c) Taxi Ranks (Appointed Stands)

Following consultation with the Garda Siochana and the Limerick branches of National Taxi Union and Limerick Taxi Drivers Association, the City Council completed a review of the city's taxi ranks. This programme increased the seven day 24 hour appointed stands stock from 54 to 98 and provided 30 new evening and nighttime stands.

The City Council proposes to further review and extend the city's Appointed Stands Stock in 2007 in consultation with the Garda Siochana and the above organisations.

d) Road Safety

The promotion of road safety awareness at every conceivable opportunity is a priority of the City Council Traffic Department. This 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 2007 we intend to expand our collaboration on road safety educational and awareness programs with Limerick County Council. The School Cycle Training Program and the transition year Drive for Life Programme will be continued in 2007 with a target of training up to certificate level 500 primary school children and 200 secondary students.

I do however wish to express some concern that notwithstanding the City Council subvention of up to €10 per student, the primary school Cycle Training Programme has in general been poorly supported by the City's primary schools.

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 Siochana, the traffic authority, in the installation of the new speed detection camera installations within the city, scheduled to commence in 2007.

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.

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. It is envisaged that the DoEHLG will provide additional funds in 2007 for this work.

The development of a new ring water main for the city to support present and future development is being advanced. New ring water mains have been laid along the course of the Southern Ring Road. The provision of a new water main from the reservoir at Newcastle to Caherdavin including a river crossing will be completed in the coming year. The Monaleen Road section of this project is only recently completed in 2006.

Over 150 metres of the existing Distribution Water Main were replaced during 2006. 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 200 leaks identified and repaired resulting in additional savings in the supply of water. The Council is currently advancing its Metering Programme to ensure that all non-domestic water consumers are metered by the end of 2007.

Clareville Waterworks

The signing of the contract for the redevelopment of Clareville Waterworks by DBO contract took place in December 2006. The strategic development of this water production facility will lead to a doubling of the capacity of the plant in the longer term. The proposed budget for 2007 includes provision for an increase of €180,000 in the operation of public water schemes. The bulk of the increase relates to additional energy costs associated with the production of water.

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. It is proposed to make provision for an additional €500,000 to cover the increased running costs for the waste water treatment plant in 2007. This increase is mainly driven by increased energy costs.

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. 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 for consideration.

Flood Alleviation

In 2006 flood alleviation works were completed along Clancy Strand. The works consisted of a reinforced concrete wall to support the existing structure and also raising the existing wall. Floodgates were also purchased. The Office of Public Works funded this project.

The Office of Public Works has recently approved plans for a similar project at Sir Harry's Mall. These works are proposed to be carried out in 2007. As part of its planning conditions the hotel development on Sir Harry's Mall will carry out necessary works on the quay walls fronting that site.

Public Toilets

Two new state of the art wheelchair accessible public toilet facilities were installed in Limerick City during 2006. The first facility was installed near the entrance to the People's Park and also included the upgrading of the footpath around the Park entrance. The second facility has recently been installed on Lower Bedford Row to replace the older model that had been in service for sixteen years.

Funding for the purchase of this toilet has been secured from the National Disability Fund however Limerick City Council will have to provide for the cost of maintenance and upkeep from within our own resources.

Water Pricing

Whilst the capital infrastructure allows for the continued expansion of the city the increased operational and maintenance costs of the entire water and waste water network must be provided for in the revenue budget of the Council and recovered as appropriate through charging mechanisms.

Docks Area Plan

The possible redevelopment of the Limerick Docklands is now under consideration as work on a Local Area Plan has commenced. This plan will provide for the strategic development, redevelopment and renewal of the Limerick Docklands area. The final adopted plan will be incorporated into the City Development Plan.

Limerick City Centre & Retail Strategy

Limerick City Centre is the single largest employment location in the region. More than 13,000 persons commute to work here each day, mainly employed in commerce, health, education and government. The role of the city centre as the primary retail location of the region is under threat. During 2005, Limerick County Council granted permission for two suburban centres totalling nearly one million square feet in gross retail space and these decisions were confirmed by An Bord Pleanála on appeal in 2006. Together with other recent permissions in the county and city and other applications expected in the county, this greatly exceeds the expected demand contained in the current Retail Strategy. Consequently it is intended to commence a review of this strategy during 2007 in the context of an overall strategic assessment of the future of the city centre business district. Permission has been granted for 300,000 square feet of shopping at the Opera Development on Patrick Street and this project is intended to go to construction in 2007.

