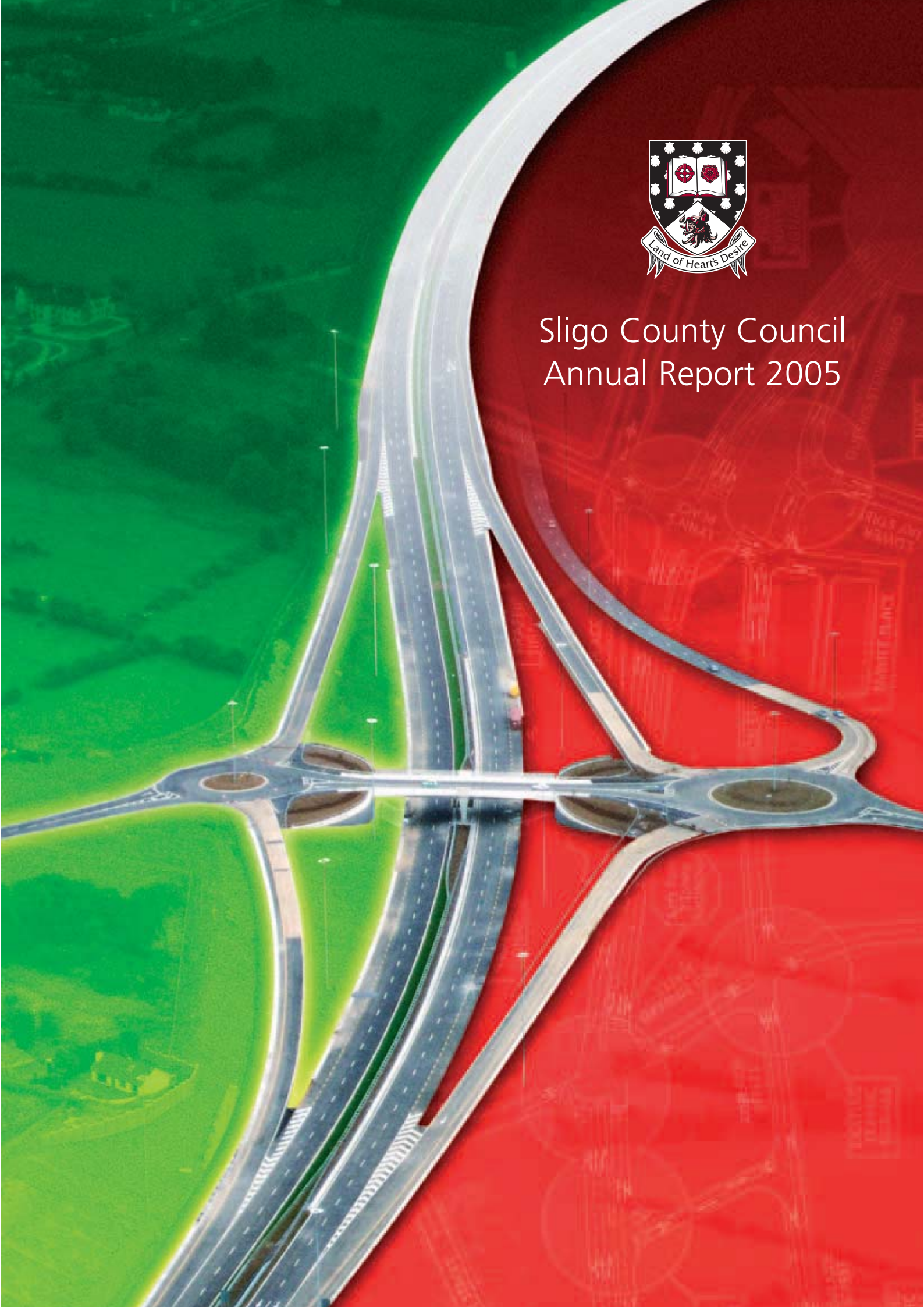




Sligo County Council Annual Report 2005



CONTENTS

Cathaoirleach's Introduction	2
County Manager's Foreword	3
Council Members / Map of Electoral Area	4
Strategic Policy Committee Members	6
Corporate Services Directorate	7
Customer Services	7
Housing and Building	8
Procurement and Project Management	11
Human Resources	12
Sligo County Library, Museum and Cultural Services	13
Communications Office	16
Sligo Civil Defence	17
Sligo Fire Authority	18
Information Technology / Register of Electors / Higher Education Grants	20
Infrastructure Services Directorate	21
Road Transportation and Safety	21
Bridge Restoration and Repairs	27
Water Services	29
Directorate of Community, Enterprise and The Arts	31
Sligo County Development Board	31
Sligo County Community Forum	33
Sligo Social Inclusion Measures Group	34
Civic Pride Awards / Omagh-Sligo Partnership	36
Telecommunications Infrastructure / Tidy Towns 2005	37
County Council Led Peace II Task Force / Burial Grounds	38
Sligo RAPID Programme	39
Sligo Volunteer Bureau / Volunteer Development Programme	40
County Sligo Arts Department	41
Planning and Environment Directorate	43
Planning	43
Environmental Services	47
County Sligo Heritage Office	53
Conferences and Seminars	55
Cathaoirleach's Year Photo Diary	56
In Memory	58
Finance Department	59
Income & Expenditure Account Statement	59
Balance Sheet	60
Motor Tax	61
Service Indicators	62



Sligo County Council
 Comhairle Chomrae Shligigh
 County Hall, Riverside, Sligo, Ireland
 T: +353 (0)71 9111 111
 F: +353 (0)71 914 1119
 E: customerservices@sligococo.ie
 W: www.sligococo.ie

Photocopying prohibited by law. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the permission of Sligo County Council.

Photography: Vincent Vidal, Charlie Brady, Noel Kennedy
 Design: IDK Design :: 071 912 0905



Introduction by Cathaoirleach Councillor Patsy Barry

**INTRODUCTION BY
CATHAOIRLEACH
COUNCILLOR PATSY BARRY**

“ 2005 was a busy and productive year for Sligo County Council with a number of important projects coming to fruition.”

2005 was a busy and productive year for Sligo County Council with a number of important projects coming to fruition.

The Sligo Inner Relief Road was officially opened on 2nd September 2005. This is the largest infrastructural project undertaken by this authority, and the high standard of the work reflects great credit on the project team. The delivery of the relief road will help position Sligo as the premier economic gateway of the northwest, re-affirming its status under the national spatial strategy. Our main objective under the strategy is to acquire a critical mass of infrastructure, facilities, services and population to facilitate the growth of business in this region. At the official opening of the Inner Relief Road, Minister for Transport Martin Cullen, TD, confirmed that balanced regional development is an economic and political imperative, and this will underpin the continuing growth of Sligo and the northwest.

The completion of this €74 million project will serve as a catalyst for progress in other areas, and the tangible air of optimism around Sligo is reflected in the growth and development of other towns and villages in our county. The Inner Relief Road is also a landmark achievement in the context of our strategic road network. Over the coming years we hope to progress the Western Distributor Road, the re-alignment of the N15, and the provision of an eastern river crossing.

Over the last year I had the privilege of serving as Chair of the County Sligo Heritage Forum, and I can't speak highly enough of the vision and commitment of the members of the forum who work tirelessly to foster a greater public awareness concerning our unique heritage.

During my term as Cathaoirleach I have had the welcome opportunity of visiting many groups and community associations throughout County Sligo. While it is often said that the culture of volunteerism is one the wane, my experience is that the heartbeat of any community is the dedicated people willing to give freely of their time for the common good.

Councillor Patsy Barry
Cathaoirleach



COUNTY MANAGER'S FOREWORD

“Sligo County Council is conscious that each customer has different needs and that contact is made in a variety of ways.”



County Manager's Foreword

Throughout 2005 Sligo County Council worked to enhance the lives of those living and working in Sligo by investing €112 million in the delivery of key infrastructure and services.

This includes investment in roads, water and wastewater facilities. In partnership with local agencies and the communities, the authority encouraged and supported investment in community, social and cultural facilities. The council also delivered its range of services and ensured that customers had access to the information they needed and were provided with a quick response.

In 2005 we put in place a Procurement and Project Management Team to help with the procurement of services and projects on our behalf. Through their work on projects such as the One Stop Shop at Riverside, Housing PPP's at Carrey and Ballinode, the team endeavours to develop best practice in the procurement function, to harness for the benefit of the Authorities modern innovative procurement processes and opportunities and to oversee the project management of specific capital works in both Sligo city and county.

The regeneration project underway in Cranmore continues to involve a multi-agency approach with representatives from Sligo Borough Council, the Community and Local service providers participating in the regeneration process. As an active participant I have recognised the benefits of taking a multi-agency approach. This is a long-term project and we hope that it will reap benefits for those who live in the Cranmore community and in Sligo city.

Our investment in Library services was rewarded with the shortlisting of Tubbercurry library for the prestigious CLIP Public Library Awards which resulted in the library winning the much coveted 'Highly Commended – Heart of the Community Award'. This is significant as it acknowledges the important role our libraries play within the community.

Providing a quality service and response to the customers we serve is at the centre of the ongoing customer service programme that Sligo Local Authorities are implementing. Actions taken recognise the need for attention to the timely delivery of services of a high quality, measured against performance indicators, personnel training and development in customer care, and more openness and transparency in decision making.

Sligo County Council is conscious that each customer has different needs and that contact is made in a variety of ways. As a result initiatives are developed and implemented to benefit customer groups in areas such as consultation, communication, complaints, information / communications technology, partnership with staff and partnership with public representatives.

