

# LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL



## ADOPTED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2006

**LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CATHRACH LUIMNIGH**

Árus na Cathrach  
Luimneach

8<sup>th</sup> December 2005

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

**Annual Budget for the year  
1<sup>st</sup> January 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006**

In presenting the Annual Budget for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 to Council, I wish to take this opportunity, to summarise the financial position of Limerick City Council at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004. The Annual Financial Statement of Limerick City Council for the year 2004 shows that the accumulated Debit Balance on the Revenue Account is a debit position of €2,116,188 at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004 (compared to the accumulated Debit Balance on the Revenue Account at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003 of €7,213,863).

Current outturn figures indicate that the Revenue Deficit will improve during 2005. With this in mind and with the limited resources available to Limerick City Council I have given greatest priority to the most essential services while, at the same time, protecting the future sustainable development of Limerick City.

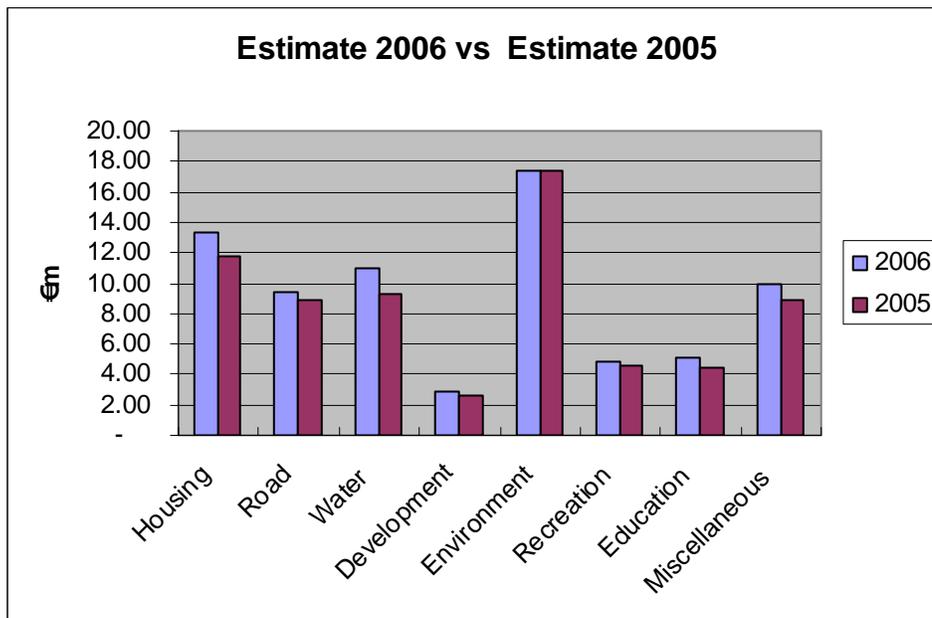
I will now set out the proposals for Expenditure and Income for 2006.

**Expenditure – 2006**

The Budget for 2006 provides for expenditure of €73.87 million. This represents an increase of €6million or 9% over the adopted Budget for 2005. The following table sets out the expenditure by Programme Group:

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
	€	€
1. Housing and Building	13,286,905	11,769,704
2. Road Transportation and Safety	9,416,749	8,869,680
3. Water Supply and Sewerage	10,922,634	9,286,665
4. Development Incentives and Controls	2,835,754	2,584,410
5. Environmental Protection	17,458,310	17,377,368
6. Recreation and Amenity	4,889,502	4,607,803
7. Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	5,126,719	4,437,549
8. Miscellaneous Services	<u>9,936,738</u>	<u>8,877,145</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,873,311</b>	<b>67,810,324</b>

The following graph depicts estimated expenditure by Programme Group for 2006, compared to 2005.



This increase in expenditure can be broken down as follows:

	<b>2006</b> €million	<b>2005</b> €million	<b>Increase</b> €million
Payroll and Pensions	37.01	35.36	1.65
Non Payroll	36.86	32.45	4.41
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>73.87</b>	<b>67.81</b>	<b>6.06</b>

### **Payroll and Pensions**

The cost for 2006 reflects an increase of 4.6% on 2005. 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 2006 on a case by case basis.

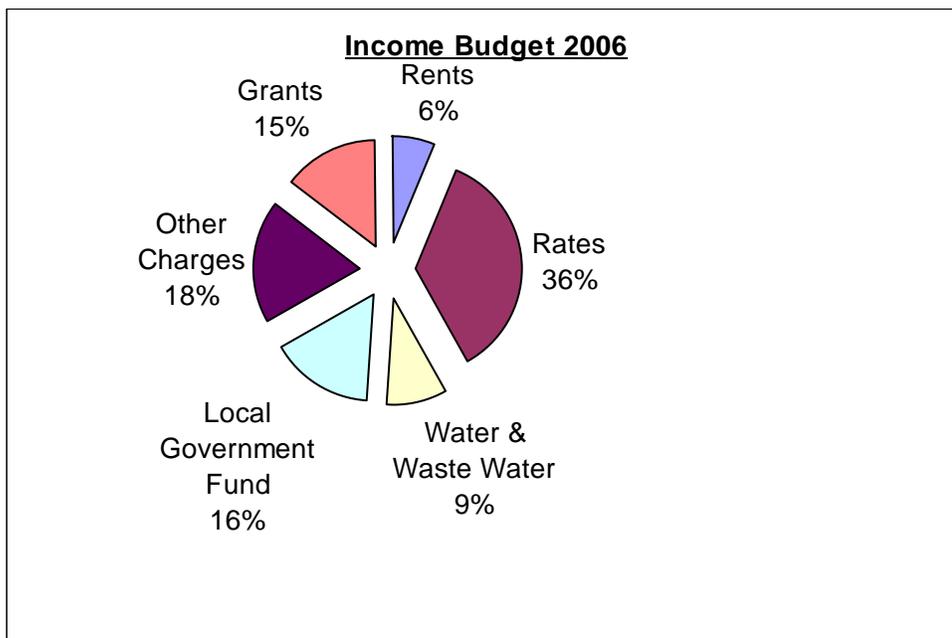
### **Non-Payroll Costs**

There are a number of new costs and unavoidable increases in current costs facing the City Council for 2006. I have made every effort to maintain expenditure in critical areas.