Borough Boundary Extension

Limerick City Council made a proposal to extend its boundary in 1998 and following consultation with Limerick and Clare County Councils by resolution dated 8th February, 1999 amended the proposal and lodged it with the Minister for the Environment. No decision was made on the proposal by the Minister, but following representation by the Mayor, a letter was received from the Minister on 8th July, 2002 in which he stated that due to the passage of time, the information on which the proposal was based had become obsolete and advised that a fresh proposal be made based on up to date information and in accordance with the Local Government Act, 2001. However, since the relevant sections of the 2001 Act have not yet been commenced, the City Council prepared a revised proposal in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1991. This proposal was adopted by the City Council and sent to Limerick and Clare County Councils in October 2004. Following receipt of replies from the two respondent Councils and having regard to the submissions received, the Council adopted a new proposal to extend the boundary at the October 2005 meeting and this was sent to the Minister. No decision has been made on the application as yet. The Minister has asked the officials of the three local authorities to meet and seek increased cooperation.

Integrated Area Plan

The termination date for developments under this scheme was July 2006 and the final projects are being completed. Permitted developments to date comprise more than €400m in investment creating almost 2.8 million square feet of building and over 1,200 residential units. It is disappointing that some designated sites where planning permission has been granted have not proceeded to construction.

Conservation of Protected Structures

The Planning Acts 1999 and 2000 make provision for conservation of buildings of architectural merit, of which 335 are listed in Limerick. The City Council provides an assessment and advisory service to the owners of Protected Structures and also administers a Scheme of Grants for the maintenance of such buildings. The programme will continue through 2007 and it is expected that grant aid will also be available from the DoEHLG. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage has completed its survey of Limerick City and the draft report is being considered.

Development Control

Planning applications

The Council will receive c.500 planning applications in 2006. Amongst the significant developments granted permission during 2006 were:-

- (1) Redevelopment of the Thomond Park
- (2) Shopping Centre development of the Opera Centre, Patrick St..
- (3) Robert Butler Developments at O'Connell Street

Among the significant applications under consideration at present are:-

1. Redevelopment of Parkway Shopping Centre.(pre-planning)
2. Redevelopment of the former GPO in Henry Street
3. Redevelopment of the former Dan Ryan's Garage, Punches Cross
4. Expansion of Mary Immaculate College

Development under construction

A number of large developments commenced construction in 2005 including:-

1. Development at the corner of Henry Street/Bedford Row – former Savoy Cinema site
2. Development of retail park at Ennis Road
3. Hilton Hotel, Ennis Road
4. New offices for the Department of Foreign Affairs, Henry Street

General Promotional Work

The draft budget includes a proposed increase in general promotional work of €130,000 from €285,000 to €415,000. Included in the increase is an increase in the provision towards Civic Week, Christmas Lighting, promotion of special events and the Limerick Co-ordination Office.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

"The overall aim of the Environment Department is to promote the conservation and improvement of the environment and enhance the business environment upon which that population depend for a livelihood"

Regional Waste Management Plan

Following a lengthy public consultation process the "Replacement Waste Management Plan 2006-2011" was signed by the City and County Managers on 20th June 2006.

Limerick County Council, as the Lead Authority for Waste Management in the Region has established a project team to roll out the implementation of the Plan. Limerick City Council contribute financially to the costs of the project team and participate fully on all technical, operational and policy committees to ensure that the interests of the city are reflected in all areas of the Plan.

Waste Collection Permit Regulations, 2001

Under the Waste Management (Collection Permit) Regulations 2001, a total of 343 Waste Collection Permits have been issued to Waste Collectors in the Limerick, Clare and Kerry region. 22 Collection Permits have been issued to collectors whose principal place of business is based in Limerick City. 6 of these permits were granted in 2006 for operators based in Limerick City. Of these 22 permits, 16 have been audited by Limerick City Council staff.