Hubert Kearns,

Hubert Kearns
County Manager

COUNCIL MEMBERS / MAP OF ELECTORAL AREA

Sligo/Drumcliffe Area Elected Members



Cllr. Veronica Cawley
Labour Elected 2004
St. Martin,
Rathbraughan, Sligo
(071) 9170267 / 087 6494723
cawleyveronica@eircom.net



Cllr. Patsy Barry
Fianna Fáil Elected 1999
Grange,
Co. Sligo
(071) 9163168 / 087 2727588
barrypatsy@eircom.net



Cllr. Ita Fox
Fianna Fáil Elected 1985
Colgaigh, Cairy, Co. Sligo
(071) 9144932 /
087 2077704
foxita@eircom.net



Cllr. Jude Devins
Fianna Fáil Elected 2004
25 Beechwood Court,
Ballykivan, Sligo
087 2021566
jdevins@hotmail.com



Cllr. Joe Leonard
Fianna Fáil Elected 1985
Cloonaghawn,
Ballinful, Co. Sligo
(071) 9163443 / 9163548
leonardjoe@eircom.net



Cllr. Seamus Kilgannon
Fianna Fáil
81 Rathedmond Estate, Sligo
(071) 9162695 /
086 8243121
dlseamuskilgannon@eircom.net

Sligo/Strandhill Area Elected Members



Cllr. Declan Bree
Labour Elected 1974
1 High Street, Sligo
(071) 9145490
087 2470802
dbree@eircom.net



Cllr. Albert Higgins
Fianna Fáil 1974
Carracoe, Sligo
(071) 9160129
0876772049
higginsalbert@eircom.net



Cllr. Jim McGarry
Labour Elected 1991
Oakfield,
Sligo
(071) 9161515 / 086 6007575
mcgarryjim@eircom.net



Cllr. Deirdre Healy McGowan
Fianna Fáil Elected 2004
Breeogue, Knocknahun,
Co. Sligo
(071) 9168604
dhmc@eircom.net



Cllr. Tony McLoughlin
Fianna Fáil Elected 1974
'Beechawn', Barnastraghy, Sligo
(071) 9160768
087 2583748
mcloughlintony@eircom.net



Cllr. Sean MacManus
Sinn Féin Elected 1999
5 Mountain View,
Maighdeanaboy, Sligo
(071) 9161460 / 086 8198456
seanmacmanus@eircom.net



Cllr. Imelda Henry
Fianna Fáil Elected 2004
Blue Lagoon, Riverside,
Sligo
(071) 9151011 / 087 8177777
imeldahenry@eircom.net

Dromore West Area Elected Members



Cllr. Mary Barrett
Fianna Fáil Elected 1991
'Deek House',
Skeean, Co. Sligo
(071) 9166753 / 086 8102738
barrettmary@eircom.net



Cllr. Paul Conmy
Fianna Fáil Elected 1991
Meenaun,
Cullens, Co. Sligo
(096) 36499 / 086 8406330
paulconmy@eircom.net



Cllr. Joseph Queenan
Fianna Fáil Elected 1999
Lackasleva,
Emisicrone, Co. Sligo
(096) 36449 / 087 6214422
queenanjoseph@eircom.net



COUNCIL MEMBERS / MAP OF ELECTORAL AREA

Ballymote Area Elected Members



Cllr. Martin Baker
Fianna Fáil Elected 2004
 2 Ardkeen, Riverstown, Co. Sligo
 (071) 9127472 / 9165650
 086 1608334
bakermartin@eircom.net



Cllr. Pat McGrath
Fianna Fáil Elected 2004
 Archnaglas, Ballymote,
 Co. Sligo
 (071) 9183225 / 087 6702792
pimgcrath@urinson.ie



Cllr. Gerry Murray
Fianna Fáil Elected 1991
 Catterane,
 Gurteen, Co. Sligo
 (071) 9182016 / 087 6862147
cilgerrymurray@eircom.net



Cllr. Gerard Mullaney
Fianna Fáil Elected 2004
 Highwood, Kilmactranny,
 Boyle, Co. Sligo
 086 8221995
mullaneygerard@eircom.net



Cllr. John Sherlock
Fianna Fáil Elected 2004
 Knox Park, Ballisodare,
 Co. Sligo
 (071) 9167506 / 086 1175435
cljshsherlock@eircom.net

Tubbercurry Area Elected Members



Cllr. Aidan Colley
Fianna Fáil Elected 1985
 Cully, Curry,
 Charlestown P.O., Co. Sligo
 (094) 9254222 / 087 2610852
acolleyyandco@eircom.net



Cllr. Margaret Gormley
Independent Elected 1985
 Carrowloughlin,
 Bunninadden, Co. Sligo
 (071) 9183239 / 086 8394795
gormleymargaret@eircom.net

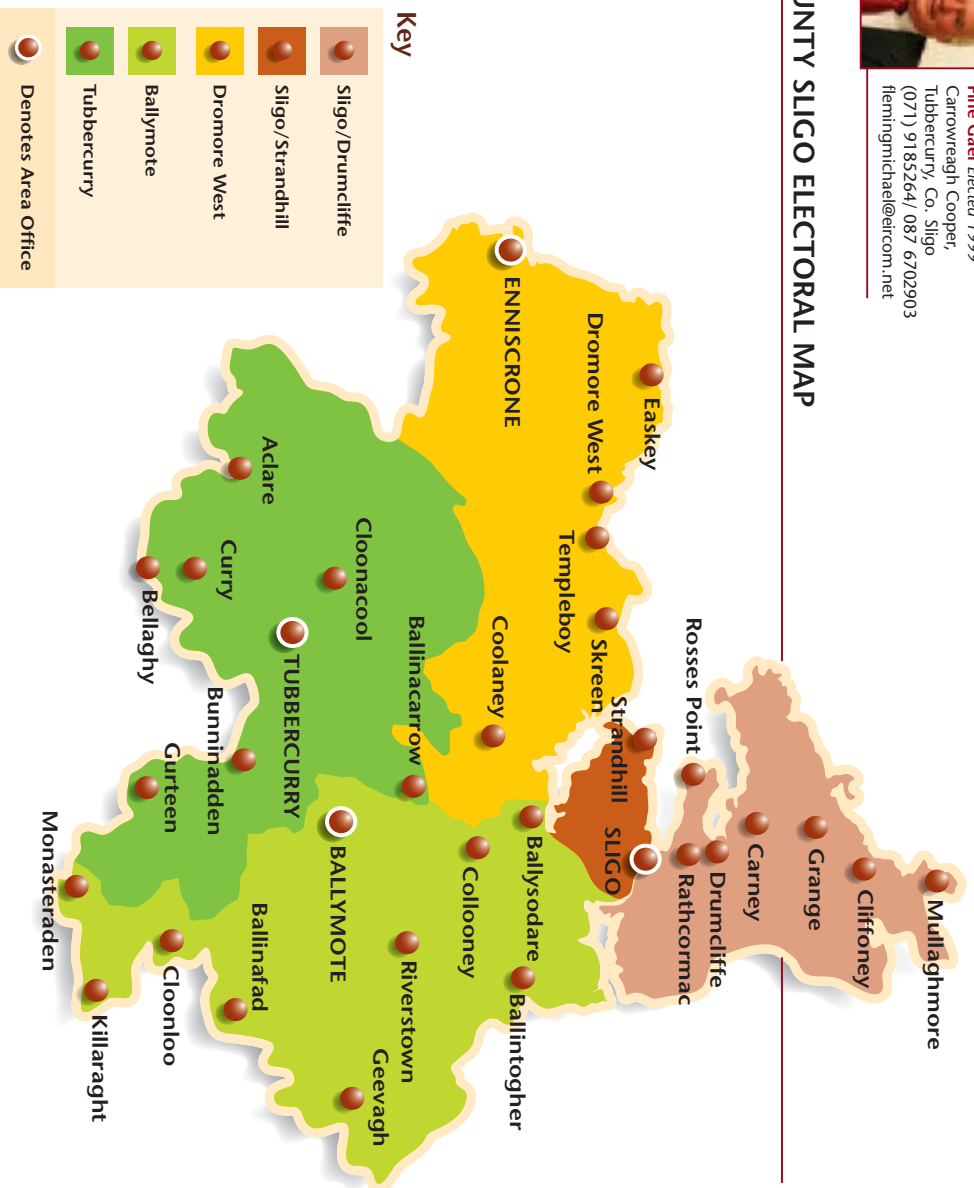


Cllr. Jerry Lundy
Fianna Fáil Elected 2004
 Rhu,
 Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo
 (071) 9185184 / 087 2900947
cljerrylundj@eircom.net



Cllr. Michael Fleming
Fianna Fáil Elected 1999
 Carrowreagh Cooper,
 Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo
 (071) 9185264 / 087 6702903
flemingmichael@eircom.net

COUNTY SLIGO ELECTORAL MAP



STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SPC 1 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING POLICY

- Cllr Tony Mc Loughlin (Chairperson),** Beechlawr, Barnasraghy, Sligo
- Cllr Patsy Barry, *Rimoe, Grange, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Aidan Colleary, *Cully, Curry, Charlestown PO, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Jude Devins, *34 Clara Court, Strandhill Road, Sligo*
- Cllr Deirdre Healy Mc Gowan, *Breeogue, Knocknahur, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Seamus Kilgannon, *81 Rathedmond, Sligo*
- Cllr Sean Mac Manus, *5 Mountain View, Maugheraboy, Sligo*
- Mr Michael Keenan, *Keenan Construction Ltd, Carraroe, Co. Sligo*
- Mr Gerry Healy, *Kevinfort Ltd, 10' Connell St., Sligo*
- Ms Niamh O' Driscoll, *Union Wood Road, Ballisodare, Co. Sligo*
- Ms Phil Tuohy, *Kincullen, Aclare, Co. Sligo*