Non payroll costs have increased by 13.5%. 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 - 2006**



The effective valuation of €320,644 (2005) has increased by €28,502 to €349,146 for 2006. This represents an increase of 8.9%.

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 2006 Budget a reduction in the Rate of half 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 €10,932,934 in the Budget for 2006 in respect of the Local Government Fund. I have also included a contribution of €1.3m 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. In order to achieve this it is necessary to increase the consolidated water and waste water charge to €6.98 per 1,000 gallons.

### **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 Diarmuid Scully and his predecessor, Councillor Michael Hourigan for their wholehearted commitment and support this year.

I also wish to express my thanks to the Directors, Mr. Kieran Lehane, Mr. Oliver O Loughlin, Mr. Pat Dowling, Mr. Joe Delaney 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 marks a turning point for the City. It 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

*"The overall aim of Social Policy and Housing is to develop and foster a culture of social inclusiveness and partnership in the delivery of the housing service."*

### 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. It is an ambitious plan, estimating to cost €90m and seeking to deliver/upgrade 1,436 social housing units over the period of the Plan through social housing construction/acquisitions, remedial works schemes, affordable housing, voluntary housing agencies and traveller accommodation. The Plan also seeks to focus on the improvement and rehabilitation of the City Council's existing housing stock and bolster our existing communities. A much broader emphasis on the regeneration of deprived areas and improved management of our estates will be to the fore of our housing programme for the short to medium term future. In 2005, the second year of the Plan; almost one hundred new units will have commenced on site.

### Housing Maintenance

The Housing Maintenance Department services a housing stock in excess of 3,200 units. Services are provided to houses in the Northside of the city from the Moyross Maintenance Depot and houses in the Southside are serviced by the Rathbane Depot. There is a dedicated relettings crew based in the Garryowen Depot and this crew deals with in excess of 200 new lettings each year.

### Replacement of Windows and Doors Programme

This programme, which is ongoing, commenced in 2001 and will continue over a five year period. Almost 900 houses in total were completed by the end of 2004. Phase 4 & Phase 5 of the programme commenced in March 2005 and includes 357 houses. It is envisaged that Phase 6 of the scheme, comprising 200 houses in Moyross, will commence in July 2006, which will complete the scheme in full.

### Central Heating Programme

Almost 2,500 units of the City Council's housing stock are without central heating. In keeping with the Council's commitment towards improvement of the housing stock it is intended to avail of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government Central Heating Initiative over the next few years. Under this scheme the Department will provide a grant of €5,600 or 80% of the cost of the work, whichever is the lesser, towards the installation of central heating and other related works. Phase 1 of the project, comprising 150 rented houses, commenced in May 2005 and three contracts were simultaneously awarded. It is expected that a further 150 houses will be completed in 2006.

### Estate Management

Estate management in the Council's local authority estates remains the Housing Department's highest priority. Limerick City Council funded six estate management groups in 2005 and continues to employ three full-time Community Liaison Officers in the area of estate management. In order to address the growing challenges of estate management and to maintain and develop services within the estates the City Council has provided an extra €15,000 towards estate management and an additional €20,000 for the Social and Community Grant Scheme in 2006.

The relationships forged within the communities provide vital links and communication channels to ensure that the future of our communities is maintained.

The continued employment of a Tenancy Enforcement Officer, who deals with incidences 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. This initiative provides our communities with a dedicated person in terms of reporting and following-up incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour. The Anti-Social Behaviour Policy agreed by City Council during 2004, continues to reflect a strong stance on the issue of anti-social behaviour.

Continued provision has been made for the full-time Travellers Services Co-ordinator who deals with the management and development of the traveller halting sites.

This is an extremely challenging role in terms of estate management and our continued investment in all aspects of estate management has proved to be of great benefit to Limerick City Council and the wider City.

### Disabled Persons Grants

In 2005, 128 applications received provisional approval. Due to changes in the accounting treatment of grants for local authority houses a reduced provision of €20,000 is made in the Revenue Budget. This reduction in the charge to the Revenue a/c will not have any effect on the overall grant allocation in 2006. The value of grants available for 2005 has been retained for 2006.

### O'Malley Park Remedial Works Scheme

A budget in excess of €15M has been approved for this project. An extensive public consultation process has been completed. All the relevant design consultants have been appointed, and have commenced preparation of detailed designs required for Part 8 Planning application, which is to be applied for in early 2006. Part 8 approval will be followed by preparation of tender documents and contractor procurement.

### Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

The Rental Accommodation Scheme, which is a new scheme for people who are receiving rent supplement, usually for more than 18 months, and who require long term housing, is being rolled out in Limerick City in 2006. There are over 650 existing tenants in private rented accommodation in Limerick city who are currently eligible for this scheme. The Council will enter into contractual arrangements with accommodation providers to secure the medium to long-term availability of private rented accommodation for this Scheme.

## ROADS, TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

*"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.

### **Road Developments**

#### Southern Ring Road

A preferred bidder has been selected for the development of Phase 2 of the Southern Ring Road including a tunnel crossing of the Shannon River. It is expected that work will start

on the project in 2006. Presently it is scheduled that the Southern Ring Road Phase 2 will be opened to traffic in 2009.

### Corbally Link Road

Limerick City Council has received part funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the development of the Corbally Link Road from the Grove Island Leisure Centre to the Park Road.

Negotiations have now been completed on the land acquisitions for the second phase of the link road and it is intended to construct the road in 2006.

### Road Maintenance

In 2005 the City Council carried out in excess of 40,000m<sup>2</sup> of surface overlay and road strengthening works at various locations throughout the city including major resurfacing works on the Dublin Road, Pennywell Road, Clancy Strand, O Connell Avenue, Roches Street and Browns Quay. In addition to these road works 8,000m<sup>2</sup> of new footpaths were constructed throughout the City and 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of existing footpath was provided with a thin surface overlay to extend its life span. This ongoing programme of road and footpath restoration will be continued in the coming year along with other necessary works. Again priority will be given to the reduction and minimisation of risk with specific road works to be carried out on a number of areas in accordance with funding available under the Specific Improvement Grant. A detailed roads programme will be brought before the Council early in 2006.