Notices are served under Section 34 and Section 18 of the Waste Management Act 1996 to 2005 for breaches of the Waste Collection Permit Regulations 2001. During 2006 there were 5 successful prosecutions under Section 34 with 1 case struck out and 1 case appealed, a further 2 cases are pending. Section 18 notices are issued to persons found carrying waste in order to determine if they are collecting waste for profit. During 2006 22 Section 18 notices were issued to suspected illegal collectors with 5 Legal proceedings pending.

Roadside Checkpoints were carried out during the year with Gardai assistance at 4 locations throughout the city. This was to check for compliance with the Collection Permit Regulations and to increase awareness among the public.

Waste Management Permit Regulations 1998 - Waste Site Facilities

There are currently 14 active permitted sites for waste processing in the Limerick City area. The waste types and methods of processing are varied. During 2006, 3 new site permits were granted and 2 renewal permits were granted. One permitted site involved in

the processing and transferring of household waste ceased trading. Of the 14 permitted sites, 9 have been audited.

Waiver Scheme

A provision of €470,000 has been included in the proposed estimates for 2007.

Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment Regulations 2005

There are 107 Electrical and electronic retailers registered with Limerick City Council under the above Regulations during 2006. These retailers are obliged to take back old electrical equipment similar to the type they have sold. Spot checks were carried out on 20 of the larger electrical retailers in the city centre on the 1st and 3rd of November 2006. A number of small non compliances with the Regulations were noted and warning letters were issued. The EPA was notified of breaches in relation to price setting and till receipt compliance.

Environmental Awareness and Education

Limerick City Council will continue to work towards the principals of reduce, recycle and recovery of waste generated in accordance with the Replacement Waste Management Plan 2006-2011. The council will strive to lead by example by working towards in-house waste and environmental management systems along with the introduction where practicable of green procurement policies such as a commitment to the use of recycled paper for printed materials produced by the city council. This is also in line with the Council's strategy of developing and implementing effective education programmes in homes, schools and businesses. The council will continue to promote home composting, Green Schools and investigate waste prevention via the EPA Local Authority Prevention Demonstration project (C&D waste); Real Nappy Initiatives and reuse initiatives such as the Oxfam Schools Environmental Challenge.

Recycling Facilities

Limerick City Council has provided 19 bring bank sites in the city and a mini Recycling facility at Park Road. 2006 saw the introduction of 8 additional textile recycling banks at existing bring bank locations around the city. Cardboard recycling was introduced at the Park Road Depot and this facility is continuing to provide a recycling collection point for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment. Preparations are on going for the proposed Civic Amenity site on the Southside of the city.

Wetlands

Limerick City Council is responsible for the ecological resource of wetlands existing within the City Boundary. Wetland areas are important ecological systems that are under threat worldwide.

They are defined as "areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt including areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed 6 meters." Great care needs to be taken in relation to development on or near Special Areas of Conservation. Limerick City Council is required to maintain and enhance the wetland areas in its functional area particularly those in its ownership.

Longpavement Rehabilitation

The Contract has been signed for infrastructural work as per EPA License 76-1. The Contractor has commenced initial works on site. The final picture of the restored landfill is not finalized but the plan is to increase the biodiversity of the area have a low maintenance management and allow for increased passive recreation in the area. The plan will also include augmentation of existing wetlands on the site. This work is being grant aided by the DoEHLG. A provision of €100,000 has been made in the budget for loan charges relating to Limerick City Council's portion of the project cost.

Litter Pollution

Limerick City Council's dedicated Enforcement unit continued to deal with matters related to litter, illegal dumping, monitoring of Plastic Bag levy, the ban on smokey coal, derelict sites, illegal transport of waste and wandering animals during 2006. Set out below are some sample statistics for the year to date.

Number of complaints processed	1827
On the spot litter fines	673
Number of households surveyed in respect of their waste disposal Arrangements	590
Section 18 Notices, Waste Management Act 1996 (requires any holder of waste to submit information in relation to their waste activities)	90
Section 55 Notices, Waste Management Act 1996 (requires any holder of waste to take certain measures in relation to the holding , recovery or disposal of waste in order to prevent or limit environmental pollution)	47

Air Pollution

As in previous years results produced at the Council's four air monitoring stations at Moyross, Southill, City Centre and the Park Road Depot did not exceed the smoke and sulphur dioxide levels allowed.