SPC2 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

- Cllr Jimmy Mc Garry (Chairperson),** Twin Oaks, Oakfield, Sligo
- Cllr Mary Barrett, *Aradbrone, Dromard, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Paul Conmy, *Meenaur, Culleens, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Michael Fleming, *Carrowreagh Cooper, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Albert Higgins, *Carrowroe, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Rosaleen O' Grady, *1 The Orchard, Kevinfort, Sligo*
- Cllr Gerry Mullaney, *Highwood, Kilmactranny, Boyle, Co. Sligo*
- Mr Geroid O' Connor, *Cambs, Ballymote, Co. Sligo*
- Ms Sally Ward, *Cregg, Rosses Point, Co. Sligo*
- Mr Martin Enright, *Raheen, Kilmacowen, Co. Sligo*
- Mr Brendan Queenan, *Castletown, Easkey, Co. Sligo*

SPC3 TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURAL POLICY

- Cllr John Sherlock (Chairperson),** Knox Park, Ballisodare, Co. Sligo
- Cllr Ita Fox, *Colgagh, Calry, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Margaret Gormley, *Carrowloughlin, Bunninadden, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Jerry Lundy, *Rhue, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Gerry Murray, *Calterane, Gurteen, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Pat Mc Grath, *Ardnaglass, Ballymote, Co. Sligo*
- Mr Padraig Davey, *The Cottage, Ballure, Clogheravagh, Co. Sligo*
- Mr Gerry Queenan, *Cabra, Rathlee, Co. Sligo*
- Ms Rita Ann Burke, *Skreen, Co. Sligo*

SPC4 HOUSING POLICY, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Cllr Joe Queenan (Chairperson),** Lacknaslieva, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo
- Cllr Martin Baker, *2 Ardeeerin, Riverstown, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Veronica Cawley, *St. Martin, Rathbraughan, Sligo*
- Cllr Imelda Henry, *Orient, Pearse Road, Sligo*
- Cllr Joe Leonard, *Cloonaghbawn, Ballintull, Co. Sligo*
- Cllr Chris Mac Manus, *5 Mountain View, Maugheraboy, Sligo*
- Cllr Declan Bree, *1 High Street, Sligo*
- Mr Frankie Brannigan, *C/o Courthouse, Teeling Street, Sligo*
- Ms Sharon Boles, *Alkvelid, Ballintogher, Co. Sligo*
- Mr Conor Fitzgerald, *Atlanta Place, Cluin Dara, Gurteen, Co. Sligo*
- Mr Gerry Creamer, *The Blennicks, Rosses Point, Co. Sligo*



CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

CUSTOMER SERVICES

The Customer Service Desk continues to provide a first point of contact both for telephone callers and face to face customers, and enables Sligo County Council to provide an informed and prompt response to customers. The Customer Services Desk provides general information, application forms and brochures for every service area of the Local Authority as well as answering queries and deal with in excess of 4,700 queries in 2005. The benefits of providing a central customer service facility is that it provides customers with a first point of contact for information. Sligo County Council endeavour to make it as easy, convenient and pleasant as possible for customers to do their business and customers can be confident that their query will be dealt with efficiently by trained members of staff.

Staff from the Customer Service Desk took part in the Options Information Road Show hosted by Sligo Leader Partnership and this involved going to different locations throughout Sligo namely Dromore West, Tubbercurry, Grange and Gleann and providing information on services offered by the Local Authority. This proved very successful with many agencies and support organisations available under the one roof to share their information and advice



▶ Sligo County Council Staff ready to answer queries at the Information Road Show (l-r) Eamon Haran, Community and Enterprise, Siofra Kilcullen, Community and Enterprise Development Officer, Deirdre Finnelly, Special Projects Officer, Mary Boylan, Customer Services

with the public. They also participated in the information evening which was held for migrant workers and organised by Omagh-Sligo Partnership.

You can contact the Customer Service Desk at (071) 9111111 or by e-mail at customerservices@sligococo.ie

HOUSING & BUILDING

The Housing section of Sligo County Council provides a number of very important services, covering every aspect of social housing:

- Assisting people who are in need of housing and who cannot afford it from their own resources
- Provision and management of traveller accommodation
- Liaison with approved Voluntary Housing Organisations and other agencies in the provision of accommodation
- Encouragement of home ownership through the Shared Ownership Scheme, Tenant Purchase Scheme, Affordable Housing Scheme and various loan options

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

The *Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan 2004-2008*, as agreed with the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government in December 2004, sets targets for the Council to deliver a specified number of units per year across a range of housing options such as Social, Affordable, Voluntary and Part V Housing. This figure stands at 493 over the life time of the plan which averages at an estimate of 98 units per annum. This figure sets a challenge to the Council in terms of securing and procuring adequate land and negotiating with both developers and the Voluntary housing agencies.

The Housing capital allocation from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for 2005 was €9,650,000, which was made up as follows:

- Local Authority Housing Programme
€9,500,000
- Residential Caravans & Group Housing for Travellers
€150,000

The following sets out in summary, progress on the larger housing schemes:

Completed in 2005	To be Completed in 2006
Ballinacarrow	Grange
Ballymote	Ballisodare
Bunninadden	Collooney
Collooney	Riverstown
Grange	Coolaney
Geevagh	Ballintogher
Ballisodare	Ballymote
Coolaney	Cultadda
	Easley
	Tubbercurry
Total: 75	Total: 71

The Council has always had a policy of purchasing houses on the open market where the houses represent value for money and where a demand exists. In the current economic climate, it is not possible to source many houses on the open market which fall within the Department's approved unit cost budget. However, 7 houses were purchased on the open market in 2005. In addition, work commenced on 4 rural houses during the year.

PART V

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, has provided a welcome opportunity to Housing Authorities to secure land, housing units or money to assist with delivering the Housing Capital Programme.



HOUSING & BUILDING



▲ Fairgreen View, Collooney

▲ Marren Park, Ballymore

▲ Kiltboghlahey, Ballisodare

The Housing Strategy states that 20% of eligible sites, which are the subject of new residential development, are to be set aside for the development of social and affordable housing. There are a variety of options for compliance with this requirement but the preferred option of the Housing Authority is to take units or land which will become available for a mix of social and affordable housing.

Negotiations on Part V take place as early as possible in the Planning Process which provides an opportunity for both the Local Authority and the developer to secure an outcome to their satisfaction. Negotiations have been ongoing with developers in respect of all applications which are within the areas zoned for residential development since the adoption of the Housing Strategy. This involves a legal agreement between the Authority and the developer setting out all details in respect of the Part V offer. The environs of Sligo, Strandhill and Enniscrone have been subject to zoning for some time. In addition, since May 2005, residential development at Ballisodare, Collooney and Grange are now subject to the Part V requirements.

The Council's target in the Action Plan is to deliver 36 Part V units by the end of 2008. This figure, while dependent on a number of factors outside the control of the Housing Authority, should be achieved. The funding for the social units is obtained from the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government while the funding for the affordable units is obtained from the Housing Finance Agency. The Bank of Ireland and some of the Building Societies have now also entered the market to provide funding to purchasers of Part V affordable housing.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The Sligo Local Authorities have recently put in place a Procurement and Project Management Team. The aim of the team is to assist in the procurement of services and projects on behalf of Sligo Local Authorities and to oversee the project management of specific capital works in both Sligo County and City.

The team is currently involved in Housing PPP projects in Carney and Bellanode. The Carney Housing Scheme is being piloted in the County as a PPP (Public Private Partnership) project and will see the development of 5.3 acres of County Council owned land into a mix of social, affordable and private housing together with some small scale commercial development and community facilities. Bidders have been shortlisted and public consultation has taken place. It is anticipated that construction of the development will commence in June 2006.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE

Approximately 66% of the maintenance budget of €480,000 was used for planned maintenance and the remaining 34% was used for emergency repairs. Planned maintenance involved replacing defective windows and doors and also replacing defective ranges.

The Council allocated €10,000 towards Environmental Improvements. The Environmental Maintenance Co-Op was successful in their tender for environmental improvements in various local authority estates which involved grass cutting and maintenance work which was carried out during the summer months.

A grant of €185,000 was received from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government towards the installation of central heating in County Council dwellings. The Council supplemented this grant with approximately €55,000 from the maintenance budget. Work was carried out on the installation of central heating and insulation of approximately 36 dwellings.

RENTS

Rents payable on local authority dwellings are assessed under a Differential Rents Scheme based on the income of the household. The Rent Scheme was reviewed in 2005 and rents were brought into line with increases in disposable income and to meet the ever-increasing demand for maintenance and estate management.

HOUSING & BUILDING

HOUSING LOANS

Those who wish to purchase or build a house but cannot get a loan from a building society, bank, etc. may be eligible for a loan from a local authority. The maximum house purchase/construction loan is 95% of the cost to a maximum of €165,000. Sligo County Council paid out €309,296.44 in house purchase, construction and reconstruction loans in 2005.

Loan Approvals 2005	
Purchases	2
Construction	1
Reconstruction	3
Loan Payments 2005	
Number	Amount
Purchases	€143,296.44
Construction	€90,000.00
Reconstruction	€76,000.00

SHARED OWNERSHIP SCHEME

This scheme offers home ownership in a number of steps to those who cannot afford full ownership in one step in the traditional way. Initially, ownership of the house is shared between the shared owner and the Local Authority, however, the shared owner has the option at a later date to purchase the Council's share outright when they are in a better position to afford it financially.

In 2005, Sligo County Council issued 17 (no.) Provisional Approvals to applicants and 7 (no.) Final Approvals were granted under this scheme.

TENANT PURCHASE

Persons who have been tenants of a local authority house for a period of at least one year may apply to purchase their rented house outright or by means of Shared Ownership under the Tenant Purchase Scheme. The purchase price will be the market value of the house in its existing state of repair and condition, less various discounts.