## **Traffic Management**

### Parking Management

Continuing investment in effective and efficient enforcement of all traffic and parking regulations is becoming increasingly important to maintain the city as a vibrant retail and economic centre.

In this regard in 2005 Limerick City Council brought on line hand held terminals for Traffic Wardens and updated back office administration infrastructure. The roads department has made an application for funding for the provision of a parking guidance signage system for the city centre car parks which will allow for a more efficient traffic flow.

Conscious of the ongoing requirement to eliminate congestion and to promote business and commerce in the City Centre the following proposals are being advanced

- Revised Clearway Schedule
- New Taxi Byelaws
- Extend Disc Parking into residential areas that are experiencing difficulties from commuter parking.

#### Adaptive Urban Traffic Control System

The implementation of the Adaptive Urban Traffic Control System (AUTC) has been completed during 2005. This system allows for improved traffic movement and greater pedestrian facility and safety by use of modern technology adapting to the changing traffic movements during the day. The system has provided an increase in the number of controlled junctions in the city and the parking guidance system referred to above will further add to the improved traffic movement.

It is proposed to add additional cells in 2006 at the Parkway Roundabout and on the new Corbally Link Road junctions. A Bus Priority Program was completed in 2005 and it is intended to extend this program in 2006 in cooperation with Bus Eireann.

#### Taking in Charge of Residential Developments

A policy for the Taking in Charge of Housing Estates was developed by the Transportation and Infrastructure SPC and approved by Council during 2005. This policy will now be implemented as the Council processes applications for the taking in charge of estates.

#### 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 2006 we intend to expand our collaboration on road safety promotion activities with Limerick County Council with a view to continuing our road safety awareness program. The School Cycle Training Program will be continued in 2006 with a target of training up to certificate level 500 primary school children.

### 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. The enhancement of accessibility of the city area for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users is paramount. Finance has been provided for this programme from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government under the Urban and Village Renewal Programme and by the City Council. The contract to pedestrianise Upper Bedford Row was started during 2005 and should be completed during the Summer of 2006. Tenders to appoint a contractor for Lower Thomas Street will be invited in early 2006.

It will be necessary during 2006 to advance proposals for an inner Orbital Route for vehicular traffic. This will facilitate advancement of plans for significant pedestrianisation of O'Connell Street and William Street.

### Public Transport

Work will continue in the coming year in the advancement of proposals for the provision of green routes at suitable transport corridors. It is important that the City Council is in a position to avail of enhanced capital programmes provided by the Department of Transport, which may be available for the provision of such routes. The provision of such green routes would further enhance the development of the city centre by removing some of the parking requirement and thus providing opportunities for the development of the streets in a more pedestrian friendly manner.

The public consultation phase for Part 8 approval of the Western Green Route on the Ennis Road was completed in November 2005. A further meeting is to be held with local residents.

### Risk Management

Risk Management continues to deliver major improvements in the management of claims and the introduction to all services provided by Limerick City Council of avoidance measures to eliminate risk and the management of risk exposure. Integrated risk solutions software is being developed with the Information Technology Department to manage risk in the City. The Risk Management Section is responsive to and aware of changes in the insurance markets and will pro-actively seek to maximise the benefits to the City Council of these particular changes. The pro-active management in place in this sector will have long-term benefits for the City Council.

### Park Canal Redevelopment

Phase I of the project was advanced during 2005 with completion in early 2006. This work has provided for deepening and cleaning of the canal and for the provision of footpaths and cycleways. Waterways Ireland will provide a lock gate at park Bridge to make the canal navigable. Phase II of the project to provide a basin at the Park Bridge will be advanced in 2006 as will other aspects of the project to extend the paths towards the Univeristy of Limerick.

### Cycle 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 has been developed. A contract to install new cycle paths and pedestrian footpath in the green area along the Childers road commenced recently and will be completed during 2006. In addition to this contract new cycle paths will be installed in the city during 2006 along the route of the new Corbally Link Road and along the banks of the restored Park Canal. The proposed Green routes are designated for cyclists as well as taxis and buses.

### 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 2006 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 currently out to tender and should start on site in March 2006. Approval has been sought for the extension of this water main from Caherdavin to Long Pavement. A number of new trunk mains to service development in the city were laid in the past year.

Over 3,000 metres of the existing Distribution Water Main were replaced during 2005. 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 2006.

#### Clareville Waterworks

Tenders were invited for the redevelopment of Clareville Waterworks by DBO contract in mid 2005 and it is anticipated that by May 2006 a Contractor will be on site. The strategic development of this water production facility will lead to a doubling of the capacity of the plant in the longer term.

#### Limerick Main Drainage

This scheme, the largest civil engineering project ever undertaken in the city is well on its way to completion with the opening and commissioning of the Wastewater Treatment Facility at Bunlicky in May 2004. Work is now practically complete on, Contract 4.3, which involves the crossing of the river Shannon and the laying of pipe work on the riverbed. 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.

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. An initial proposal to appoint consultants to advance Phase 2 has been submitted to the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government for consideration.

### Flood Alleviation

In 2005 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 have recently approved plans for a similar project at Sir Harry's Mall. These proposed works are proposed to be carried out in 2006. 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

During 2005 the City Council completed the Part 8 consultation and tendering processes for the provision of a disabled toilet at Upper Mallow Street close to the main gate of The Peoples Park.

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.

It is expected that the new wheelchair accessible public toilet will be installed during February 2006.

### 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. In order to recover the increased costs in 2006 it is necessary to increase the consolidated water and waste water charge from €5.60 to €6.98 per 1,000 gallons.

*Docks Area Plan*

The redevelopment of the Limerick Docklands is under examination by a representative group comprising Limerick City Council, Shannon Development and the Shannon Foynes Port Company. Consultants were appointed early 2003. Work on a Local Area Plan will start in 2006. This plan, for the strategic development, redevelopment and renewal of the Limerick Docklands area, will be submitted to Council in 2006. The final adopted plan will be incorporated into the new 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. 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 2006 in the context of an overall strategic assessment of the future of the city centre business district.