Enforcement Officers have begun Inspections of retailers in the city and the four main suppliers of solid fuel based in the city will be visited. So far there have been no spot checks of bell men selling coal in the city however a programme for inspections is to start within the next 2 weeks under the regulations governing the ban on the marketing, sale and distribution of bituminous coal in Limerick City and its adjoining built-up areas. The council will continue to enforce these regulations in 2007.

Cemeteries Department

On going maintenance work on kerbing, pathways and driveways continues in both Mt. Saint Lawrence and Mt. Saint Oliver cemeteries. By December 2006 block 26 in Mt. St. Oliver will be completed which will create an additional 180 grave spaces. In addition 105 grave spaces were also created in Mt. Saint Lawrence Extension.

In the year to date 175 people have been buried in Mt. Saint Lawrence and 185 people were buried in Mt. Saint Oliver.

Fire and Rescue 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 Planning;
- Fire Service Mobilisation and Communications

Fire & Emergency Operations

Achievements for 2006 include:

- A general purpose utility vehicle was purchased to enhance service delivery
- The service successfully attended 1767 incidents from 1st January to 31st October, 2006. Of this number, 1136 were fire incidents and 131 were road traffic accidents.
- Refurbishment of Fire Station – BA Recovery & Muster Bay Area
- Enhance Health & Safety Measures
- A number of training courses were provided for all staff in the following areas
 - First Responder
 - Block Training
 - Senior and Junior Officers Courses
 - Swift Water Instructor
 - BA Refresher

Plans for 2007 include:

- Progress extension of Fire Station
- Implementation of Benchmarking;
- Achieve a standard fire & rescue equipment inventory on the first turnout of fire appliances;
- Continue the roll out of swift water rescue training for Fire-fighters;
- Further enhancement the training regime within the Fire Brigade;
- Maintain and improve on standards of health and safety;
- Progress disability access to Fire Station
- Upgrade aerial appliance fleet

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.

The services provided in 2006 included:

- **Licensing of Premises:** Inspected 100% of licensing applications received, (65 licences at 06/11/06)
- **Planning Applications:** Assessed 100% of applications received, (92 at 06/11/06)
- **Fire Safety Certificate Applications:** Assessed 100% of FSC applications received, (115 at 06/11/06);
- **Building Control:** 30% of premises for which commencement notices were received were inspected. (The national target is a minimum of 12.5%).
- **Public Advice & Complaints Service:** 13 complaints were investigated and reported on;
- **Part M of the Building Regulations:** All planning applications referred to the Department were examined for conformity with Part M of the Building Regulations;
- **Dangerous Buildings:** inspections were carried out, reported on and Notices served on owners/occupiers (21 up to 06/11/06)

Objectives for 2007 include:

- Continue the high rate of assessment of Fire Safety Certificate applications;
- Continue to improve upon the percentage inspection rate of premises for which commencement notices are received;
- Progress the utilisation of the geographical information system (GIS) to improve building control and fire prevention premises records;
- Progress the extension and modifications of the Fire Station to improve the capacity for Fire Prevention and Building Control services, administrative

- efficiency to improve access for the public generally and for people with disabilities in particular.
- Achieve ISO 9001 quality assurance.

Major Emergency Planning

The Fire & Rescue Service leads the implementation of Limerick City Council's Major Emergency Plan and provides administrative and secretarial support to the Mid West Inter-Agency Major Emergency Planning Group.

Achievements for 2006 include:

- The Mid West Inter-Agency Major Emergency Planning Group contributed to the development of the new National Framework for Major Emergencies.

Objectives for 2007 include:

- Implementation of the requirements of a new national framework for major emergency management which is currently being finalised.

Fire Service Mobilisation and Communications

The Munster Regional Communications Centre (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.

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

In 2006, achievements included:

- Geographic information system installed and operational in MRCC;
- There have been significant developments of management information systems in accordance with the requirements of the MRCC and the participating fire authorities;
- Integration of Waterford City was completed;
- Award of ISO 9001: 2000 has been achieved over all business areas;
- New telecoms system installed and operational

Plans for 2007:

- Further development of management information system analysis tools both internally in the MRCC and externally for the participating authorities;
- Development of regional mobile data system to bring risk information to front line personnel

- Maintenance and development of ISO 9001 standard;
- Development and implementation of Return on Investment Analysis on training programmes in the MRCC;

Civil Defence

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

Achievements in 2006 included:

- Provided ambulance cover for local, inter- provincial and international rugby matches at Thomond Park and other venues;
- Provided crowd control for St. Patrick's Day Parade & River Fest Festival
- Participation of team in International BBQ competition;
- Continued the provision of transport for the Chernobyl Children Project;
- Participated in courses on fire fighting both conventional and forest fires, inflatable boating, GPS, map reading and search management
- Transportation of Polish Government Officials
- Auxiliary Fire Service won Regional Competition

Plans for 2007 include:

- Development of water rescue capacity further;
- Continue to support community activities and to enhance the capacity of the service to respond as a second line emergency service.
- Implement programmes in accordance with the National Strategic Plan.

CULTURAL & SPORTING POLICY

Parks General

The Parks Section is responsible for the maintenance and development of public parks, public open spaces and civic decoration.

During 2006 grass cutting was carried out on all verges, parks and open spaces on a regular basis. Flower and tree planting took place in all our public parks.

The shelter in the Peoples park is nearing completion and work will now commence and the refurbishment of the shelter in O'Brien Park Clare Street. This work is being carried out in cooperation with Limerick Civic Trust.

A tree planting programme was carried out in various parts of the city using large semi-mature trees. The successes of previous planting programmes are now coming to fruition, which has resulted in an increase in tree pruning activity.

A new depot comprising a canteen, toilets, offices, chemical store and machinery workshop was provided in the Peoples Park. Provision of €50,000 has been made in the budget to begin replacement of Park's vehicles and equipment.

City Enhancement

Additional work has been carried out in this area. All our bridges have now been fitted with brackets for the hanging baskets that provided wonderful colour during the spring, summer and autumn.

Extra containers were placed on Spokane Walk and "Poor Man's Kilkee". O'Connell Street, Cruise's Street, and Roches Street were decorated with floral containers which were very successful. The Crescent Monument and other designated flower containers were also planted with colourful bedding plants. Provision has been made in the 2007 budget to maintain the current spend of €50,000.

Urban Forestry

As part of our development programme, work commenced on the provision of pedestrian pathways through the plantation in Shannon Fields, Corbally. This plantation has also been thinned and pruned. Phase two of this programme is due to commence in 2007 with the carrying out of further infrastructural works.

Playground Facilities

New Safety Surfacing was installed in the People's Park playground in late 2006. Three additional play areas were also completed in 2006, under the Rapid Playgrounds Grant Scheme. These are: Distillery View, Thomondgate; Clarina Park, Ballinacurra Weston and Four Parks Green, Moyross.

Municipal Golf Course

White Young Green Ireland Ltd, Limerick, have been engaged by the Council to carry out design works for course development at Rathbane. A grant of €300,000 was provisionally allocated by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, to the Council, under the 2006 Sports Capital Programme, towards construction of a 25-bay driving range, a bunker redevelopment programme, realignment of holes to facilitate the driving range, upgrade of tee boxes and development of a short game practice facility.

St. Enda's Sports Complex

The Council submitted an application under the 2006 Sports Capital Programme, to the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, for a grant to develop the sports complex. A grant of €100,000 was provisionally allocated by the Department in July, 2006 towards funding some of the work proposed. A further application was recently submitted for funding under the 2007 Sports Capital Programme

Grants for Community and Voluntary Groups

The Grant Assistance for Environmental Improvement Initiatives Scheme was introduced in 2003 to assist community and voluntary groups financially, in their efforts to improve the local environment. This year €75,000 was allocated to 33 groups from all over the City. The type of work eligible for grant assistance included tree planting, grass cutting, skip hire, equipment hire, etc. The proposed budget includes a provision of €75,000 for these grants.

Library & Information Services

Limerick City Library & Information Service continued to provide a wide range of services to the public from two service points, the Granary & Roxboro during 2006. The provision of technology e.g. the Internet, Word, Excel and other computer packages continue to add value to the service which is provided.

Life is for learning and there is no better place to start than in a library. Rapid change is leading to an intensification of social exclusion for vulnerable communities. Lifelong Learning to day is seen as a significant force for social change. There has been renewed interest recently in providing learning opportunities that are community-based in order to make education more accessible to the general population, and in particular for adults that are “hard to reach” or socially excluded. This is particularly important since surveys have found that adult education and training programmes are less likely to reach those with low skills, who need them most. It is hoped that the new library at Watchhouse Cross will provide the facilities to reach not just the community in Moyross but also several communities in the surrounding areas.

