

**LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CATHRACH LUIMNIGH**

Árus na Cathrach
Luimneach

13th December 2004

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

**Annual Budget for the year
1st January 2005 to 31st December 2005**

In presenting the Annual Budget for the year ended 31st December 2005 to Council, I wish to take this opportunity, to summarise the financial position of Limerick City Council at 31st December 2003. The Annual Financial Statement of Limerick City Council for the year 2003 shows that the accumulated Debit Balance on the Revenue Account is a debit position of €7,291,212 at 31st December 2003.

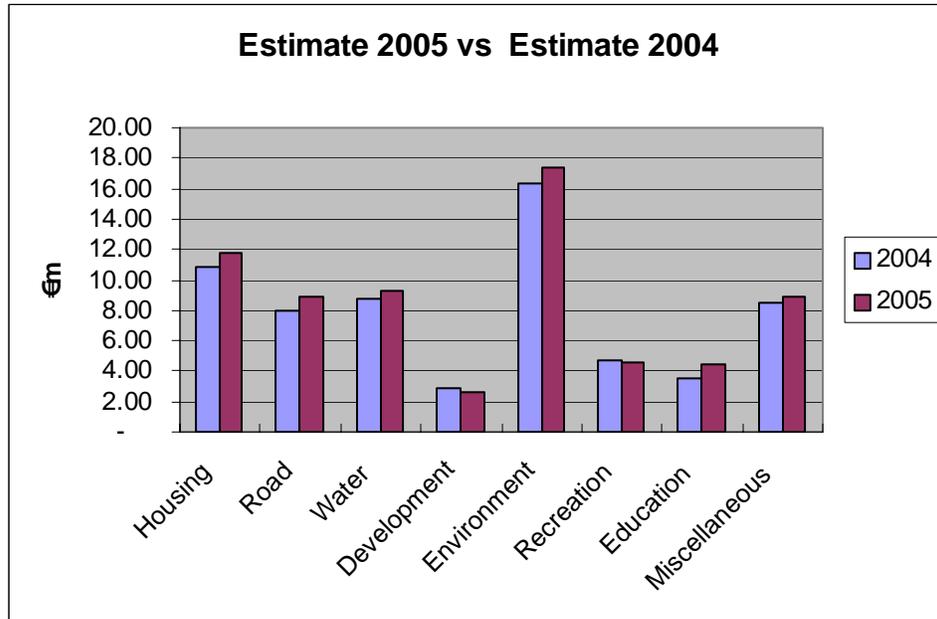
Current outturn figures indicate that the Revenue Deficit will not deteriorate during 2004. With this in mind and with the limited resources available to Limerick City Council I have given greatest priority to the most essential services while, at the same time, protecting the future sustainable development of Limerick City. I will now set out the proposals for Expenditure and Income for 2005.

Expenditure – 2005

The Budget for 2005 provides for expenditure of €67.8 million. This represents an increase of €4.375 million or 6.9% over the adopted Budget for 2004. The following table sets out the expenditure by Programme Group:

	2005	2004
	€	€
1. Housing and Building	11,769,704	10,900,851
2. Road Transportation and Safety	8,869,680	7,960,012
3. Water Supply and Sewerage	9,286,665	8,748,545
4. Development Incentives and Controls	2,584,410	2,904,799
5. Environmental Protection	17,377,368	16,368,016
6. Recreation and Amenity	4,607,803	4,558,080
7. Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	4,437,549	3,551,677
8. Miscellaneous Services	8,877,145	8,443,304
Total	67,810,324	63,435,285

The following graph depicts estimated expenditure by Programme Group for 2005, compared to 2004.



This increase in expenditure can be broken down as follows:

	2005	2004	Increase
	£million	£million	£million
Payroll and Pensions	35.36	33.39	1.97
Non Payroll	32.45	30.05	2.40
Total Expenditure	67.81	63.44	4.37

Payroll and Pensions

The cost for 2005 reflects an increase of 5.9% on 2004. In preparing the Budget for 2005 in order to minimize the increase in payroll costs it is intended:

- not to increase the number of employees
- to consider the necessity of filling any vacancies that occur in 2005 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 2005. I have made every effort to maintain expenditure in critical areas. Non payroll costs have increased by 7.9%. Details of proposals are set out in the following pages.

Domestic Waste Collection from Low Income Households

Since the discontinuation of the City Council Refuse Collection Service in 2000, a scheme known as the “waiver scheme” has operated for low-income householders. It has however come to my attention that the City Council can only waive a charge made by it. As we do not make a charge for refuse collection we cannot waive such a charge. There is also to my knowledge no provision in law to pay a subsidy to a householder, or to a waste service provider on behalf of a householder. While acknowledging the intention of the scheme, nonetheless it is necessary for a Local Authority to have a legal basis for making payments of public money.