*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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 has now been sent to the Minister.

### Integrated Area Plan

The termination date for developments under this scheme is July, 2006. Good progress continues to be made on developments benefiting from Tax Relief under the scheme. Permitted developments to date comprise more than €400,000,000 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.

### Living Over The Shops

Limerick was granted tax exemption on 1.5km of street in the City Centre. All owners have been contacted and advised through public seminars and publications. The “Corn Building” in Shannon Street was completed under this scheme. The owners of a number of other suitable properties have come forward for inclusion in the scheme, which is due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006.

### 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 2006 and it is expected that grant aid will also be available from the DoEHLG. During 2006 it is also anticipated that the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage will complete its survey of Limerick City and will recommend additions to the register of Protected Structures.

### Contribution Scheme

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides for the adoption of a development contribution scheme, the purpose of which is to provide a mechanism to partially fund the provision of infrastructure and community facilities in the local authority area. The making of a development contribution scheme is a reserved function and the scheme was adopted in March 2004. The scheme is under review at the request of the Council.

The amount of development levies that will be collected in 2005 is estimated at €7m. An up to date statement of the total balance of development levy income on hand will be set out in the Annual Financial Statement. The Council proposes to utilize levies on the projects set out in the Contribution Scheme adopted in March 2004.

## **Development Control**

### Planning applications

The Council received 530 planning applications in the first 11 months of 2005, 197 of which, when examined, were declared invalid and returned to the applicants. Many of these concerned developments on tax exempt sites under the Integrated Area Plan adopted by the City Council in March 1998.

Amongst the significant developments granted permission during 2005 were:-

- (1) Redevelopment of the former County Council Offices at O'Connell St.
- (2) Refurbishment of the Royal George Hotel on O'Connell St.
- (3) Hotel, Shopping Centre & Conference facilities at LEDP, Southill

Among the significant applications under consideration at present are:-

1. Retail development at Ellen/ Rutland/Michael Street.(pre-planning)
2. Development of Hotel at O'Mara Site, Ennis Road

### 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 Childers Road.

## **Community & Enterprise Department**

The Department of Community and Enterprise 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.

## **City Development Board**

### Review of Limerick City Development Board Strategy

In accordance with Local Government Circular LG 2/05, the member agencies of the Board undertook a comprehensive review of the City Development Board's strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the city. The review identified key developments at local, regional and national level since the strategies were prepared; assessed their implications and identified what has been achieved to date in terms of implementation. Limerick City Development Board has completed this review and launched its updated strategy in December 2005. The focus of the review was to identify a number of key priorities and actions on which the City Development Board will concentrate over the next three years. These key priorities will form the work programme for the City Development Board up to 2008. Work has already commenced in some areas and will continue in 2006.

### Socio-Economic Profile of Limerick City

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr. Dick Roche T.D. launched the Limerick City Development Board report "Limerick: Profile of a Changing City" on Friday 28th January 2005.

The socio-economic profile of Limerick City is the result of the compilation and interpretation of the data from the small area population statistics taken from the 2002 Census.

### Sustainable Indicators Project

This project is lead by the University of Limerick and to date has identified a set of measurable baseline sustainability indicators for Limerick city and environs, and a set of indicators for which data are available for the past and present. Further research is currently underway and will continue in 2006, based in the University of Limerick, the project aims to find out if Limerick's citizens have ideas in developing indicators for inclusion, and an attempt is being made to involve as many people as possible. The Board will publish a report in 2007 which will explain the significance of the indicators, and what they tell us about the development of the city.

### Local Anti-Poverty Strategy (LAPS)

A Local Anti-Poverty Strategy, was developed by Limerick City Development Board. The project focuses primarily on four statutory agencies and three communities who, working in partnership, will develop and implement four programmes:

1. An “Employment Linkage Programme”
2. A programme to create sustainable and secure communities
3. A “Healthy Communities Programme”
4. A programme to identify and share good practice in tackling educational disadvantage.

Work will continue in 2006 to source funding and rollout the project.

### Survey of Persons with Refugee and Leave to Remain Status in Limerick City

A report was commissioned by the Reception and Integration Agency, Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in partnership with the Limerick City Development Board to undertake a comprehensive study of persons who have received refugee or leave to remain status in Limerick City. This research project is the first of its kind in Ireland and will focus on service provision in the four key areas of education, employment, health and housing. The findings of report will be published by the end of 2005.

### 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 2006. Consultation will commence on drafting a Strategy for Limerick as a City of Learning.

### Civic Leadership Programme

Limerick City Development Board in conjunction with Limerick Civic Trust will develop and organise a leadership training course designed for a select group of young adults from marginalised communities in Limerick City that have demonstrated leadership potential in 2006.

### Making Limerick a Healthier City

The Healthy Cities project in the European Region has shown the value of a holistic approach in the face of growing health challenges. It is an effective and popular mechanism for promoting policies and programmes based on health for all at local level.

As part of this work to raise awareness among vested groups influencing the health of the population, a series of seminars were held in 2005 to consider the potential of making Limerick a healthier city. Each seminar examined unique facets of the World Health Organisation's concept of a Healthy City, the merits of Social Capital in neighbourhoods and also contrasts the health of the citizens of Limerick with that of other cities. Work will continue in 2006 to apply for associative membership of the Healthy Cities Network.

### RAPID Programme

RAPID stands for "Revitalising Areas through Planning Investment and Development". It is a national programme which targets 45 of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. There are three RAPID Programme areas in Limerick City, with a RAPID Co-ordinator in each area:

North Limerick City Area: Moyross, Ballynanty, Kileely and Thomondgate

City Centre: Kings Island and Watergate Flats

South Limerick City Area: Southill, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady Queen of Peace and St. Saviours

In 2005 the RAPID Programme has assisted in securing various funding for projects in the three Limerick RAPID areas:

- Leverage Funds: over €600,000 has been allocated across the three RAPID areas under the following schemes:
  - Housing Estate Enhancement Scheme
  - Playground Scheme
  - Traffic Calming Scheme
- Kings Island Crèche: €900,000 from Dept of Justice, Equality and Law
- Moyross Community Enterprise Creche: €1.2m from the Dept of Justice Equality and Law Reform
- Ballynanty Family Resource Centre Creche: €1.2m from the Dept of Justice Equality and Law Reform
- St Mary's Rugby Club: €27,000 from Dept of Arts, Sports and Tourism
- Athlunkard Boat Club: €5,000 from Dept of Arts, Sports and Tourism
- The Alms Houses have been provided by Limerick City Council to St Mary's AID Ltd. to provide services to the community at present being delivered from the Action Centre in Nicholas Street.