Ten houses were sold under the Tenant Purchase Scheme - 2 were approved for Council loans and the remaining 8 received loans from other financial institutions.

IMPROVEMENT WORKS IN LIEU OF RE-HOUSING

This Scheme allows Sligo County Council to improve or extend privately owned houses occupied or intended to be occupied by an approved applicant for housing as an alternative to the provision of local authority housing.

During 2005, 11 houses were upgraded at an average cost per house of €50,432 and 10 applications were approved under the Scheme.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

During 2005, construction commenced on 10 four-bedroomed affordable houses in Grange. This is the first scheme of its kind in North Sligo and it is expected that interest will be very high when the scheme is completed early in 2006.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Estate Management Officer continued to provide support to Council tenants during 2005 via pre-tenancy training, engaging with Resident Associations in relation to Estate Action Plans and acting as a liaison with Council officials regarding housing issues, e.g. maintenance, transfers, etc.



Sligo County Council received approval during 2005 for funding of €55,000 under the Clár Estate Enhancement Scheme, (€26,125 from Clár, €26,125 Local Authority Internal Capital Receipts and €2,750 local contribution). The Scheme operates from September 2005 to the end of August 2007 and the approved works include the provision of seating, paving, landscaping and lighting of six specified Council estates.

In September 2005, Sligo Local Authorities adopted a joint policy on combating Anti-Social Behaviour. This document sets out clear policies and procedures for dealing with instances of anti-social behaviour in Local Authority housing. It was prepared in consultation with Estate Management Officers, Gardai, Resident Associations and other interested parties. Extensive public consultation was undertaken, and feedback was positive.

To further support Estate Management activities, Sligo Local Authorities jointly sought and secured funding from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government under the 2005 Housing Management Initiative Grants Scheme for the following projects:

- The employment of a Housing Investigation Officer and Community Development Officer, whose main roles will be to implement the recently adopted anti-social behaviour policy, facilitate the establishment of and provide support to Resident Associations
- The development of a comprehensive Integrated Estate Management Strategy for County Sligo – a project co-ordinator will be employed for a 12 month period for this project



HOUSING & BUILDING

ESSENTIAL REPAIRS GRANTS

The principal benefit of the Essential Repairs Grants Scheme is that it enables structural repairs to be carried out to prolong the life of a house for an elderly resident. The maximum grant available under the Scheme is €9,523, with 2/3 of the cost being recouped from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

34 approvals were issued during the year and 23 grants were paid out under this Scheme, totalling €92,896.25.

DISABLED PERSONS GRANTS

The Disabled Persons Grants Scheme allows Sligo County Council to make a grant available for the provision of house adaptations to meet the needs of a household member who is disabled. Due to the ever-increasing number of applications, the grants are awarded on a priority basis, with a focus on those cases where the applicant's disability seriously impacts on their quality of life.

The maximum amount payable under the Scheme is €20,315, with 2/3 of the cost being recouped from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. 113 approvals were issued during the year and 70 grants were paid out under this Scheme totalling €215,929.70.



TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

During 2005, the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005 – 2008 was adopted, and proposals contained in the programme, including a transient Halting site at Cloonamahon, are progressing. Construction work on the transient site commenced in November, and is due to be completed mid 2006.

A Traveller Liaison Officer was appointed with Sligo County Council in December 2005.

PROCUREMENT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

In 2005 the Sligo Local Authorities put in place a Procurement and Project Management Team to assist in the procurement of services and projects on behalf of Sligo Local Authorities.

The team endeavours to develop best practice in the procurement function, to harness for the benefit of the Authorities modern innovative procurement processes and opportunities and to oversee the project management of specific capital works in both Sligo city and county.

The team has been involved in furthering Housing PPP (Public Private Partnership) projects in Carney and Bellanode. The Carney Housing PPP project commenced in 2005 when Expressions of Interest were sought from developers for inclusion on a select tender list. A Public Consultation took place in November to encourage the involvement of those interested in the development of the 5.3 acres of County Council owned land. It is anticipated that construction of the development of a mix of social, affordable and private housing and possibly small scale commercial development and community facilities will commence in late 2006.

Investigations into the development of a 37 acre site at Bellanode through a PPP process are ongoing. Consultants were appointed in 2005 to undertake a feasibility study. It is anticipated that the scheme will comprise mixed tenure housing and community facilities.

The project team continued to progress the development of the Riverside One Stop Shop, the development of a cultural precinct at the Mall/Connaughton Road, the development of a new museum/library and the extension of the Model Arts and Niland Gallery. In 2005 the office were also involved with Waterpoint in the development of phase II, the completion of the Sligo Courthouse project and, in an advisory capacity, assisting in the provision of a new parking management system in Sligo City.

HUMAN RESOURCES

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Performance Management Development System commenced roll-out to all sections of the Local Authority during 2005 and the long-term focus of the training department will be to respond in a planned way to the needs which will be identified in the preparation of Personnel Development Plans under the system. During the year, training was provided to supervisors / line managers to enable them to carry out their role under the system effectively.



▶ Performance Management & Development Systems Launch.
L-R: Antoinette McLaughlin, County Manager Hubert Kearns, Corporate Services Director Tim Caffrey, Cathairleach Clr Patsy Barry and Paula R Callagher, Senior Executive Officer

During 2005, the Training Department of the Council delivered programmes such as:-

CERTIFICATE IN HEALTH & SAFETY

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 introduced significant changes in relation to occupational health and safety. In conjunction with Sligo I.T. a training programme was developed to equip staff with the skills to manage work activities so that persons at work are not endangered.

DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING

Under the Disability Act 2005, Local Authorities are required to ensure a high level of awareness among all staff in regards to the requirements of persons with disabilities. In 2005 a programme of training was initiated to meet this need. This will be continued in 2006, and will include the following:-

- Staff Awareness Sessions
- Universal Accessibility Auditing Programme which will focus on the technical aspects of disability proofing, structured projects and conducting access audits.

NUI DIPLOMA IN IRISH

During 2005, in conjunction with NUI Galway, a training programme was developed to ensure a better availability and a higher standard of services through Irish. Twelve staff members successfully completed year one of this course, and will complete the second and final year of the course in 2006.

AREA BASED STAFF TRAINING

During 2005, particular emphasis was placed on the training needs of the area based staff. This was reflected in programmes such as:-

Non National Roads Training Programme

- This included courses on signing, lighting and guarding at roadworks, and health & safety at roadworks.

Health & Safety

- Training courses included site dumper training, chainsaw training, safe use of abrasive wheels, manual handling training, safe pass training and training for safety representatives.

Waterworks Caretakers

- The Council have an ongoing training programme in relation to Water and Waste Water Treatment, which also covers dealing with the operation and maintenance of systems. A number of staff attended this training during 2005.

Return to Learning Programme

- The Return to Learning Project is a partnership initiative between the Local Authority National Partnership Advisory Group (LANPAC) and the Department of Education and Science (DES), supported by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA). The project aims to give staff an opportunity to attend a workplace basic skills course. Participants benefit from the course by improving their literacy skills, increase in self-confidence and the re-awakening of an interest in learning.

During 2005, nine staff members were successful in achieving FETAC Certification in Computers under the Return to Learning programme.

Customer Service Training

- During 2005 Customer Service Training was delivered with a particular emphasis on the needs of area based staff. The aim of the programme was to provide an understanding of the concept of customer care, and equip staff with skills to deal with customers in difficult situations.

STAFF EDUCATION SCHEME

This scheme provides opportunities for staff to pursue part-time courses of study leading to a recognised qualification. 15 No. Staff are currently funded under this scheme to pursue courses which include:

- BA in Local Government Management
- Certificate in Public Management
- Diploma in First Line Management
- BSc Library Studies
- B Soc Sc in Housing and Community Studies
- Degree in Construction Economics and Management
- Masters In Town Planning.



▶ Successfully completed the Diploma in Local Government Studies in 2005 – Suzanne Siberry, Damien Willis, Joanne McMahon, Naomi Corevan, Siofra Kilcullen, Máiread Clerkín
Missing from photo: Bernadette Devine, Pamela Bergin, Lorraine Carty, Caroline Devins, Fionnuala Duignan, Brenda Mulligan and Orla Murnin.

SLIGO COUNTY LIBRARY, MUSEUM AND CULTURAL SERVICES

2005 proved to be a very special year for the Sligo County Library Service with the shortlisting of Tubbercurry Community Library in the prestigious Chartered Institute Library and Information Professionals, Public Library Awards.



▲ Caption here (supply ENG + IRL)

Tubbercurry was short listed along with 9 other newly built libraries from a list of 69 entrants, based both in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

It was a major achievement for Sligo County Council, as this is our first purpose built Public Library to be constructed in County Sligo

Whilst the shortlisting is seen as a major achievement in itself, the subsequent award of the much coveted Highly Commended – Heart of the Community Award was the icing on the cake and in the opinion of the adjudicators, seen as a reflection of the tremendous partnership displayed between the Sligo Library Service and the communities of Tubbercurry. Cathaoirleach Cllr. Patsy Barry accepted the award on behalf of Sligo County Council, at the awards ceremony held in Kenilworth, Warwickshire, England.

A Library Development Plan was commissioned in 2005 and a process of public consultations took place in the autumn. The lifespan for this development plan is from 2006 to 2010 and it will oversee and guide the development of new libraries for both Sligo and Ballymote and the subsequent expansion of the range and diversity of services to meet the growing demand for community based Library services as witnessed in Tubbercurry. It is expected to publish this document in 2006.

ENNISCRONE LIBRARY

Seachtain na Gaeilge 2005: Storyteller Niamh McGrath of Pignut Theatre conducted a number of storytelling sessions as gaeilge in Enniscrone Branch Library.