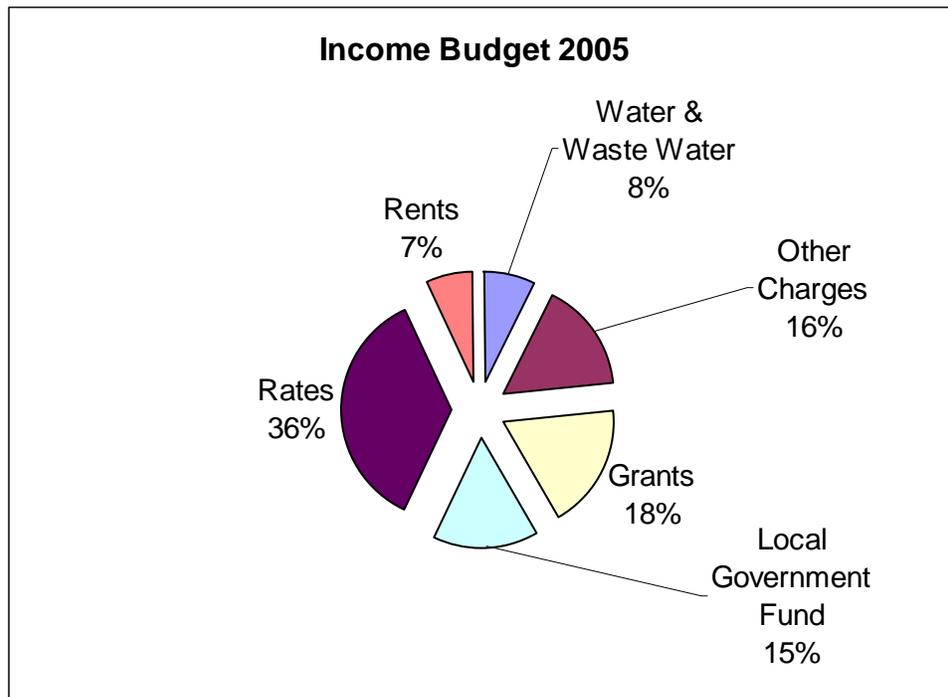
Considerable effort has been expended in trying to resolve this matter. A mechanism is now evolving which I expect will allow us to accomplish the wish of the City Council to ensure that a refuse collection arrangement is available to low income householders without causing them undue hardship.

In arriving at a sum to include in the Budget for 2005 we also have to consider the following: -

- ❖ The polluter pays principle.
- ❖ The need to encourage recycling.
- ❖ The need to have incentives for waste reduction.
- ❖ The financial position of the City Council.
- ❖ The ability of householders to pay without undue hardship.

Bearing the above in mind, I believe that it is reasonable to include a provision of €400,000 under this heading.

Income Proposals - 2005



The effective valuation of €309,792 (2004) has increased by €10,852 to €320,644 for 2005. This represents an increase of 3.5%. This increase is as a result of the continued improvements delivered in the City. There have been increases in economic activity and the level of investment in the City has continued to grow.

While this increased buoyancy in effective valuation has been a welcome boost to the finances of Limerick City Council, in order to meet the commitments that I have referred to and having maximised all sources of income available to Limerick City Council, I propose an increase of 3.6% on the General Annual Rate on Valuation for 2005.

I have included a sum of €10,348,435 in the Budget for 2005 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.

The consolidated charge for water and waste water will increase to €5.60 per 1,000 gallons in 2005 from €5.39 in 2004, an increase of 3.9%. There is no proposed increase in parking discs from the current charge of €1.50. In the following pages I have set out on a programme by programme basis the main areas of income and expenditure.

Conclusion

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

- 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 Michael Hourigan and his predecessor, Councillor Dick Sadlier 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. John Breen 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 look forward to debating any issues involved with Members.

I recommend the adoption of the Annual Budget, as set out, at the Statutory Budget Meeting to be held on 21st December 2004.

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 (which is currently before City Council) is the blueprint for the provision of social and affordable housing for the period 2004-2008. This is an ambitious Plan, estimated to cost €193.18m, seeking to deliver/upgrade 1436 no. social housing units over the period of the plan through newbuild/acquisitions, remedial works schemes, voluntary housing agencies etc. The Plan also seeks to shift much of our energy away from building of new estates towards the rehabilitation of the stock already in our control. 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. 2004, the first year of the Plan, has seen the addition of 99 houses to our stock.

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. By the end of the current year 875 houses will have benefited from the programme. Provision is being made in this budget for Phase 4 & Phase 5 to commence early in 2005 which will see 357 additional houses benefiting.

Central Heating Programme

Almost 2,500 of our housing stock, comprising 79% of Elderly accommodation and 92% of the remainder of City Councils housing stock, have no central heating. In keeping with our commitment towards improvement of the housing stock it is intended to avail of the recently announced DoEHLG Central Heating Initiative.

Under this scheme the Dept will provide a grant of €5,600 or 80% of the work, whichever is the lesser, towards the installation of central heating and other related works. A provision of €50,000 has been made to enable this work begin in 2005.

Estate Management

Three Community Liaison Officers continue to be provided for in the estate management budget and provision is also made for the employment of a Tenancy Enforcement Official who deals with incidences of anti-social behaviour in our housing estates. This initiative has proved very successful in the current year. A new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy was agreed by City Council during 2004 which reflects Limerick City Council's strong stance on the issue of anti-social behaviour.

Funding has also been provided for the running costs of each of the properly established estate management groups. Provision has also been made for the full-time Travellers Services Co-ordinator who deals with the management and development of the traveller halting sites.

Provision has been made for an increase of €25,000 to €150,000 to the Social & Community Grants Scheme in 2005. Grants were paid to 12 groups in 2004.

Disabled Persons Grants

Provision of €320,000 has been made in the budget for 2005 in respect of Disabled Persons Grants. Provisional approvals for the year are estimated at 60.

O'Malley Park Remedial Works Scheme

A budget in excess of €15M has been approved for this project.

During the year a Project Office was established in O'Malley Park and is the base for the full time project management team. An extensive public consultation process with local residents and community based groups commenced in 2004 and it is expected that designs will be finalised early in the New Year.

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."

To give effect to this overall aim a number objectives have been set out:

- To have continuously available a high quality drinking water to meet local and regional demands.
- To promote the provision of flood protection infrastructure to minimise the risk of flooding and to provide an appropriate emergency response.
- To provide a high quality sanitary wastewater collection and treatment system to meet local and regional demands in the EU requirements.
- To promote the development of the waterways to their full development.
- To plan, design and maintain roads, footpaths and associated infrastructure in a sustainable manner which ensures safety, accessibility and efficiency for all.
- To plan for the provision of a sustainable quality transport network in and around the city for all modes of transport.