Statistics for 2006.

	Granary	Roxboro	Combined Total
Issues: Books, Languages, Talking Books.	<i>143,207</i>	<i>20,306</i>	<i>163,513</i>
Music Issues	<i>10,547</i>	-----	<i>10,547</i>
Mobile Issues	<i>12,864</i>	-----	<i>12,764</i>
Total Issues			<u>186,824</u>
No. of Hours for			
Internet Usage	<i>13,551</i>	<i>3,873</i>	<i>17,424</i>
Number of Visitors	<i>124,592</i>	-----	<i>124,592</i>
No. of Lectures	<i>9</i>	-----	<i>9</i>
No. of Book Launches	<i>5</i>	-----	<i>5</i>
No. of Exhibitions	<i>8</i>	-----	<i>8</i>

Audience and Access Development

In October 2006, LCGA, appointed two experienced professionals – artists and curators – to the position of Curator - Audience and Access. The Curator – Audience and Access is responsible for all aspects of LCGA’s education, outreach and audience development activities. The role involves driving the development of substantive and innovative

public events and programmes, to increase the engagement with audiences for contemporary art.

The Arts Service

The Arts Office of Limerick provided a range of services throughout the year including information and advice to individuals and organisations, provision of support in developing the arts infrastructure in the City, provision of financial support and opportunities for the individual artists, Art in Education Projects in both the South and Northside of the City and a Programme of Arts events that establishes Limerick as the Cultural Capital of the Mid West. (see events below)

Highlights of 2006

- The Arts in Education projects included The Irish Chamber Orchestra working with three city schools in the Southside of the City and in the Northside, the Storyteller, Susie Minto worked with 5th class students in Corpus Christi school for a two month period.
- Two applications from Limerick City Council for capital funding have been made to the Department of Arts Sport and Tourism to help develop the Cultural infrastructure of the City.
- Cuisle Poetry Festival attracted great audiences, Brendan Kennelly in particular read to a full house in the newly refurbished St. John of The Cross Church in John's Square. Twenty poets from 6 different countries attended the festival
- ev+a 2006 included the work of 70 artists from 20 different countries into Limerick and received very favourable coverage on RTE's nationwide.
- May Music in the Park provided opportunities for 4 Limerick marching bands to play to locals and visitors in the City's municipal parks, a joint initiative between The Environment Department and The Arts Office.

The Jim Kemmy Museum

There were 153 additions to the museum collection during the year. Notable among them were: an RIC officer's Webley pistol taken at the Dromkeen ambush, 1921; four nineteenth century Limerick pocket watches by C. Cromer, Moser Brothers, R. Wallace and Edward Moser; the flag used by Mayor Casey to start the first Limerick road motor race, 1935; the Civil Articles of Limerick, printed in 1692; eighteenth century prints of William, Lord Blakeney of Co. Limerick, MP for Kilmallock 1727-56 and of St. Mary's

Cathedral, and a photograph by O'Brien & Doyle, Thomas St., of Limerick Rovers cricket team, 1885.

888 new records were added to the catalogue, bringing the total number of records in the catalogue to 54,441. 2732 digitised images were added to the catalogue, bringing the total to 24,157.

There were 957,355 hits on the museum catalogue on the internet during the year, totalling nearly two million since the launch in June 2004, and email enquiries and comments were received from all over the world. Information exchange with these is two-way, particularly from the descendants of Limerick people living abroad. More than 2000 enquiries were dealt with in total, from personal callers, by phone, letter and email.

A grant was received from the Heritage Council towards the restoration of the painting, The New Bridge at Limerick by Samuel Brocas, c.1820.

Visitor numbers were 11,890.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Partnership

The Partnership process, over the past number of years, has been a mechanism to secure delivery of change and modernisation in the City Council and is based on the model of National Partnership that has been very beneficial in securing economic and social progress. During 2006 this process continued with the establishment of new committees to work on specific items of change on a directorate basis.

Performance Management Development System

As part of Sustaining Progress all local authorities are required to implement a system of Performance Management and Development (PMDS). Two trainers have been assigned to implement the PMDS and good progress is being made with over 25 Team Development Plans and 100 Personal Development Plans completed to date.