Issues: 12,536

SLIGO REFERENCE LIBRARY, BRIDGE STREET, SLIGO

Heritage Week 2005: An open day was held in the Reference Library on Bridge Street, Sligo in September. Examples of recent acquisitions to the ever increasing Local Studies collection were exhibited. Library staff were on hand to give an introduction to Sligo's Local Studies collection, a collection which documents the rich heritage of County Sligo. Work is ongoing on the project to digitise the Library's Local Studies Collection.

Cultural Heritage Project: In 2005 the Local Studies section were successful in securing funding from the Library Council and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to undertake the digitisation of the Wakeman Collection of archaeological watercolours, which captured the principal archaeological sites in County Sligo in the 1880s. In addition, Mr Sam Moore, Archaeologist in partnership with library staff, wrote a comprehensive narrative, commissioned and collected a series of contemporary photographs to document the Wakeman images on the website.

Library staff co-ordinated the digitisation and uploading of the metadata and images onto the Ask About Ireland website (www.askaboutireland.ie).



▲ Cathaoirleach Cllr Patsy Barry with Donal Timney, County Librarian and Fran Hegarty, Assistant Librarian

SLIGO COUNTY LIBRARY, MUSEUM AND CULTURAL SERVICES

National Primary School Curriculum Development Project: In 2005, Sligo County Library played a leading role in the sourcing and provision of Local Studies material for inclusion on the Ask About Ireland website. This website now includes a section which is developed for primary school students and teachers.

Internet and Online Services: The online Library catalogue was upgraded in 2005 to allow our members to view their account details, place reservations on items in any of our branch network and renew borrowings online. A customer's booklet outlining the services available online was created in house and circulated to all current and new members of the Library.

The range of membership cards, which have been well received by our readers, has been expanded to commemorate the renowned feminist and local poet Eva Gore Booth.

The ongoing updating and modernisation of the public Internet facilities continued throughout 2005 in partnership with Sligo County Council's IT section.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Throughout 2005 Sligo Library has supported individuals who wish to gain experience of library work either as part of their studies or to gain access to library studies. Participants volunteer their work in lieu of training. Branches participating in this scheme in 2005 were Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Sligo Central Library and a total of nine individuals took part.

Reference Library:

Local Studies Users: 5,034

Internet Users: 14,365

SLIGO CENTRAL LIBRARY, STEPHEN STREET, SLIGO

In 2005, Sligo Central Library continue to be our busiest branch with, on average, 480 items issued per day, along with a continuous stream of internet users and browsers.

Issues: 122,695

BALLYMOTE LIBRARY

While World Book Day 2005 was celebrated in all four branch libraries in the County, the artist, John Leonard conducted practical sessions on art work at Ballymote Branch Library. Ballymote Library participated in many countywide activities which were organised through the Library branch network, such as the Children's Book Festival.

Issues: 12,126

TUBBERCURRY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Just two years after opening, August 2005 saw Tubbercurry Community Library register its 4000th member. 701 new members were registered during the year, bringing total membership since opening in 2003 to 4,122. 79% of this number were adult and teenage members with the remaining 21% registering as juvenile members.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES


World Book Day

World Book Day 2005 was celebrated on March 3rd with a workshop conducted by local artist Annie West. Annie spoke to a group of children from two local schools on the topic of book illustration and in particular her own experiences of dealing with publishers and authors.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

Seachtain na Gaeilge 2005 was celebrated in Tubbercurry Community Library with readings from Annie West's award winning title Cearc an Phrompa.

National Tree Week

 National Tree Week was held during the first week of March 2005 and the library in conjunction with the local authority environmental awareness officer distributed a large number of holly bushes to members of the public.

Children's Book Festival

The Children's Book Festival 2005, which was celebrated in October 2005, was packed full of events and activities. Quizzes, workshops, readings and competitions all ensured that books and reading were highlighted as a fun activity for all.



The Afternoon Show

In November, RTE's live flagship daytime programme The Afternoon Show featured Tubbercurry Community Library on its Book-Club lot. Two members, one from each of the library's book clubs, together with the librarian with responsibility for the library were invited to discuss the title Seven Nights in Zaragoza by Karen Gillece live on the programme. Viewers also saw footage of the library which was filmed in the Tubbercurry branch the previous week.

EXHIBITIONS

ENFO

Tubbercurry Community Library displayed three wonderful ENFO exhibitions throughout the year. A Seeds Collection exhibition was featured during April, Walls to Wild Flowers during August and September and the focus for October was Garden Birds. A large number of schools visited the library to view the three exhibitions and talks and workshops were organised to complement them.

ESB Environmental Awards Exhibition

Tubbercurry Community Library hosted the ESB Environmental Photography Awards Exhibition from May 23rd to June 18th 2005. This was the third occasion for the library to host the exhibition, now in its eighth year. The exhibition contained all fifty short-listed photographs in the five categories: Junior, Youth, Amateur, Professional and



SLIGO COUNTY LIBRARY, MUSEUM AND CULTURAL SERVICES

International. The competition is now established as one of Europe's most prestigious photographic initiatives.

Domestic Violence

An exhibition entitled 16 Days of Action highlighting the issue of domestic violence was held during December.

Recycling

An exhibition on the theme of Recycling was displayed in the library during the Summer months. The children of Cloonacool National School produced some very imaginative hats made from all kinds of recyclable material and these attracted the attention of many library users while they were on display.

Guzzler Exhibition

An exceptional interactive exhibition entitled 'Guzzler combats Climate Change' was on display at Tubbercurry Community Library during the month of December. To complement the exhibition, facilitators from Sustainable Energy Ireland conducted a series of workshops over the course of one week aimed at primary school children. The workshops involved the students being guided through the exhibition in order to learn about energy, the effects of energy use and they also participated in various energy related experiments.



PRESENTATIONS

Open University Presentation

An open meeting for anyone interested in studying through the Open University was held on the evening of October 4th in Tubbercurry Community Library. Mr Pierre Tansey from the Open University was in attendance.

Michael Smith

Well-known author, Michael Smith attended Tubbercurry Community Library on the evening of October 24th 2005. His presentation on the topic of Polar Exploration was a fascinating experience and provided a wonderful opportunity to hear an inspiring author speak on the topic of Tom Crean, other polar explorers and Antarctic adventure.

Mick Hanly

A highly original evening of music and readings by well-known singer/songwriter Mick Hanly took place in Tubbercurry Community Library on November 17th. Mick who is one of Ireland's best singer/songwriters in recent years combined songs with excerpts from his autobiography, *Wish Me Well/Notes On My Sleeve*. The readings and songs represented key moments in his life. The evening was a very poignant and personal reflection of the highs and lows of Mick's life and provided the listener with a wonderful insight into this remarkable man's life.

Michael Moylan

To complement the primary school curriculum, Tubbercurry Community Library invited Michael Moylan to present his highly acclaimed Irish History Live and Science is Magic shows. Irish History Live is a show which combines storytelling with a unique opportunity for children to gain access to real tools, armour, weapons and costume of a given period in history. The Science is Magic show allows children to experiment with heat, light, sound, magnetism and electricity.

ONGOING LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

Chess & Draughts Club

The Children's Chess and Draughts Club continued to meet weekly during 2005 and membership increased to 30 children.

Book Clubs

Both of the library's book clubs continued to meet monthly and went from strength to strength as members agreed on some challenging, yet enjoyable and rewarding titles.

Writing Group

2005 was an exciting year for the library's writing group, The Leyney Writers. June saw the launch of their very first publication, Wednesday's Words. The publication, containing over 100 pages of personal reflections and memories, poetry and short stories was launched by the Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council, Councillor Margaret Gormley and has proven to be exceptionally popular with those living in County Sligo and beyond.



School Visits

Many local schools continued with their regular visits to the library and a number of schools from Sligo town and county also visited in order to attend exhibitions and workshops organised by the library.

Issues: 42,133

COUNTY MUSEUM

The County Museum collection of artefacts was greatly augmented in 2005, with the donation of a major collection of cameras, which range in date from the late 1880's to the 1970's, by a local benefactor.

This collection will act as a tremendous insight into the development of photography and when on display they will afford older generations the opportunity to reminisce while younger generations can visualise the techniques used to capture the images of the past.

The proposed new Museum for Sligo continued to be developed to planning stage in 2005 and it is hoped to commence building in 2007.

The number of visitors to the County Museum in 2005 was 3347.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The Communications Office was established to provide information services to the Elected Members, staff, media and general public, as well as providing administrative support to the Cathaoirleach.

CONTACT MAGAZINE

Sligo Local Authorities publish a quarterly magazine for the general public, 'Contact', which provides news and information from Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council. The magazine is circulated with the local newspapers, and is also available from a network of outlets throughout the county. An on-line version of the magazine is available on www.sligococo.ie

E-CONTACT

To supplement the quarterly magazine, the Communications Offices also publish a monthly e-newsletter. E-Contact is circulated to individuals and groups who register their interest on-line. A 'hard copy' of the e-newsletter is also available to those without access to a computer.

WEBSITE

The Communications Office works with the Information Technology section to maintain and update the Sligo local authorities' websites. The sites provide on-line access to application forms and guidelines, contact details for all the services, weekly roads reports, monthly news digest, and all the current advertisements and recruitment notices.

In 2006 the websites will be upgraded to facilitate access for people with visual impairment, and will also be adapted to present information in the Irish language.

OPEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Under its 'Open Local Government' initiative, local school children invited to County Hall to attend a monthly meeting of the Council. The children also attend a presentation on the role and services of the Council, and are given an information pack of brochures, newsletters and reports.