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 some national secondary routes. The length of national primary route in the city area is reducing with the construction of the Southern Ring Road and the reclassification of National Primary roads.

Road Developments

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 O'Dwyers Bridge to Corbally Road to Park Road. Provision of this road is a crucial element in the opening up of this area of the city for economic development and will also provide relief to local traffic in the area. The road way will also enhance access to the canal provide additional pedestrian and cycle access to the University of Limerick and the river Shannon.

Negotiations have now been completed on the land acquisitions for the second phase of the link road and it is intended to commence construction in 2005, in accordance with available funding.

Southern Ring Road

Phase 1 of the Southern Ring Road from Rosbrien (N20) to Annacotty (N7) was opened to traffic on the 31st of May last. The opening of this road has resulted in the removal of some 10,000 through vehicles from travelling through the city streets on a daily basis.

The development of Phase 2 of the Southern Ring Road including a tunnel crossing of the Shannon River has been approved by An Bord Pleanala following an oral hearing during the summer of 2004. The development of this road is proceeding apace and it is scheduled that the Southern Ring Road Phase 2 will be opened to traffic in 2009. It is vital that the city now plans for the strategic development which the Southern Ring Road will provide in terms of the traffic removed from city streets with the consequent opportunities to develop pedestrian friendly enhanced civic areas.

Northern Relief Road

The provision of further relief to traffic in the general city area is to be provided for. In this regard, plans have been developed by Clare County Council for the provision of a Northern Relief Road on the Northern and North Eastern areas of the city which should give relief to the traffic congestion in a number of areas including the Corbally area. We will be working closely with our colleagues in Clare County Council on the development of this project over the coming year.

National Spatial Strategy

It is absolutely imperative that Limerick City is in a position to gain from its designation, with Shannon, as a developing gateway in the National Spatial Strategy. The Limerick Planning Land Use and Transportation Study which has been developed over the past number of years needs to be brought to conclusion, and be placed before the relevant Councils for adoption. This will be a priority in 2005. This study sets out a strategic framework for the development of the city and its hinterland along with associated transportation and road planning issues. It will also allow the city to maximise the opportunities that will arise from economic development in the region.

Road Maintenance and Improvement

The ongoing programme of footpath restoration will be continued in the coming year along with other necessary works part funded through the adopted development levy scheme. 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 2005.

Traffic Management

Street Management

Available street space within the city is becoming a more valuable resource as traffic volumes continue to increase and demand for space is at a premium. With this in mind it is vital that the Council puts in place appropriate street management policies which are sustainable and which permit the economic development particularly of the city centre to meet all its requirements. To this end it is intended to bring forward a number of policies including proper regulation of deliveries in the city centre, management of street and under street space, street furniture and street signage management and greater control and regulation on road openings for utility services in the coming year.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming schemes have been rolled out across the city over the past number of years. In 2005 a further enhancement programme in this regard will be put in place to be agreed with the City Council in accordance with the level of funding received from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Parking Management

Proper effective and efficient enforcement of all traffic and parking regulations is becoming increasingly important as the city develops as a retail and economic centre. In the coming year there will be an increased focus on the enforcement of the parking regulations in order that the city streets are freed up to support and provide free flow thoroughfares for the daily business of the city. As part of this focus, a review of the parking policies will be undertaken through a parking study presently being carried out, for the City Council. This will lead to the development of enhanced policies on the management of parking within the city area and will address various parking needs i.e. retail, commercial, professional and commuter requirements. The roads department has made an application for funding for the provision of a variable messaging and parking guidance signage system for the city centre car parks which will allow for a more efficient traffic flow.

Adaptive Urban Traffic Control System

Implementation of the Adaptive Urban Traffic Control System (AUTC) has been rolled out during 2004. 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. The number, extent and times of clearway facilities will be reviewed in the coming year to ensure that their provision is appropriate to the needs of the city.

Taking in Charge of Residential Developments

The taking in charge of residential developments once properly completed in accordance with the planning permissions granted is a matter that must be proactively addressed in 2005. There is now a requirement under the planning legislation for the Council to take such developments in charge however it should be borne in mind that there will also be an increased long- term maintenance cost which must be provided for in the annual revenue budget. Accordingly it is prudent that the policy with regard to Taking in Charge be reviewed and a suitable policy be brought forward which provides for the Council to take in charge of estates on a conditional basis once properly completed whilst ensuring that the long term cost of maintenance is not solely borne by the Council. Given the extensive survey work which must be carried out for each application made to the Council for a development to be taken in charge an appropriate fee structure will be implemented in 2005 to cover the cost of this service.

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.

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. Grant aid 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 completed works at Baker Place and at Lower Bedford Row are a testament to the quality of street surface and street furniture, which we should aspire to. The programme will be advanced in the coming year with works at Upper Bedford Row and Lower Thomas Street.

Remodelling of the city centre area cannot be divorced from consideration of the enhancement of our main thoroughfare, O'Connell Street. It is proposed to examine this in detail early in 2005 with a view to commencing appropriate measures to develop the status of the street as the principal thoroughfare of Limerick City and to develop its streetscape to reflect this status. Street use, street furniture, lighting, pedestrian access, use of road space and vehicle management will all form part of this consideration to enhance our primary street.

Broadband Network

The first phase of the Metropolitan Area Network to reduce the cost of broadband access throughout the City and environs has been completed. The City Council together with Shannon Development and other local authorities in the Mid-West have combined to form a limited company to progress the project for which 90% funding has been provided by the Department of Communications Marine and Natural Resources. It should be acknowledged that the Phase 1 development has been rolled out in a manner which had limited impact on traffic movement and street usage during its construction. The City Council will continue its involvement in Phase II of this project in 2005.