Training

The department provides training courses both internally and externally. Over 60 such courses have been delivered or will be by the end of 2006. In addition a number of staff were approved during the year to attend courses to further their education and professional development. As part of the City Council's *Train the Trainer Programme* 5 employees who have received training will start delivering courses to staff in improving customer services.

Register of Electors

The 2006/2007 Register was published on the 1st February, 2006 and came into force on the 15th February, 2006. Work commenced in the summer on the preparation of the Draft Register for 2007/2008 that was published on the 1st November, 2006. Revised requirements specified by the Department of the Environment that are designed to improve the accuracy of the register came into force and were implemented.

Higher Education Grants

428 Higher Education Grants have been paid to date in 2006.

Official Receptions and Meetings

2006 has been a busy year for Council meetings, civic services and functions, details of which follow (figures correct to 23rd November 2006):

No. of Council meetings	15
No. of Area Meetings	8
No. of SPC meetings	23
No. of Civic Receptions	4
No. of Mayoral Receptions	26
No. of Tender Openings	15

ICT Department

During 2006 the ICT Department continued to support the computer infrastructure and systems applications in place. Reinvestment in the network infrastructure, PC's and facilitation of the City Hall refurbishment progressed during the year.

Work continued on the promotion of Geographic Information Systems as well as the development of a selection of web-based GIS tools: One increased public access to the planning register while another distributed the capture of data across the organization. As always there was a focus on dataset creation (Main Drainage) and analysis (Housing Profile) while a strategy for managing corporate address databases was also formulated.

During the year, the ICT Department focused on consolidation and efficiencies. A new backup system was introduced, a number of older servers and PCs were replaced. Microsoft, Citrix, Exchange email and Anti Virus products were upgraded or replaced. The IT Infrastructure including cabling, Servers, and PCs for new Moyross Library was designed.

In line with an organisation wide commitment to accessibility the Department reviewed the corporate website (www.limerickcity.ie) in the form of a web audit. A proposal to redesign the website to include a new Content Management Server was initiated and the project is due for completion in early 2007. In addition to having an accessible website, all departments will be able to publish their information directly to the site. The department was also involved in the development of the Limerick SIM website.

The Water Services and Roads Complaints System were deployed and this contributed to the greater efficiencies in tracking and dealing with complaints thus giving a better public service.

Provision has been made in the 2007 budget to continue the progress that has been made to date with specific increases provided for in training, communications and hardware.

FINANCE

The Finance department will continue to focus on improving the delivery of financial information to all relevant stakeholders. In 2006 a significant upgrade of the Agresso financial system was successfully implemented.

During 2006 employee expense claims were switched from a manual system to an electronic system. Further efficiency improvements to payment processes are planned for 2007.

Significant progress has been made in 2006 on improving the level of overdraft at the bank. There will be a continued emphasis on cash flow management in 2007.

The Accounts Receivable section is currently implementing a new system that will allow customers pay their rates and water bills by direct debit. A new e-payment system is to be introduced in the first half of 2007. It is planned to introduce further enhancements to the billing systems in 2007.

Property Management

The Property Management Section will coordinate and oversee all property transactions in 2007.

A provision of €36,768 has been made in the 2007 draft budget for the following works to be carried out by the Civic Trust:

- Repair of the Fountain in Johns Square
- Works to the “Untank Crypt” St. Johns Square.
- Works to the “Abbey Wall”, Sir Harry’s Mall.
- Maintenance works to the “O’Connell Monument”

In 2007 Property Management will address areas of dereliction/underutilisation in the City with a view to identifying key sites of interest for commercial redevelopment. All title issues on these sites will be addressed with a view to the provision of “packaged” sites which will bring to fruition sustainable economic development. This will lead to the successful showcasing of Limerick as a progressive City and a contender to any other area as a base for Business.



LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL BUDGET

For the Year Ending 31st December 2007

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

I hereby certify that at the Budget meeting of Limerick City Council held this 18th day of December 2006 the City Council by resolution adopted for the financial year ended 31st December 2007, the Budget set out in Tables A and B and by Resolution determined in accordance with the said Budget the Rates set out in Table B to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for that year for the purposes set out in that Table.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Countersigned: _____
City Manager

Date: _____ 18th December 2006