In June the Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform launched a Community Based CCTV scheme which will allocate up to €200,000 to successful applicants for the development of CCTV scheme in RAPID areas.

In 2006, further funding is expected for RAPID areas through the RAPID Leverage Fund for projects relating to housing estate enhancement, community safety, playground development and road safety.

### Social Inclusion Unit

The Social Inclusion Unit was set up in March 2002. Social Inclusion Units (SIUs) are funded directly by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government as a pilot under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. The overall aim of the SIU is to broaden the role of Limerick City Council in tackling social exclusion and poverty in Limerick City. Included in the 2006 programme of work will be the continuation of a number of ongoing projects:

#### Customer Satisfaction Survey

To carry out a customer satisfaction survey on the service provision of Limerick City Council. In conjunction with this a customer Complaints System will be devised. The information from the surveys will allow each department to develop its services to the public in a tailored manner.

#### Profile of the Housing Waiting List

The Housing Waiting List data will be used to develop a housing waiting list profile.

#### Discussion paper on anti-social behaviour

The SIU has produced this discussion paper with recommendations on how anti-social behaviour can be tackled by the Council and also citywide in the context of the LAPS. The SIU will be working with the Research Officer in the PAUL Partnership on best practice in 2006.

#### Submission to the Combat Poverty Agency

Limerick City Council Social Inclusion Unit will work with other Social Inclusion Units to prepare a submission to the Combat Poverty Agency as part of the new National Anti Poverty/Inclusion Consultation Process.

#### National Disability Funding

SIU facilitate sections to compile a submission for funding for next year's allocation of National Disability Funding.

### Limerick City Childcare Committee

'Schools Out' is a training manual and DVD/Video was developed by the Co-coordinator of Limerick City Childcare Committee was launched in 2005 by the Minister for Defence, Mr Willie O'Dea, T.D. in the presence of the Deputy Mayor of Limerick, Cllr. Kieran O'Hanlon.

A complimentary resource to the School's Out resource – a School Age Childcare Code of practice was developed this Autumn.

A Guide to Childcare Training Paths was launched on the 29th November 2005. The guide summarises potential career opportunities within the childcare profession.

Training and Networking events organised in 2005 including Anti Bias Training, FETAC Level 5 School Age Childcare Training, FETAC Level 6 Supervision in Childcare, First Aid Training, Conferences by Dr Richard Woolfson on Childhood Behavior and Disability, Employment Legislation. A mentoring programme for childcare providers was initiated in partnership between the City Enterprise Board and the Childcare Committee, and will continue into 2006

Limerick City Childcare Committee worked in conjunction with the University of Limerick and undertook a Study of the accessibility and sustainability of childcare within Limerick City in Spring 2005. Work will continue in 2006 to develop this further.

Limerick City Childcare Committee worked to promote Equality and Diversity, organizing a number of events. Programmes for the promotion of Equality and Diversity will be developed in 2006

#### Community Forum

Limerick City Community Forum was formed in 1999 under the Directorate of the Community and Enterprise Department. The Forums were established in accordance with the guidelines of 'Better Local Government' The main function required of the Forums is to be the representative body of the Community and Voluntary Sector within the local council structures. Limerick City Community Forum has three representatives on Limerick City Development Board, the Forum is represented on working groups of Limerick City Development Board.

The Community Forum is funded from the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government through Limerick City Development Board. The amount received for 2005 is €33,220.

A full operational review of Limerick City Community Forum was completed in 2005 and the restructuring of the forum will go ahead in 2006. A part-time development worker has been employed. Throughout the year the Forum will be developing a mechanism for community consultation in Limerick City.

## 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

Limerick City Council adopted the Regional Waste Management Plan on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2001 under the Waste Management (Amendment) Act, 2001. This Plan is currently being reviewed and the draft replacement Plan was launched for public consultation on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2005. Following the public consultation process a replacement Plan will be published early in 2006.

Limerick City Council and the Environmental Strategic Policy Committee members have received a CD version of the draft replacement plan.

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.

### Presentation of Waste Bye-laws 2005.

The Presentation of Waste Bye-Laws were adopted in March, 2005, and came into operation in May, 2005.

### Waste Collection Permit Regulations, 2001

The permits granted to Waste Collectors operating in Limerick City, under the Waste Management (Collection Permit) Regulations, 2001 have ensured that a dry recyclable collection service is now available to the citizens of the city.

### Environmental Awareness and Education

Limerick City Council will continue to work towards the implementation of the principle of reduce, recycle and recovery of waste generated in accordance with its Waste Management Plan. This is also in line with the Council's strategy of continuing to work with homes, schools and businesses in relation to litter and waste. Among the initiatives

proposed for 2006 is ongoing work with the Green Schools Programme in the city and participation in waste reduction initiatives such as home composting and real nappy week.

### Recycling Facilities

To date Limerick City Council has provided 19 bring bank sites in the city and a mini Recycling facility at Park Road. A pilot scheme of introducing textile banks at bring bank locations was introduced in late 2005 and its progress will be monitored in 2006. Consultation is continuing in relation to the proposed Recycling Centre site on the Childers Road.

### Westfields Wetlands

Interpretive Signage was erected in 2005 following the installation of the viewing platform in 2004. The City Council will continue to monitor and evaluate the Westfields Wetlands.

### Longpavement Rehabilitation

Limerick City Council has received a licence from the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to rehabilitate and restore the closed landfill site at Longpavement. Work has already taken place and further work will be carried out in 2006 on the implementation of the licence conditions. The total cost of this project will be in excess of €4.5m.