Public Transport

The provision of an efficient sustainable public transport system is a crucial element in the economic and spatial development of any city. The ability to move large numbers of people in an efficient manner in and about the city is essential to our long-term development. In this regard priority will be given in the coming year to 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. Proposals will be brought forward in 2005 to advance these matters.

In the current year the City Council secured funding for the provision of bus priority measures and work commenced in late 2004 on the installation of traffic signal loops and bus transponders which will provide a priority to city and expressway buses on all signal controlled junctions. These bus priority measures are facilitated by the installation of the AUTC Signal System.

A suitable public transport infrastructure must be provided both inside and outside the city and accordingly it is proposed to establish a Limerick Transport Forum in the coming year to provide a mechanism for the discussion, formulation and the delivery of policies which will address the transportation needs of the city both in the central business district, in the suburbs and the greater hinterland. To work in isolation is to provide only one part of the public transport jigsaw which is required.

Risk Management

Pro-active focus of the City Council on 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. The Council will engage with and actively support the work of the recently established Personal Injuries Assessment Board and other government initiatives in an effort to reduce the cost of insurance nationally and particularly as it affects Limerick City Council. 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.

Sanitary Services

The Sanitary Services Department 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 to 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.

The development of a new ring water main for the city to ensure the provision of high quality water supply to support present and future development is being advanced. New ring water mains have been laid along the course of the Southern Ring Road and will be advanced as the road progresses. The provision of a new water main from the reservoir at Newcastle to Caherdavin including a river crossing has been 50% complete during 2004 and will be finalised in the coming year. Approval has been sought for the extension of this water main from Caherdavin to Long Pavement and tender approval is awaited. A number of new trunk mains to service development in the city were laid in the past year.

Over 2700 metres of the existing deficient Distribution Water Main were replaced during 2004 at Courtbrack Avenue, Dock Road, Dublin Road, Childers Road, Tipperary Road and Bedford Row. Additional valving was carried out in the City to improve the water supply system and to minimise those areas affected during periods of works or shutdown.

The continued pro-active leakage detection in the city mains system continued during the past year with some 220 leaks identified and repaired resulting in additional water savings. Continued detection of such leaks again highlights the need for the replacement of water mains within the city as part of the water services strategy. To this end it is hoped to commence the implementation of major find and fix programme in 2005 to alleviate leaks on the old mains system.

The Council is obliged in accordance with National Policy to ensure that all non-domestic water consumers are metered by the end of 2006. This programme will be advanced in 2005 with a significant increase in the number of meters installed. The meter installation and the find and fix programme will result in disruption to services as the work is carried out however this is vital strategic work.

An active promotional programme focusing on the need to conserve water will be rolled out through various media forms in the coming year.

Clareville Waterworks

The major redevelopment of Clareville Waterworks was advanced during 2004 and it is anticipated that tenders will be invited in early 2005. The strategic development of this water production facility will lead to a doubling of the capacity of the plant in the longer term.

The requirement for the installation of meters across all non-domestic consumers has been set out above. Charges associated with the supply of water and the manner in which same are computed are set out in the Government's Water Pricing Policy. This provides for the recovery of the full cost of the provision of water services to non-domestic customers. It also provides for the recovery of the operational costs associated with the domestic element as supplied from Central Government. As Sanitary Services (both water treatment and wastewater treatment) facilities are upgraded and substantial capital investment is made in them the need to make substantial provision for the operational costs of these facilities associated with the domestic element is placing an increasing financial burden on the resources of the City Council. A suitable provision has been made in the budget for the operational costs of these facilities which are non recoverable through the charging mechanism.

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 of 2004. Work is progressing on the completion of the final contract, Contract 4.3, which involves the crossing of the river Shannon and the laying of pipe work on the riverbed. When it is completed the city will have 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.

Whilst the capital infrastructure allows for the continued expansion of the city the increased operational maintenance costs of the drainage system and the wastewater treatment plant associated pumping stations and the sewer collection system network must be provided for in the revenue budget of the Council and recovered as appropriate through charging mechanisms. This will be reflected in the consolidated water and wastewater charge to be applied to all non-domestic consumers in the coming year.

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 preliminary report has been submitted to the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government seeking appropriate funding for this next phase of the drainage development.

Flood Alleviation

During 2004 flood alleviation works in Clancy Strand were progressed with the re construction of the quay walls. Funding of this work was provided by the OPW. It is proposed to proceed with similar works in Sir Harry's Mall in the coming year subject to similar funding being made available. The Council will also take the opportunity in the coming year, with the recent publication of the National Flood Study Review, to strategically review the need for further flood alleviation measures in the context of definitive climate change data and its strategic impact on the Shannon River Basin.

The recommendations of the Greenpark/Courtbrack Avenue Drainage Study and the Monaclinoe Area Drainage Study will be advanced during 2005.

Park Canal Redevelopment

During the year plans for the redevelopment of the Park Canal Project in accordance with the funding secured under the EU INTERREG IIIB Programme have been advanced. It is anticipated that the relevant planning process will be commenced by year end 2004 with works on site by quarter 2 2005. The project which comes under the auspices of the EU "*Water in Historic Cities*" project has provided the City Council with the opportunity to link directly with cities in Britain and mainland Europe and has provided a very worthwhile forum for the exchange of views, opportunities and advice which will enhance not alone this project but the consideration of other strategic developments in the city. The restoration of the Park Canal for amenity use and the provision of walk ways and cycle ways along its banks will provide a very tangible link between the developing University of Limerick Campus and the city of Limerick and it will also complement and support the economic development of the Park Canal Area in conjunction with the completion of the Corbally Link Road.

“The overall aim of the Economic Development and Future Planning Department is to ensure that the economic potential of the City can be realised through the proper planning and development of the city, strategically guided by the City Development Plan”.