CATHAOIRLEACH'S AWARDS

The Cathaoirleach's Awards Scheme was introduced in 2000 to reward the many volunteers in County Sligo who have given special service to their community. The award winners in 2005 were:

Arts	Seana Haughey
Environment and Heritage	Tom Haran
Community	Alfie Gallagher
Sports	Eileen Brennan
National Schools	Scoil Ursula

STAY IN TOUCH

To register for news and information updates from the Sligo Local Authorities, visit www.sligococo.ie, email communications@sligococo.ie or phone 071 9111016.



COMMUNICATIONS SNAPSHOTS



▶ Peter Horan with his granddaughter Sophie Leonard at a reception to honour his services to Irish traditional music.



▶ Joe Kennedy receiving a presentation to honour his contribution to charity work.



SLIGO CIVIL DEFENCE

Sligo Civil Defence continues to 'Meet the challenges of a changing world', and 2005 was a particularly busy and eventful year for the organisation.

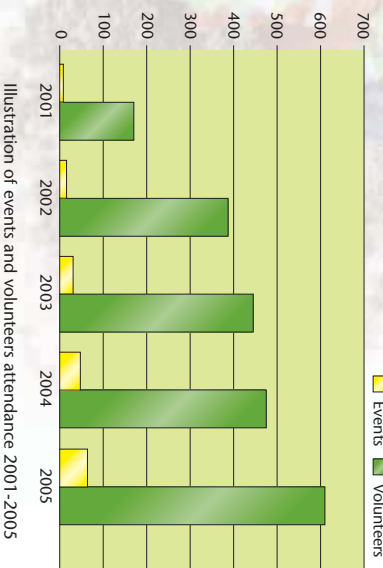
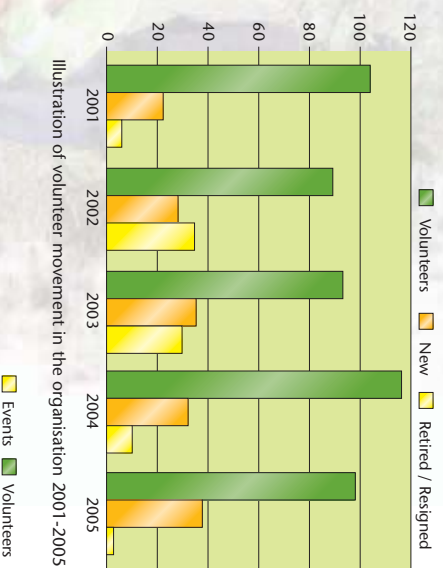


▲ Group Receiving Rescue Training

Another busy year for the volunteers of Sligo Civil Defence. This is evident in statistics that show a continued increase in the number of events that the volunteers attended.

This year Sligo volunteers assisted the Coast Guard in hosting a major exercise in Rosses Point which highlighted the dangers of the water and how to respond to such an emergency. This exercise involved all emergency services carrying out various water based rescues. It was a great success and was well attended by the public. Following this exercise the Gardai, in association with the Health Service Executive, the Fire service and Civil Defence hosted a mock major emergency. This is a very useful initiative which involved a high level of coordination and planning with other agencies.

Sligo Civil Defence volunteers continue to provide first aid / ambulance cover at major sporting events. This is a great challenge and the experience to be gained is immeasurable. Sligo Civil Defence attended over 60 events during 2005 and the commitment and dedication of the volunteers involved is very evident in their professional approach.



Classes re-commenced in October with the registration of 33 new volunteers. It is hoped that the skills they learn and the camaraderie of the volunteers will encourage them to stay especially in these times when there is such a demand on people's free time.

Sligo was represented at the National Civil Defence exercise in Monaghan and finished a very creditable fourth place, a great achievement by the Sligo volunteers.

This year Civil Defence attended an induction training for the new Volunteer Bureau which is being launched in the county in early March 2006. This will assist in bringing more volunteers into the organisation.

In December, to celebrate Volunteers Day, Civil Defence presented First aid certificates and long service medals to a number of volunteers at a reception hosted by the Volunteer Bureau group. This event was attended by various volunteer agencies and was an opportunity to highlight the role of the new Volunteer Bureau.

SLIGO FIRE AUTHORITY

The Fire Authority provides a number of services ranging from the emergency response to incidents such as fires, road traffic accidents, air accidents, chemical incidents and more recently biological incidents, to ensuring the fire safety of the built environment through certification, inspection and enforcement.

The Authority also provides information and training on fire safety management and fire fighting. In order to provide this service in an efficient manner throughout the county there are Fire Brigade Stations in Sligo, Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Enniscrone. These Brigades attended over 738 incidents in the last year.

There were several large complex fires this year, again emphasising the need for an efficient and effective fire service and the need for preventative measures. There has been an increase in car fires and fires caused by arsonists. These pose a serious threat to life and property and the cost can also result in the loss of jobs within the community.

People must remain vigilant in the home, as this is where our most life threatening fires occur each year. The loss caused by these incidents is enormous, tragically three persons died as a result of such fires. One person also died as a result of a fire following a road traffic accident.

The fire authority attended numerous other special services incidents that resulted in six fatalities and emphasises the multi-functionary role of the service provided.

TRAINING

There is a very strict training regime in the Fire Brigade as is necessitated by the sometimes difficult and dangerous environment in which Fire Fighters work. Fire Fighters undergo over one hundred hours training every year, this includes the latest advances in techniques used to tackle the fires known as flashover and backdraft and the latest methods of extraction of casualties from vehicles involved in incidents. This is particularly important in view of the advances in active safety technology employed in the modern car, airbags and seatbelt tensioning do save lives the instant an accident occurs but can pose a serious threat to rescue personnel.

The Brigade now holds block R.T.A. training over a number of days, in which the necessary skills are learnt and practised.

Sligo is now a hot fire training centre and offers this facility nationally for the training of Fire Fighters throughout the country. This facility is used to demonstrate and train Fire Fighters in the latest techniques and equipment necessary



▶ Major emergency exercise at Curry Village

SLIGO FIRE AUTHORITY

for their protection and the saving of lives. The fire service now has nationally qualified medical first responders in all stations and in the Sligo office.



▲ Presentation by Sligo Fire Authority to Oncology Unit

The Breathing Apparatus training centre has been used as a national training centre following modernisation and the installation of a gas fire system; this is used to train staff in proper search and rescue techniques and in the use of Breathing Apparatus in fire situations.

Local Industries have also facilitated the Brigade in carrying out Pre-Fire Training in which various types of incidents are staged and training undertaken so that should a similar incident occur the Brigade will have the necessary skills and resources needed to deal with it in an efficient and professional manner.

Sligo's Fire Fighters are certified users of Automated External Defibrillators (AED) and do refresher training every 90 days.



▲ Emergency Training Exercise at Curry Village

The Fire Authority also took part in a major emergency exercise at Curry village as part of the regional training for the coordinated response to incidents and is now a regional decontamination response centre.

COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

Talks were given to the elderly and other groups on fire safety. Groups of primary school students visited the stations and watched fire safety videos and demonstrations. In all, approximately 400 students visited the station.

Groups from secondary schools, Sligo Institute of Technology and the local community also participated in courses held in the Fire Station.

These courses reinforce the need for vigilance when it comes to fire safety and brings this message back to their homes, schools and workplaces.

The Fire Authority processed over 212 Fire Safety Certificate applications as required under Building Control Legislation and dealt with in excess of 200 Planning Applications under the Planning Acts. These applications covered a wide range of premises from Apartment Blocks, Hotels, and Shops to large commercial developments. Inspections were carried out under the various licensing legislation covering nearly every type of premises from petroleum stores to dance licences. The Fire Authority made comment on all transfer of licences before the courts and carried out numerous 'during performance' inspections of dance halls, public houses and workplaces to ensure the Fire Safety Standards were being upheld. Generally the level of co-operation received when advice is given is very good.

FIRE STATIONS AND APPLIANCES

In the last number of years, the ageing Fire Engines in Enniscrone, Tubbercurry, Ballymote and Sligo have been replaced with new modern appliances. The Emergency Tender in Sligo is in its 14th year of operational use with some of the equipment thereon over 20 years old. An application for funding will be made to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the replacement of this appliance.

Plans were submitted to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the funding and upgrading of Sligo Fire Station in line with current requirements and this matter is being progressed, as is the provision of the new Fire Station in Ballymote.

COMMUNICATIONS

The 24-hour Watchroom at Headquarters dealt with all emergency calls for the Borough and County for over 25 years and has now been replaced with the Computer Aided Mobilisation Project (CAMP).

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY / REGISTER OF ELECTORS / HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Department provides I.T. Services to both Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council. 2005 saw substantial development of facilities provided by the IT Department. A major upgrade of the communications system took place with the implementation of a modern telephone infrastructure and the implementation of broadband links between offices in Sligo town. The new telephone system incorporates modern state of the art technology and will allow better communication between staff and a more streamlined system for public contact at a more economical cost than previously. Broadband data links will allow better information flows throughout the organisation and ultimately provide for an improved service to the public.

Implementation of the Integrated Planning System in Sligo Local Authorities has continued with its implementation in Sligo Borough. The system comprises Document Imaging (iDocs), Planning GIS (geographic representation of Planning information on electronic maps), and the iPlan (Planning Administration System). This is an area which continues to be developed for both Sligo Local Authorities and will result in the expansion of services and information available online.

Services currently available online which may be accessed through Sligo Local Authorities web sites are:

- Planning enquiries
- Register of Electors enquiries
- Payment of traffic fines
- Motor Tax online
- Sligo County Library Catalogue

Developments in the Planning Area and the provision of online services are part of an ongoing modernisation process. This process is also being extended to other services provided by Sligo Local Authorities and will enable easier access to information and maximise the number of on-line services.