### Litter Pollution

During 2005 a dedicated enforcement unit within the Environment Department has been established to deal with litter, illegal dumping, implementation of Plastic Bag Levy, Coal, derelict sites, illegal transport of waste, auditing of Waste Permit Holders and other litter/waste related issues. The unit is staffed by three Enforcement Inspectors, one Assistant Engineer and administrative backup.

### Air Pollution

Limerick City Council has four air monitoring stations, Moyross, Southill, City Centre and the Park Road Depot, where smoke and sulphur dioxide are continuously monitored. The results produced over the years have never exceeded the levels allowed.

Since regulations governing the ban on the marketing, sale and distribution of bituminous coal in Limerick City and its adjoining built-up areas were introduced, the air quality has improved further. The council will continue to enforce these regulations in 2006.

### Cemeteries Department

Major improvements to pathways and driveways, in both Mt. St. Oliver and Mt. St. Laurence, were completed in 2005. Additional grave spaces will be developed in 2006.

### 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 2005 include:

- Radio communications with Fire Brigade vehicles were enhanced with installation of an additional radio base station at Woodcock Hill
- The following equipment was procured in 2005 to enhance service delivery
  - General purpose utility vehicle
  - 2 Thermal Imaging Cameras
  - 3 Automatic Cardiac Defibrillators
- The service successfully attended 1618 incidents from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005.
- A number of training courses were provided for all staff in the following areas
  - Methods of Instruction
  - First Responder
  - Block Training
  - Senior and Junior Officers Courses
  - Hot Fire Training
  - Swift Water Instructor
  - High Reach Appliances

Plans for 2006 include:

- Achieve ISO 9001 quality assurance.
- 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:

### **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 2005 included:**

- **Licensing of Premises:** Inspected 100% of licensing applications received;
- **Planning Applications:** Assessed 100% of applications received;
- **Fire Safety Certificate Applications:** Assessed 100% of FSC applications received, (119 at 02/12/05);
- **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:** 19 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:** 24 inspections were carried out and reported on, (up to 02/12/05).

#### **Objectives for 2006 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;
- Investigate the feasibility of utilising a geographical information system (GIS) to improve building control and fire prevention premises records;
- Pursue funding for 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.

### 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 2005 include:**

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

#### **Objectives for 2006 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 65 retained fire stations throughout Munster and 3 full time stations in Limerick City and Cork City. Waterford City's full time and retained station is in the process of being brought into the system.

The phase of the MRCC Project, being implemented at present, involves the installation of a new microwave alerting and mobile radio and data networks for Counties Clare, Kerry, Waterford, North Tipperary, South Tipperary and Limerick.

#### **In 2005, achievements included:**

- Contract awarded for a geographic information system;
- There have been significant developments of management information systems in accordance with the requirements of the MRCC and the participating fire authorities;
- Integration of Cork City was completed and Waterford City is almost complete;
- Award of ISO 9001: 2000 has been achieved over all business areas;

#### **Plans for 2006:**

- Development of Management information system, specifically regarding the integration of fire reporting systems with the fire authorities;
- Further development of management information system analysis tools both internally in the MRCC and externally for the participating authorities;

- Maintenance and development of ISO 9001 standard;
- Implementation of GIS and mobile data projects
- 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 2005 included:**

- Provided ambulance cover for local, inter- provincial and national rugby matches at Thomond Park and other venues;
- Provided crowd and traffic control personnel for the J.P. Mc Manus Charity Invitational Golf Pro-Am;
- Continued the provision of transport for the Chernobyl Children Project;
- Participated in the boating competitions in Roscommon, auxiliary fire service competitions in Skibbereen and an all services competition in Portlaoise.

#### **Plans for 2006 include:**

- Continue training of members in the use of cardiac defibrillators and first aid equipment;
- 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

### *Sports and Recreation Policy Framework Plan*

The Limerick City Sports and Recreation Policy Framework Plan was approved by Limerick City Council on the 3rd May, 2005. The standards of all recreational amenities and facilities in the city and the environs were audited and assessed in the course of its preparation. The Plan puts forward appropriate policies for the provision, management and maintenance of recreational facilities.

### *Playground Facilities and Public Parks*

The playground in the Peoples Park continues to provide large numbers of children in the city and its environs with a valuable amenity. A grant of €60,000 was approved under the Local Authorities Playground Grants Scheme, 2005, for improvement work at this playground.

An amount of €30,000 in National Disability Funding was also made available by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, to install some additional playground equipment (on universal accessibility principles) in O' Brien Park. This work was completed in November, 2005.

The Council are pursuing the development of Shelbourne Park in consultation with local residents and elected members from the area, and grant approval towards the provision of a playground there was received in 2004. The Part 8 Planning Process for park development was completed in October 2005, and work will commence in 2006.

A number of play areas were provided in 2004/2005 under the Rapid Playground Grants Schemes. Those completed to date are: Lee Estate, John Carew Park, Shanabooley Road, and Tara/Mungret Court.

### *City Enhancement Scheme*

Additional hanging baskets, boxes and tiered containers were provided in 2005 as part of the City Enhancement Scheme. These were provided on Cruises Street, Spokane Walk, Athlunkard Bridge and O' Connell Street and these colourful floral displays were the subject of much favourable comment. An additional provision of €15,000 has been made in the 2006 Budget to facilitate the further development of this scheme.

The Limerick Looking Good Environment Competition entered its second year in 2005. This covers city streets, residential areas, residential front gardens and special category nominations under a number of headings. This competition links into the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's City Neighbourhood's Competition which is held annually.

#### Municipal Golf Course

The current management arrangement is now in place for three years and is working well. The newly refurbished clubhouse at the course was officially opened by Mr. John O' Donoghue, Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism, on the 13th May 2005. This attractive building provides a modern and comfortable clubhouse, enhancing the course and facilitating its continued development.

#### Grove Island Leisure Centre

The Grove Island Leisure Centre opened in 2004. This Leisure Centre is a major recreational amenity for the City. Its facilities include a 25 metre pool, Kiddies pool, Sports Hall, Gym, Sauna, Steamroom and Jacuzzi.

#### St Endas Sports Complex

Limerick City Council is working closely with the Board of Management to secure funding for the redevelopment of the complex. Progress has been made in this project in 2005.

It is proposed to increase the allocation to St. Endas from €50,000 in 2005 to €75,000 in 2006.