Planning and Development

Development Plan Review

Under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, the review of the City Development Plan commenced during 2002 with a report by the City Manager to the Council on progress achieved under the 1998 Plan. The 2004 Plan was adopted by the City Council in November 2004 following an extensive consultation process.

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. An Area Plan is currently being prepared. It is expected that this plan, for the strategic development, redevelopment and renewal of the Limerick Docklands area, will be submitted to Council in 2005. The final adopted plan will be incorporated into the new Development Plan.

Borough Boundary Extension

Limerick City Council made a proposal to extend its boundary in 1998 and following consultation with Limerick and Clare County Councils and by resolution dated 8th February, 1999 amended the proposal and lodged it with the Minister. No decision was made on the proposal by the Minister for the Environment, but following representation by the Mayor of Limerick City, a letter was received from the Minister’s private secretary on 8th July, 2002. In the letter, the Minister advised 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 has decided to prepare 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.

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.

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 31st 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 2005 and it is expected that grant aid will also be available from the DoEHLG.

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.

Development Control

Pre-Planning Discussions

A large number of pre-planning discussions took place in 2004 the most significant of which involved development at (1) Limerick Race Course and (2) Site of Jury’s Hotel.

Planning applications

The Council received 530 planning applications in the first 11 months of 2004, 197 of which, when examined, were declared invalid and returned to the applicant. Among the significant applications under consideration at present are:-

1. Development of the County Buildings, O'Connell Street
2. Development of the Strand Hotel
3. Re-development of the Ardhu Ryan Hotel

Development under construction

A number of large developments commenced construction in 2004 including:-

1. St. Munchin House Development
2. Development at the corner of Henry Street/Lr. Cecil Street – former Henry Cecil site
3. Development of retail park at Childers Road.

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 12th September 2001 under the Waste Management (Amendment) Act, 2001. This Plan is currently being reviewed and a draft Plan will be presented to Council in the first quarter of 2005.

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.

It is proposed to present the final draft of the Presentation of Waste Bye-Laws to the City Council in 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 developing and implementing effective education programmes in homes, schools and businesses. Among the initiatives proposed for 2005 provision of a paint and related materials collection point at the Park Road and further promotion of home composting and ongoing Green Schools promotion.

Recycling Facilities

To date Limerick City Council has provided 19 bring bank sites in the city and a mini Recycling facility at Park Road. Funding has been secured for the upgrading of these facilities and work on these projects will continue into 2005. Consultants have been appointed to prepare the planning application for the proposed Civic Amenity site on the Childers Road. It is expected that this application will be lodged early in 2005.

Westfields Wetlands

The installation of a viewing platform in the Wetlands was completed in 2004. The annual programme of reed control and monthly water monitoring will continue in 2005. A program of works to improve water flow in the Wetlands will also be undertaken in 2005 and Interpretative Signage will be erected in suitable locations adjacent to the 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 it is expected that further work will be carried out in 2005 on the implementation of the licence conditions. The total cost of this project will be in excess of €6m.

Litter Pollution

During 2004 the enforcement staff were increased to 2 Environment Inspectors and one Asst. Engineer and a dedicating enforcement unit within the Environment Department has now 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.

Air Pollution

Limerick City Council has 3 air monitoring stations, Moyross, Southill and the City Centre where smoke and sulphur dioxide is 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 2005.

Cemeteries Department

Major improvements to pathways and driveways, in both Mt. St. Oliver and Mt. St. Laurence, were completed in 2004. Additional gravespaces will be developed in 2005.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mission:

Minimise the risk of fire and other emergencies to life, property and environment and provide an integrated organisational response to fire and major emergencies.

The Chief Fire Officer, who reports to the Director of Service, Environment, Recreation & Sport, manages Limerick City Council Fire & Rescue Service. The Service has 5 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;
- Civil Defence.
- Fire Communications

Fire & Emergency Operations

The Fire/Emergency Operations Department provides a comprehensive fire brigade service to the community, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The Fire Brigade operates from the Fire Station, Mulgrave Street, Limerick and provides fire and rescue services to an area of approximately 419 sq. kilometres and a population in excess of 100,000 people within the Borough itself and in adjoining areas in counties Limerick and Clare. The Fire Brigade also provides a response to road traffic accidents, chemical incidents, flooding and other emergencies.

Achievements for 2004 include:

- A new water tender was purchased with grant aid from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government and put into service, further improving fire-fighting capacity;
- 2 new training courses were held: hot fire fighting and swift water rescue;
- An energy conservation project was implemented involving the installation high energy efficient lighting and heating controls;
- Security was improved with the installation of automatic gates, additional CCTV cameras and keypad coded entry;
- New ICT equipment was purchased with grant aid from the DoEHLG;

- The number of fires and incidents attended in 2004 was 1603;
- 5 new recruits successfully completed a recruits training programme in Lancashire International Fire Training Centre with one recruit receiving the Silver Axe Award and another recruit achieving first place in the Breathing Apparatus training module.

Plans for 2005 include:

- Implementation of the ICT Development Programme;
- Provision on new personal protective equipment for all fire-fighter personnel;
- Standardisation of the equipment inventory on water tenders;
- Implementation of Benchmarking;
- Further enhancement of the training regime within the Fire Brigade.

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 2004 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, (122 at 02/12/04);
- **Building Control:** 40% of premises for which commencement notices were received were inspected. (The national target is a minimum of 12.5%)
- **Public Advice & Complaints Service:** 35 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:** 36 inspections were carried out and reported on.

Objectives for 2005 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.
- Implement the ICT Development Programme for the Department.