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the Register of Electors annually. There are 48,244 electors registered on the 2005/2006 Register. The cost of preparing the Register is borne by the Council and is estimated to be €87,500 in 2005.



Number of Electors by Area:	
Ballymote	10,040
Dromore	5,697
Sligo/Drumcliffe	11,951
Sligo/Strandhill	13,219
Tubbercurry	7,337

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS

Sligo County Council assisted 489 students under the 2004 Higher Education Grants Scheme. There were 176 new applicants and 313 continuing students. The scheme is administered by the Council on behalf of the Department of Education and Science.

In the academic year 2004/2005, Sligo County Council allocated €169,230 in Social Maintenance Grant assistance. A total of €1,796,222 was allocated by Sligo County Council to students in maintenance and fees.





INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE

ROAD TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

MAJOR NATIONAL ROAD PROJECTS

N4 Sligo Inner Relief Route and County Extension

“Helping to position Sligo as the premier economic gateway of the Northwest region.”

The Sligo Inner Relief Road Project was completed many months ahead of its original schedule and was officially opened by Minister for Transport, Mr Martin Cullen, TD, on 2nd September 2005. In welcoming this achievement, the Sligo Local Authorities acknowledge the co-operation of the people of Sligo, who showed great patience and goodwill throughout the various stages of the contract. The project was funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan and part funded by the European Union under the European Regional Development Fund

The 4.5 km road runs from the Carraroe roundabout South of Sligo to Michael Hughes Bridge North of the city centre. Two bridges at Carraroe facilitates the movement of traffic from Dublin and the South onto the roundabout. These will also allow the flow of traffic in and out of the city with easy access on and off the roundabout. The over bridge at the Caltragh Interchange provides a link into Crozon and will ultimately link with the Western Distributor Route, which will cater for the medium to long term development of Sligo Borough and its environs.



▶ Part of the city section of the N4.
▶ Part of the county section of the N4.



FACTS AND FIGURES

The contract for the Sligo Inner Relief Road required:

- 680,000 cubic metres of excavation
- 510,000 cubic metres of fill
- 610,000 cubic metres of topsoil
- 63,000 metres of drainage and ducts
- 8,000 metres of fencing
- 120,000 square metres of blacktop
- 9,000 cubic metres of structural concrete
- 10,000 square metres of wall finishes
- 10,000 square metres of decorative paving

WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THE RELIEF ROAD...

Minister for Transport, Martin Cullen, TD:

Balanced regional development, here in the northwest and in all the regions is an economic and political imperative. With the completion of this project, Sligo is opened to new development opportunities, existing businesses can prosper and jobs in the area can grow.

County Manager, Hubert Kearns:

The opening of the new inner relief road is a major step forward for Sligo. As well as the immediate and tangible benefits in terms of improved journey times, the new road will provide the impetus for the continued growth and development of Sligo and its environs.

Director of Infrastructural Services, Seamus Concannon:

During the construction phase the public were very understanding because they understood the benefits of the project. I think the Inner Relief Road will not only improve confidence in Sligo city, it will also help create greater acceptability for other major infrastructure projects in the pipeline.

Chairman of the National Roads Authority, Peter Malone:

The Sligo Inner relief Road will provide for a safer movement of traffic in the town, relieve congestion and as the gateway to the northwest of the country, will allow Sligo to build on its reputation as a major tourist destination.

IDA Regional Manager, Joe McHugh:

The delivery of the new Inner Relief Road will further help to position Sligo as the premier economic gateway of the northwest region, reaffirming its status under the National Spatial Strategy. A proper transport infrastructure is critical both in terms of inward investment and indigenous development.



Caltragh - Start of project



Approach to Carraroe - during contract



Upper John Street – work in progress



ROAD TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

N15 Realignment – Sligo to County Boundary

The N15 National Primary Route is part of a strategic corridor link connecting Sligo with the towns of Bundoran, Ballyshannon, Donegal Town, Ballybofey, Stranorlar, Letterkenny and Derry.

In view of the existing and projected traffic volumes it is proposed to construct a new dual carriageway and 2 + 1 road which will by-pass the villages of Rathcormack, Drumcliffe, Grange and Cliffoey.

The realigned N15 will represent a major investment in the county's infrastructure and the completed project will:

- Reduce travel time and improve access to the North West
- Reduce transport costs
- Reduce accident rates, particularly fatal and serious injury accidents
- Improve the competitiveness and efficiency of the economy both locally and nationally
- Create a safer environment for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and children.

Following the public consultation for route selection, submissions were considered together with the results of the specialist environmental studies and an emerging preferred route was drawn up. The emerging preferred route is a combination of the four routes shown at the previous consultation, with some minor modifications included in order to reduce the impact on individual houses or archaeological sites.

N17 Collooney to Charlestown Road (Tubbercurry By-Pass)

The design of the 10 km section of the N17 route, from Rathscanlon to Achonry (Tubbercurry By-Pass) was advanced during 2005. Ongoing studies for the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) were progressed as follows:

- Socio-economic impact
- Impact on landscape, ecology, geology, traffic route lighting and agriculture.

Work progressed on preliminary design and Compulsory Purchase Order procedures. The construction will commence 2008/2009.

N4 Cloonamahon to Castlebaldwin

Design of the 12 km route from Cloonamahon to Castlebaldwin was advanced in 2005 and ongoing studies for the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) were progressed to determine impact on landscape, ecology, geology and agriculture.

NATIONAL ROAD PROJECTS

The following works were undertaken with grants allocated by the National Roads Authority

- N15 – 2.07 km of quality overlay at Castlegal (€745,608 expended)
- N15 – 2.8 km of quality overlay at Mullaghmaneane (€1,005,647 expended)
- N4 - 1.62 km of pavement strengthening at Ardloy and Carrowmagark (€301,900)
- N16 - 3km of pavement strengthening/surface dressing at Barroe/Dunally (€290,862 expended)
- N17 - 1.25km of pavement strengthening at Castleoye (North of Tubbercurry) (€146,618 expended)
- N59 - 1.78 km of pavement strengthening/asphalt surface at Ballysadare (€366,534 expended)
- N59 - 0.85 km of pavement strengthening/asphalt surface at Beltra (€176,966 expended)
- N59 - Junction realignment – Grant of €200,000 allocated, junctions improved at N59/R298, Tanregro West and Caltragh
- N4 - Sligo town streets: Adelaide Street and Pearse Road, between Cairns Rd and Mail Coach Road junction were surfaced. (€553,442 expended)
- N4 Dual Carriageway median barrier: The installation of the median barrier on the section of road between Carrroe and Collooney was completed. (€206,279 expended).

Accident Remedial Schemes

A grant of €160,000 was allocated under this scheme and works were undertaken at:

- N4 Sligo Borough – Pearse Road/Cairns Road
- N15 Sligo Borough
- N15 Cashelgarron
- N16 Sligo Borough – Duck Street
- N17 Curry
- N17 Rhue
- N59 junction signage/road markings improvements. The expenditure of €200,833 was incurred.

Winter Maintenance

The National Roads Authority allocated a grant of €160,000 for National Roads and a grant of €40,000 for the N59. Sligo County Council has five modern salt spreaders and snow ploughs for winter maintenance of roads.



ROAD TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

N17 ROAD IMPROVEMENT

Sections of this road between Cloonacurra (North of Ballinacarrow) and Rhue (South of Tubbercurry) were improved by widening of the carriageway/verge. This involved excavating out the grass verges and laying crushed stone and surface dressing. Substantial works were carried out at Rhue junction that improves traffic safety in the area. The expenditure on this scheme was €717,774.

Metrication of Speed Limit Signs

The speed limit signs at towns and villages were changed to comply with the metrication of speed limits nationally. New poles/signs were erected at junctions of National Roads with Non-National Roads. The speed limit on our rural national roads is 100km/h while the speed limit on rural non-national roads is 80km/h. The National Roads Authority and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government funded the cost of erecting signs and poles.

NON-NATIONAL ROAD SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

R294 Drumaskibbole/Glenagoolagh

The realignment of a 0.4 km section was carried out costing €795,149. The ground was very poor and the removal of up to 5m of soft material was necessary.

R294 Mullaghroe

Realignment of the road continued. The cost of realigning 0.34 km was €490,871.

R297 Muckduff/Bartragh

Work commenced on the realignment of a 0.6 km section of this road. Earthworks were completed and the road base is partly laid. A new bridge is being erected on the re-aligned road. This construction of this scheme will continue in 2006. The expenditure was €510,461.

R292 Knappaghmore

Construction commenced on the realignment of this section of R292 from the borough boundary towards Strandhill. A number of portions of front gardens were acquired and accommodation works/new garden boundary walls and services were provided. The expenditure was €422,459.

R292 Tully

Accommodation works were carried out and payments for land acquired for the scheme were made. The expenditure was €465,981.

R2 Ballinode/Hazelwood

The re-alignment of this section commenced within the Sligo borough area. The works involved land acquisition, laying services and pavement works. A new T-junction is being constructed at the R284/L3408 (Cally Rd) junction. This scheme will continue in 2006. The expenditure was €422,549.



▼ Road Improvements

ROAD TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

NON-NATIONAL ROAD MAINTENANCE AND PAVEMENT IMPROVEMENT

Restoration Improvement

A grant of €4,901,000 was allocated by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government for road reconstruction and surface restoration of Non-National (Regional and Local) roads. This provided for substantial improvements to be made to the Non-National Road Network. The works consisted of pothole repairs, strengthening of the road pavement with bitumen macadam or graded crushed stone, double surface dressing and drainage improvement.

Bitumen macadam was laid on the Regional Roads and on some local roads with high volumes of traffic. These roads were then surface dressed to improve skid resistance.