#### Grants for Community and Voluntary Groups

The Grant Assistance for Environmental Improvement Initiatives Scheme was introduced in 2003 as a pilot scheme to assist community and voluntary groups financially, in their efforts to improve the local environment. This scheme continued in 2004 and 2005 with an increased number of applicants availing of it. It is proposed to continue this scheme in 2006 and provision has been made in the Budget.

#### Limerick City Library Services.

This year is the 150th Anniversary of the first Public Libraries Ireland Act (1855), which established libraries in Ireland. Since then libraries have moved into the electronic age with the introduction of automated library services and access to the Internet.

Limerick City Library is a powerful community resource with the potential to encourage and develop people of all ages through the usage of its resources in all forms. Limerick City Library Service can be described as a service, which provides:

- open and democratic access to the world of information;
- a locally-based support for life-long learning;
- access to the sum of human thought and imagination in self-directed fashion,
- and be a community-based support to literacy training and reading, particularly for young people.

Public Libraries offer an alternative, non-threatening environment for young people and have staff with specialist knowledge and expertise. They support the young person's own pace and development, enabling them to learn, encouraging them to become independent learners and supporting them in exploring and investigating a wide variety of resources.

The Schools Library Service serves thirty primary schools in the city. The Department of Education and Science provided a grant in 2005, of €29,872. The Minister also funded a special grant for all Disadvantaged Schools in Ireland. A total of 17 schools in the City benefited from this grant of €18,282.

The Schools Mobile Library Service completed its first full school year, issuing almost 10,000 books and audio materials to 3,500 children in nineteen primary schools.

Children's Book Festival in 2005 ran for the entire month of October. The main aim is to promote children's books and reading for children of all ages. "Library Ireland Week" took place in March and twenty classes attended events held in the library.

#### Moyross Library

Final costings for the Fit Out of Moyross have been submitted to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and are awaiting approval. Provision has been made in the 2006 Budget for additional staff for the Moyross library. Provision has also been made for the operational costs.

#### Reference & Local Studies Department.

School tours: We conducted tours for senior second-level classes during 2005. Leaving certificate history students are now required to write a project on a chosen topic, by doing their own research.

History Lecture Series. The history lecture series continues to be very popular. We were particularly happy to welcome Eoin Hand, former manager of Limerick City soccer club and former manager of the Republic of Ireland, to our January lecture. He thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and expressed interest in the idea of returning in the future to give a talk on his time in Limerick. Some of the lectures in 2005 included:

### *Digitisation*

A digitisation project on the Mayors of Limerick was carried out in 2005. The role of the Corporation/City Council and its leaders the Mayors has been central in Limerick City for the past 800 years. A Formal launch of the project in 2006 will mark the 350th anniversary of the re-establishment of Limerick Corporation, abolished by Cromwell between 1651 and 1656.

### *Music Library*

A “Gramophone Circle” commenced during the year and members of the public are invited to meet in the music library to discuss and listen to music. A presentation is made by one of the members of the group on a particular choice of Music. The group meets on the first Monday of every month.

### *Enterprise Information Service*

Resources available include books, business magazines, company files and computer facilities. During 2005 subscriptions to the Factfinder and Kompass online databases and the Kompass CD-ROM were purchased to complement the existing resources. The Business Studies curriculum now includes greater emphasis on areas of enterprise and business start up and students benefit by being introduced to the resources available in the library.

### **Plans for 2006.**

- Open library at Moyross.
- Continue training with the Equality Authority to ensure access for all to library service.
- Participate in Library Ireland Week by hosting community-based events.
- Partake in the “Bealtaine Festival” which is aimed at the elderly.
- Pilot project in partnership with Ordnance Survey Ireland for the provision of free public access to historical maps.
- Book to be written on the History of the Mayors in Limerick.

### *Jim Kemmy Municipal Museum*

There were 330 additions to the museum collection during the year.

There were 672,484 hits on the museum catalogue on the Internet during the year, and email enquiries and comments were received from all over the world. More than 2,000 enquiries were dealt with in total, from personal callers, by phone, letter and email.

As a designated museum under the National Monuments Acts 1932-1994, a grant was received from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism towards the finder's award for a Late Bronze Age hoard from Castleconnell acquired last year, the first time such a grant has been issued by the Department to a local authority museum. Visitor numbers, at 13,522 (to 1 December), are similar to 2004.

### Limerick City Gallery of Art.

The mission of Limerick City Gallery of Art is threefold:

- to provide artists with the opportunity to experiment, develop and above all display their work;
- to provide local, national and international audiences with a wide range of the best of contemporary visual art practice;
- to display, extend and maintain the Gallery's Permanent Collection.

### **Plans for 2006**

- **January-February:** 1. Exhibition by Daphne Wright, which will coincide with a publication on her work. 2. Contemporary Exhibition of Ceramics organised by Neil Reid and Henry Pim of the National College of Art and Design.
- **March -May:** Opening of ev+a at LCGA and venues around the city, this year's curator is Katerina Gregos from Athens.
- **June-August:** Sampling from the Past will allow up to ten artists a unique opportunity to delve into the permanent collection at Limerick City Gallery of Art. This will culminate in a two-month exhibition that will fill the entire space at LCGA in June/July 06.
- **August – September:** LCGA is currently in negotiation with the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam to borrow some works from the collection for the latter part of the summer.
- LCGA's Education and Outreach programme is focussed on offering a varied range of events. A series of child centred workshops are offered to schools. The workshops aim to increase interaction through practical sessions that provide hands on experience of art materials and a sequence of activities that culminate in the child producing their own artwork.

### *Phase 2 Development of LCGA*

The Gallery hopes to access funding for the Phase 2 development of the Gallery, which could provide storage space for the collection and develop our workshop and visitors service in the form of a research and café area.