Major Emergency Planning

The Fire & Rescue Service updates the City Council's Major Emergency Plan. It also facilitates the development of departmental major emergency plans, by providing administrative and secretarial support and by chairing the City Council's Major Emergency Planning Implementation Committee.

The Fire & Rescue Service also participates in, and provides administrative and secretarial support to the Mid West Major Emergency Planning Working Group.

Achievements for 2004 include:

- The Major Emergency Plan was updated;
- 2 meetings of the MEP Implementation Committee were held;
- 3 ordinary meetings of the MW MEP Working Group and 3 site visits took place.

Civil Defence

The Civil Defence provides emergency relief and support and ensures the continued operation of vital services and the maintenance of public life during major emergencies and responds at the request of City Council management, in accordance with the Major Emergency Plan.

Achievements in 2004 included:

- Provided ambulance cover for local, inter- provincial and national rugby matches at Thomond Park;
- Provided crowd control for visits, to Limerick, of President, Taoiseach & Ministers;
- Transported Chernobyl Children from Shannon Airport to destinations around the country;
- Competed in Civil Defence Annual National Competitions in Sligo, Tipperary and Wexford.

Plans for 2005 include:

- All members to be trained in the use of defibrillators and first aid responder activity;
- Selected members will be trained as instructors in new line rescue techniques;
- Enhancement of water rescue capacity with the acquisition of new personal protective equipment, dry suits and wet suits etc;
- Continue to focus its efforts on enhancing its capacity to respond the emergencies as a high quality second line service, in addition to facilitating community support activities.

Fire 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 one full time station in Limerick City.

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

In 2004, achievements included:

- Completed the tender phase for a geographic information system;
- Implemented technical developments in the areas of voice recording and server architecture;
- Enhanced and improved management information systems to provide member Fire Authorities with service indicator information.
- Significant improvement and enhancement of training programs within the Munster Regional Communications System.

Plans for 2005 include:

- Complete the current project involving implementation of a telecommunications network, mobile radio, mobile data network and a geographic information system for Munster;
- Further developments of management information systems in accordance with the requirements of the MRCC and the member Fire Authorities;
- Enhance training programmes to meet the requirements of the MRCC and the participating fire authorities, particularly in the area of exercise based training;
- Complete the full integration of Cork and Waterford City fire brigades into the MRCC mobilising and communications systems.

Sports and Recreation Policy Framework

The Sports and Recreation Policy Framework strategy has audited and assessed the current provisions and standards of all recreational amenities and facilities in the city and the environs. It puts forward appropriate policies for the provision, management and maintenance of recreational facilities. The draft document was put forward for public consultation in 2004. Some amendments to the text of the document are proposed, as a result of submissions made. A final draft of the Policy Framework Plan is being prepared for consideration by the Culture and Sport Strategic Policy Committee in early 2005.

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. The People's Park was awarded Best Public Park in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's City Neighbourhoods Competition in 2004, for the second year in a row. It is proposed to provide additional playground facilities in the City. 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 from the above Department in 2004.

It is intended to bring forward a Planning Application for the park in early 2005 subject to finance being available.

City Enhancement Scheme

Additional hanging baskets were provided in 2004 as part of the "Bridges in Bloom" initiative and, along with the colourful floral containers in the city, were the subject of much favourable comment. Funding of €35,000 has been provided in the Budget for 2005 to expand further on this scheme. In addition the Council launched a new environment competition in 2004, Limerick Looking Good, which covered city streets, residential areas and residential front gardens. This new competition will link into the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's national City Neighbourhood's Competition in 2005.

Municipal Golf Course

The current management arrangement is now in place for two years and is working well. Work on redevelopment of the clubhouse is almost complete. This attractive building will provide a modern and comfortable clubhouse, which will enhance the course and facilitate its continued development.

Grants for Community and Voluntary Groups

In 2003 a pilot scheme was introduced to assist community and voluntary groups financially in their efforts to improve the local environment. This scheme continued in 2004 with an increased number of applicants availing of it. It is proposed to continue this scheme in 2005 and a provision of €65,000 has been made in the Budget.

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 the Board of Management to secure funding for the redevelopment of the complex. Progress has been made in this project in 2004.

Limerick City Library

The main objective of the library service is to promote the library as a resource for education, information, recreation and culture. It continues to achieve this objective through

- (i) lending of books, language tapes, talking books, and music to all age groups in both the Granary and Roxboro branches;
- (ii) provision of Internet facilities;
- (iii) providing access to Reference and Local Studies material for research purposes;
- (iv) bringing the book to the child with a new school's library van;
- (v) providing Business Information

[Netd@ys Europe 2004](#)

The library took part in the European Commissions [Netd@ys](#) Europe 2004 initiative. The idea submitted to [Netd@ys](#) Europe was "Chase the Country, Catch the City, Collect the Facts". This project brought school classes to the library to search the Internet for answers to a number of questions relating to countries which took part in the special Olympics. Library staff were available to show children how to use the Internet. Limerick City Library project will be included on the [Netd@ys](#) 2004 website where it will be promoted in educational, cultural and other organisations in Europe and beyond.

EU Enlargement

To celebrate EU enlargement, a special lecture on Slovenia (which was twinned with Limerick) was held in the library in May.

Centenary of the Abbey Theatre

An exhibition and workshops were held in the library to create an awareness of the work and drama of the Abbey Theatre over the last 100 years.

Moyross Library

Work continued on the library in Moyross with the shell and core of the building completed.

Evening Lecture Series

The evening lecture series continued to attract large audiences during the year. Lectures varied from Roger Casement; Thomas Round: A Tenor; Waders and Wintering Wildfowl to Love Letters from the Front.

A special event organised for Christmas features singers, musicians, storytellers, poets, choirs and a seanachai.

Children's Book Festival

An extensive programme of events was prepared and delivered by library staff during the two week festival. Events included storytelling, author visits, creative writing workshops, poetry workshops, inter schools table quiz together with colouring and essay competitions.

Prizes will be awarded to winners in the various competitions before year end.

Digitisation Project

Limerick City Library is currently engaged in a digitisation project as part of the third phase of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna's Cultural Heritage Project. This project is aimed at making unique local studies material available to all via the Internet.

The Project in Limerick is centred on the *Seamus Ó Ceallaigh GAA Collection*. This collection consists of a vast array of GAA-related materials collected by Ó Ceallaigh during his fifty years as a GAA journalist and enthusiast and which he bequeathed to Limerick City Library on his passing in 1988.

The project aims to give a thorough listing of the content of this collection, thus enabling any Internet user to gain an understanding of what can be found within it. We are also highlighting various specific aspects of the collection. The most significant of these is Ó Ceallaigh's series of biographical sketches of great Limerick sportsmen of the past, which was published in the Limerick Leader during the 1950s and '60s. Each of these biographies will be available for viewing, downloading and/or printing. There is also a large collection of GAA journals dating from 1914 up to the mid-1980s. We are selecting and making available articles of interest, mainly Limerick-related, from these journals, again for viewing, downloading and/or printing.

Plans for 2005

- Provide software for the blind and visually impaired.
- Provide software for people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties
- Complete branch library in Moyross
- Participate in a project with the Equality Authority with regard to access for all
- Target teenagers through secondary schools to become aware and avail of library facilities.
- Participate in [Netd@ys](#) 2005.
- Plan series of lectures for Spring and Winter.
- Take part in the 'Intersearch Pilot Project' organised by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna.

Jim Kemmy Municipal Museum

The museum catalogue on the City Council website was updated and launched officially by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue, on 3 June. Since then the average number of visitors to the catalogue per week has exceeded 10,000 and the total number of visitors to date (1 Dec) is 293,863.

893 new records were added to the catalogue, bringing the total number of records in the catalogue to 52,112. The backlog of records to be added has been cleared and, in addition to adding new acquisitions, work over the next year will concentrate on creating indexes of persons, institutions and historical events in order to increase the ease of use of the catalogue.

2,300 digitised images were added to the catalogue, bringing the total to 17,828. A priority in the immediate future is to complete the digitisation of images of the entire collection.

An exhibition of painted beehive panels from Slovenia was mounted to mark the enlargement of the European Union, and this was officially opened by Mr. Anton Rop, Prime Minister of Slovenia, on 2 May.

The Johns Square museum building was taken over by Daghda Dance Company, and space for the museum objects stored there was made available at the temporary archives store on Michael Street.

There were 144 additions to the museum collection during the year. Notable among them were: Limerick silver teaspoon by Thomas Walsh, c.1770; Limerick silver salt spoon by Maurice Fitzgerald, c.1800; a pocket watch by Sterling, Limerick, 1872; a button of Limerick Merchant Volunteers, c.1780; a poster of the Theatre Royal, 1857; a review of Limerick Skating Rink, Wellesley Place, 1909; newspaper, the New York Daily Tribune, 28 August 1848, with extensive reports on the Young Ireland insurrection and its aftermath; a medal of Limerick Motor Club, 1930s; a tin for Spillane's Two Flakes tobacco and a photograph of the tank Scotch & Soda on Thomond Bridge, April 1919.

More than 2,000 enquiries were dealt with, from personal callers, by phone, letter and email, many of them emails arising from the presence of the catalogue on the internet. Information exchange with these is two-way, particularly from the descendants of Limerick people living abroad.

Visitor numbers, at 13,458 (to 30 November), are similar to 2003.

Plans for 2005

- Addition of digital images to museum catalogue.
- Increase the number of access points to the catalogue of search by historical event.
- Provision of images of the Main Drainage Exhibition
- Review and upgrade object storage plan for the re-organisation of the museum displays during 2006.

Arts Service Report

The art service had a very busy schedule for 2004. The major highlights of the year were the **Day of Welcomes** and signing of the lease on St. John of The Cross Church in John's Square and no. 1 and 2 John's Square for **Daghdha Dance Company**.

Other events successfully delivered during the year were

- Kate O'Brien Weekend 2004
- Cuisle Poetry Festival
- Story Making on Film - The Banshee Lives in the Handball Alley
- Compose Yourself in association with The Irish Chamber Orchestra
- Sionna Festival of Traditional Music and Dance
- Music Network in association with Limerick City Council

In addition to the above events the following grants were approved
Requests for Grants Under The Arts Act

The Irish Rambling House
St. Nessian's Community College – CD Project
Ireland/Florida Exhibition
Jim Kemmy International Young Designer of the Year Awards
Egleston Photography – Book
V-Day 2004 – Limerick School of Art & Design
Limerick Camera Club
Feile Luimni
The Georgian House and Garden Concert Series
Contact Studios – Exhibition
The Torch Players
La Cosa Nostra Theatre Group
The Kate O'Brien Weekend
Children's Book Festival, Limerick City Library
The Quarry Players
Teaspach Theatre Company
Doras Luimni Art Group
Martin Bennis
Summer Music on the Shannon
Michael O'Brien : A Poetic Calendar

Plans for 2005

February 2005: The Kate O'Brien Weekend 2005
March – May 2005: ev⁺a 2005 : The exhibition of visual⁺ art
October 2005: Cuisle : Limerick International Poetry Festival

October 2005: The publication of Stony Thursday Poetry Book
November 2005: Sionna : A World of Music and Dance
Each event will be part programmed and managed by The Arts Service of Limerick City Council.

Educational Community Based Projects 2005

Jan – March 2005: Young ev+a, a series of workshops with artists that will result in a production of an event by the community with the artists
October 2005: Compose Yourself : a 3 year area-based project, taking place in Limerick City South, with the Irish Chamber Orchestra. 2005 will be the final year of the project.