### *Limerick City Arts Service.*

In 2005 a full programme of events were held including:

***Cuisle : Limerick City International Poetry Festival-October 18<sup>th</sup> to October 22<sup>nd</sup>***

**Launch of 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of The Stony Thursday Book**

**Excursions – Performance Festival, Limerick 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2005**

**Irish Chamber Orchestra Outreach Program in Three City Centre Schools**

*Sionna Festival, A World of Music and Dance*

*Australian Poet Les Murray visited Limerick*

*The Kate O'Brien Weekend – Passion and Partisanship*

**Capital Development – St. John of the Cross Church.** Daghdha Dance Company was formed by Mary Nunan at the University of Limerick in 1988. Under the stewardship of Klien, Daghdha Dance Company has moved to its inspiring new premises in Limerick's city centre, where it has continued to develop and strengthen its position as a pioneer of radical contemporary dance in Ireland.

***Direct support to Artists***

Gavin Hogg – support to produce a publication in relation to his work

Sean Taylor – Tyrone Guthrie Bursary

Karl Doran – Exhibition assistance

Cecily Kenny – Exhibition assistance

Melanie O'Rourke Exhibition assistance

Kate Hennessy – Exhibition assistance

Contact Studios – support for exhibition programme by artists

The Art Show Committee – support to purchase equipment for exhibition programme by artists

***Music Concert Program for Limerick City***

Celtic Connections, Music Network Traditional Music Tour : 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005

National Chamber Choir, National Tour, Motets and the Bard : 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Ensemble Nordlys, Music Network Classical Music Tour : 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005

St. John's Brass & Reed Band – Concerts in the Park Program : May 2005.

## 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. During 2005 significant discussions took place between management and unions on the implementation and delivery of change under Sustaining Progress. These flexibilities include the following;

- Revised working practices in the Housing Maintenance Department
- Amalgamation of Water and Sanitary Services Departments and introduction of new working arrangements
- Revised overtime/call out arrangements in Roads Department
- Introduction of hand held technology and agreement to revised routes in the Traffic Warden service
- Agreement to certain flexibilities in the Environment department

It is proposed to further extend the process of participation in 2006 with the introduction of new Directorate based Partnership Committee structures.

### Human Resources

2006 will be a challenging year for the Council and especially the Human Resources Department, with the further expansion of the Performance Management Development System. In addition, the Department is committed to enabling and assisting in the management of further improvements in work practices as part of the change and modernisation programme. We continue to drive the modernisation agenda as required under the benchmarking agreement.

### Training

In line with the Corporate objective to “Enhance our Human Resources” as outlined in the current City Council Corporate Plan, considerable emphasis has in 2005 been placed on building up the skills base of Council staff to enable them to adapt to ongoing changes and modernisation. The following is a sample of the most notable initiatives undertaken during 2005;

- Further development of Train the Trainer skills programme
- Delivery by City Council trainer of Safe Pass Training Programmes across the organisation
- Appointment and Training of Performance Management Development System Trainers

- Delivery of Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures training to Supervisory staff

### Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)

A Performance Management and Development System commenced implementation in all Local Authorities in 2005. A Sponsor and trainers were appointed to co-ordinate the roll out and implementation of Performance Management in Limerick City Council. Social Policy & Housing and Finance were selected as pilot Departments for the initial rollout in 2005. It is anticipated that the roll out will be progressed significantly in 2006 in line with the national completion date of March 2007.

Making progress on these fronts will improve delivery of service to our customers and will require the Human Resources Department to play a pivotal role in leading and managing change.

### ICT Department

During 2005 ICT Department continued to support the infrastructure and applications in place. Reinvestment in PCs and facilitation of City Hall refurbishment progressed during the year.

The website [www.limerickcity.ie](http://www.limerickcity.ie) had additional items added including functionality offering the public the opportunity to provide feedback on-line and submissions on reports requiring consultation e.g. the Draft Development Plan, Register of Electors and planning enquiries. Road works, Public Notices and Arts events are published directly to the website by individual departments using a web service developed in-house.

Since an estimated 90% of City Council's data has a spatial element, Geographic Information tools are now used for the analysis of socio-economic data for Community & Enterprise sections in addition to their traditional focus in areas such as planning, transportation and infrastructure.

In 2006 the ICT Department intends to adhere to its commitments of 2005 and to focus on consolidation and efficiencies. A replacement program for ageing servers and ancillary equipment will start. Radio links between City Hall and remote sites will be improved. The backup and security strategy will also be reviewed to further consolidate the organisations network and communications infrastructure.

In line with an organisation wide commitment to accessibility the Department is currently undergoing a review of the corporate website ([www.limerickcity.ie](http://www.limerickcity.ie)) in the form of a web audit. It is proposed to re-design the website in 2006 having regard to the audit report. The Water Services Complaints System will be rolled out and the functionality and scope of this very significant, public-focused, application will be improved. On the GIS front it

is proposed to bring the recently piloted Planning Enquiry System to the attention of a wider audience and to develop associated and supporting GIS based services further through the website and intranet.

It is worth noting that on-going projects will also have a significant bearing on the work schedule for 2006. These include the completion of the City Hall re-fit project, the roll-out of a localised network and communications centre in the newly built Moyross Library and support for the planned upgrades of Agresso and HOME.

ICT training plans are developed in conjunction with the HR Department to ensure that staff have appropriate IT skills.

### 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 will be implemented. It is planned to review the payroll systems and processes. All payroll payments will be made via electronic means from January 2006 onwards.

During 2005 supplier payments were switched from cheque payments to electronic funds transfer. Further improvements to the procurement to payment process are planned for 2006.

Significant progress has been made in 2005 on improving the level of overdraft at the bank. There will be a continued emphasis on cash flow management in 2006.

The Accounts Receivable section have implemented a new water billing module and a new traffic fine back office system in conjunction with the rollout of handheld terminals to wardens during 2005. It is planned to introduce further enhancements to the billing systems in 2006.

### Property Management

The property management section will continue to manage all property transactions in 2006. It is planned to implement a property interest register in 2006.

Provision of €10,000 has been made in the 2006 budget for the removal of the footbridge at Cals Park. A provision of €25,000 has been made for a contribution to improvement works in the Galvone Industrial Estate.



## ***LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL***

### **ANNUAL BUDGET**

*For the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006*

#### **CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION**

I hereby certify that at the Budget meeting of Limerick City Council held this 15<sup>th</sup> day of December 2005 the City Council by resolution adopted for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006, 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: \_\_\_\_\_