Other Services

- Administration of Grants Under The Arts Act.
- Working towards extending and enhancing the infrastructure for the arts in association with The Belltable Arts Centre, Daghdha Dance Company and other locally based arts organisations.
- Grant applications to be prepared for funding of arts projects locally.
- The implementation of a public art programme under the 1% for art scheme.

Limerick City Gallery of Art

As part of the artistic programme a large number of exhibitions were held at the Gallery in 2004. The calendar was full for the entire year and the following are a list of the exhibitions:-

Tina O'Connell - Limerick born, London based artist produced Sculpture and a large scale floor Installation specially fabricated for LCGA.

Tjibbe Hooghiemstra - Night Flight, presented Drawings and Paintings.

EV+A - 52 National and International artists from 22 countries Curated by Zdenka Badovinac, Slovenia.

Corpus- Women Artists and Embodiment, work from the Irish National Collections, curated by Pippa Little, Shinnors Curatorial Scholarship.

Our Lady of Lourdes Active Group, Outreach project and exhibition responding to the Corpus Exhibition, with artist Ruth Brennan and Curator Pippa Little.

Florida/Ireland – Artists Exchange Exhibition.

Fantasia in NYC and recent work by Amy O'Riordan July 23rd-August 27th.

Aine Phillips - ardent shelters exploring the concepts of home and shelter (exhibition included a Live Performance of homeless SHOOT! AT THE ARTIST, both an exhibition and a story of the last years of the totalitarian regime in the former Yugoslavia).

Jack Donovan Exhibition of Retrospective Paintings 1959-2004. Publication also of a hardback catalogue.

Tom Fitzgerald Exhibition - The Ministry of Dust New Drawings, Sculpture and Installations. This was the largest exhibition he has ever assembled. A hardback catalogue accompanied the exhibition.

Paintings by Des Shortt hung with selections from the Collection,

You should really go there - An Experimental Project curated by Sean Lynch.

A Contemporary Dance co-ordinated by Mary Nunan, including Colin Dunne and Jean Butler Nov. 16th Limerick Art Society Annual Ex. Dec.

Permanent Collection Storage

Using funds from a Heritage Council Grant new storage racks have been purchased and installed.

Guide for young people to the Permanent Collection

LCGA published a guide for young people to the Permanent Collection. This guide is designed to act as a stimulus for young people and their educators to study and discuss some of the wonderful work in the Collection. It will cover a variety of items in the collection including paintings by Paul Henry, Sir William Orpen, Jack B Yeats, and John Shinnors. The guide was published with the help of a Heritage Council Grant.

Collaborations with other Galleries and Loans.

Siamsa Tire, The National Folk Theatre staged an exhibition of work from the Permanent Collection entitled Painting The Free State. Important works from the Permanent Collection featured major Irish artists of the mid 20th century including Jack B Yeats, Paul Henry, Sean Keating, Maurice Mac Gonigal, Walter Osborne and Percy French.

Plans for 2005

- Launch Young people's guide to the Permanent Collection.
AIB Prize Winner Exhibition with Amanda Coogan. Opening of Mark O' Kelly exhibition. Loan of 'Man of the West' a portrait of Sean Keating by Sir William Orpen to the Imperial War Museum London.

- Opening of ev+a at LCGA and venues around the city, this year's curator is Dan Cameron, Chief curator of the New Museum, New York.
- Multi Media Music and sound interactive exhibition.
- Exhibition of 'Into the landscape' featuring some of Ireland's best known artists, curated by Jim Savage and exhibition by Dutch Artists curated by Arno Kramer.
- Two Limerick Artists, Donald Teskey and Gavin Hogg will show new works.
- The South African William Kentridge will be presented in October in co-operation with the Model Niland Gallery, Sligo and the Royal Hibernian Gallery, Dublin.
- Pippa Little, Shinnors Curatorial Research fellow based at the gallery will present her second curated event.

CORPORATE & FINANCIAL SERVICES

"Corporate and Financial services represent a combination of internal support services whose objective is to ensure that the organization and the people within the organization are enabled to deliver a quality service to our customers"

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 2004, work continued on a number of initiatives including, development of a draft Policy on Interculturalism, use of Mobile Phones, implementation of a No-Smoking Policy, introduction of a Workplace Health Promotion programme, and implementation of Pre-Retirement training. In addition, three members of staff attained Junior Certificate qualification as part of the Return to Learning training programme.

It is proposed to further extend adult learning opportunities to staff during 2005. Other matters targeted for action include; Development of a Policy on Vaccinations, implementation of Workplace Health initiatives, and examination of internal communication mechanisms. It is also envisaged that some structural changes will be introduced to Partnership committees early in 2005.

Human Resources

2005 will be a challenging year for the Council and especially the Human Resources Department, with the planned introduction 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. This modernisation agenda is required under the benchmarking agreement. The Council will also progress the recommendations of the Human Resource Strategy prepared by Price Waterhouse Coopers for which the Council was a national pilot. Staff training will remain a key priority for 2005 with specific focus on enhancing skills, competencies and behaviours to achieve organisational, departmental and individual goals.

Making progress on all 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 2004 ICT Department continued to support the infrastructure and applications in place. Reinvestment in client pc's and facilitation of City Hall refurbishment will progress during the coming year.

The website 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. The next phase in the development of GIS is to distribute this information to staff and the public via web-based GIS technologies; the groundwork is well underway!

Plans for 2005 include formulating an ICT strategy which will look at the business processes within Departments with a view to introducing efficiencies through the use of ICT. Other projects will include the introduction of electronic payments, an extranet for City Council members, a complaints system and an integrated Housing system.

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