The following lengths of roads improved under this scheme:-

- 10.14km of regional roads
- 118.9km of local roads
- A total of 129.04km of roadway

Restoration Maintenance

A grant of €1,685,000 was allocated. This grant is intended for surface dressing of Non-National Roads. Most of the roads listed for surface dressing particularly the local roads required some strengthening/shaping with graded crushed stone and double surface dressing as well as pot-hole repairs and drainage improvement.

The lengths of road improved under this grant were:-

- 13.8km of Regional Roads
- 69.2km of Local Roads
- A total of 83km of roadway

Discretionary Improvement Grant

A grant of €636,000 was allocated to carry out minor improvements on non-national roads in the Council/Borough. Work undertaken included:-

- Construction of new foot-paths in Easkey, Tubbercurry, Gurteen, Riverstown, Collooney, Cliffoney and Strandhill
- Public lighting Improvement
- Improvement of sight-lines at junctions and re-alignment of road bends, bridge repairs
- Drainage works
- Flashing amber lights at schools
- Road safety.

Discretionary Maintenance Grant

A grant of €752,000 was provided for the general maintenance of regional roads in the County. This provided for pavement maintenance, road markings, drainage and signage maintenance.

Class II and III Roads

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG) allocated a grant of €151,000 for improvement of these classes of roads. 6.58km of road was improved with this grant.

In addition to the DOEHLG grant, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs allocated a grant of €387,784 for the improvement of Class II and III roads and for the provision of amber flashing lights at schools.

- 17.2km of Class II and III road was improved
- Amber flashing lights were erected at Coola and Kilmactranny N.S

Clár/Coillte Grants

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Coillte Teoranta allocated a grant of €17,500 for the Restoration Improvement Scheme at Local Road L7105 at Castleal. 1.1km of road was improved with this grant.

Accident Remedial Schemes

A grant of €88,000 was allocated under this scheme and work was undertaken at:-

- L2302 - Corkamore
- L7309/7316 - Ballinvoher
- R290 - Collooney
- R294 - Tubbercurry - Lough Tait County boundary.

Local Improvement Schemes

The DOEHLG allocates a grant for the improvement of non-public roads, which benefit two or more landowners, engaged in separate agricultural activities. The beneficiaries of a scheme must contribute towards it – 10% for a scheme estimated to cost less than €25,393 and 15% in excess of this figure.

The DOEHLG grant allocated in 2005 was €483,219 enabling 28 schemes to be carried out.

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs also provided a grant of €346,205 for Local Improvement Schemes in CLÁR areas. This enabled a further 26 schemes to be undertaken.

BRIDGE RESTORATION AND REPAIRS

During spring 2005 amid routine bridge inspections, the condition of Arnabrack Bridge was noted and was such as to warrant emergency repairs. The extent of the bed scour and damage was severe and a road closure was necessary. The option of complete replacement seemed the obvious choice but following discussions with our experienced outdoor staff it was decided that repair and reconstruction of the structure was possible, although difficult. The works involved substantial temporary propping and a carefully planned and executed method of working. Starting from one end of the structure the foundations were underpinned and rebuilt and any portion of missing arch rebuilt thereon. This process was repeated in stages along the structure as far as the upstream portion where the condition was so grave that it was necessary to remove the remnants of the arch and take down the external arch ring (voussoirs) and rebuild an entire portion of the arch.

After rebuilding the arch and new sprandrel, the masonry work was continued and parapets, which had long since disappeared, were re-established on both sides of the road. This work was skilfully carried out by members of Sligo County Councils staff James Conlon (Craftsman), Pat Foley and Thomas Colley, Area Supervisor Michael Haran, Area Engineer Rosie Friel, under the overall direction of Gary Salter SEE. It is estimated that the works were carried out at one third of the likely replacement cost of the structure. This is another example of the quality of direct labour work.



▶ Arnabrack Bridge during restoration



▶ Arnabrack bridge before restoration



▶ New foundations, rebuilt and pointed abutments.



▶ Propping of the arch intrados during restoration

▶ Arnabrack bridge after restoration



BRIDGE RESTORATION AND REPAIRS

AUGHNIS COASTAL PROTECTION WORKS

Progressive landward erosion of the foreshore increased the vulnerability of the old retaining wall supporting County Road 17a. Subsequent northerly storms, coincident with high tides resulted in critical portions of the wall collapsing in September 2005, exposing the road and adjacent dwelling to undermining and damage. Emergency works were required to replace the wall and to re-instate the road. Precast concrete units were designed, fabricated and transported to site. Preparation and site construction works were ably carried out by Sligo County Council staff, under the supervision of Gary Salter. The Council worked in cooperation with the community resulting in a very satisfactory final product. The county road was reopened in November with minimal disruption.

The works included:

- Design of precast retaining/ parapet / protection wall
- Onsite trimming of old walls
- Foundation preparation
- Reinforced concrete integral foundations
- Drainage works
- Road reconstruction and finishing works.

CULLY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT 2005

This two span bridge at Cully, near the village of Curry, spans over the River Mullaghanoe, and is a tributary to the River Moy. The old masonry abutments and centre pier were supporting an old concrete bridge deck, which was in very poor condition. A weight restriction was imposed as a safe guard to users. The old abutments were examined and assessed as being unable to support a new bridge deck. The Structures Section of the Council designed a replacement bridge, comprising reinforced concrete abutments and pier and a new two span concrete integral bridge deck. During construction of the new bridge a temporary route was provided across the river by means of fabricating a steel culvert. Poor ground conditions and rapid rising water levels made these working conditions very difficult. Most of the work was carried out by the Council's outdoor staff including John Cahill and Michael Carroll. The more specialised work was carried out by Dermot Dooney Ltd. The project was funded by a Special Improvement Grant from the Department in 2005.

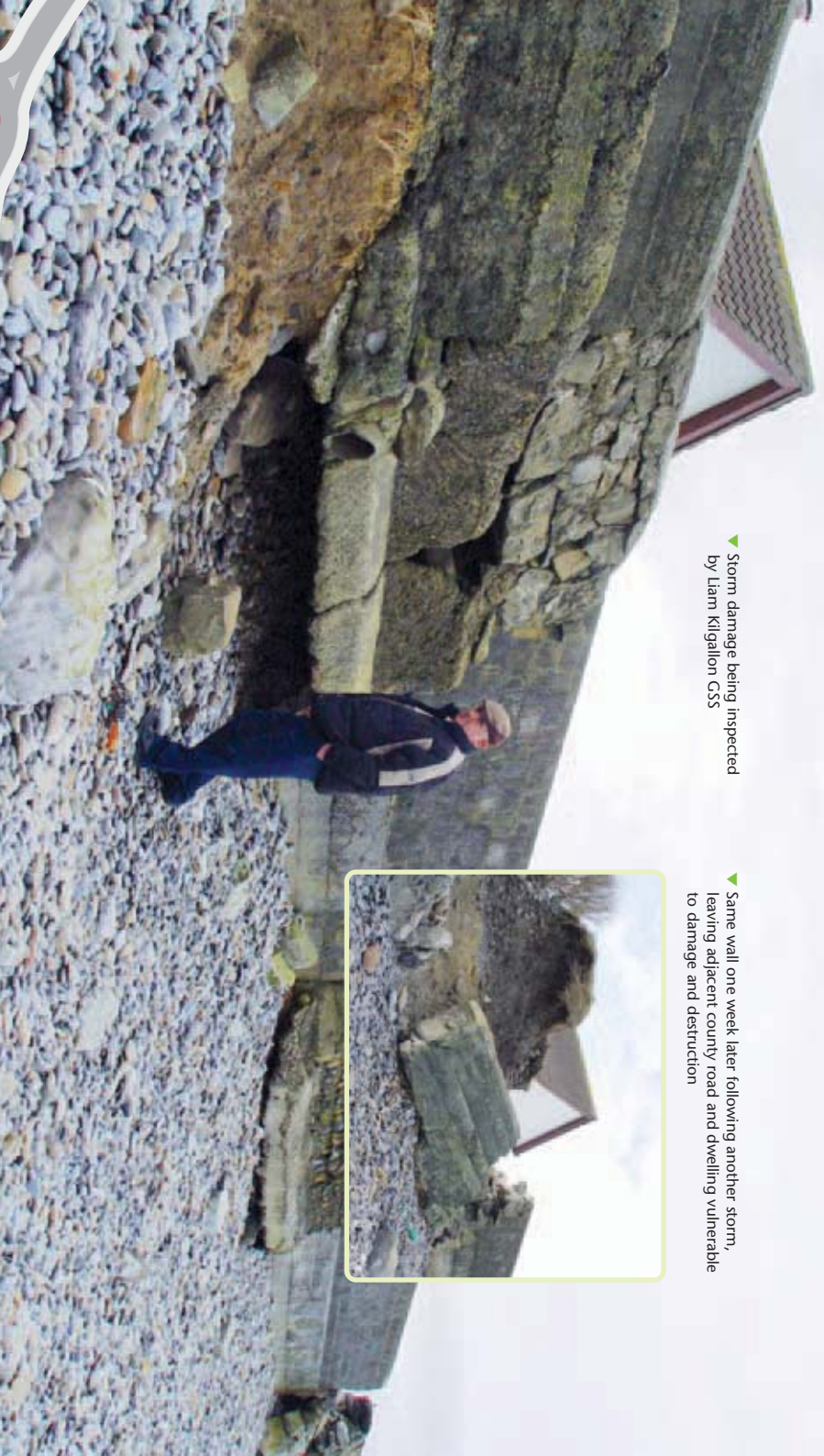
The Council worked in cooperation with the North Western Regional Fisheries Board regarding environmental aspects of this salmon river.



▲ Cully bridge replacement

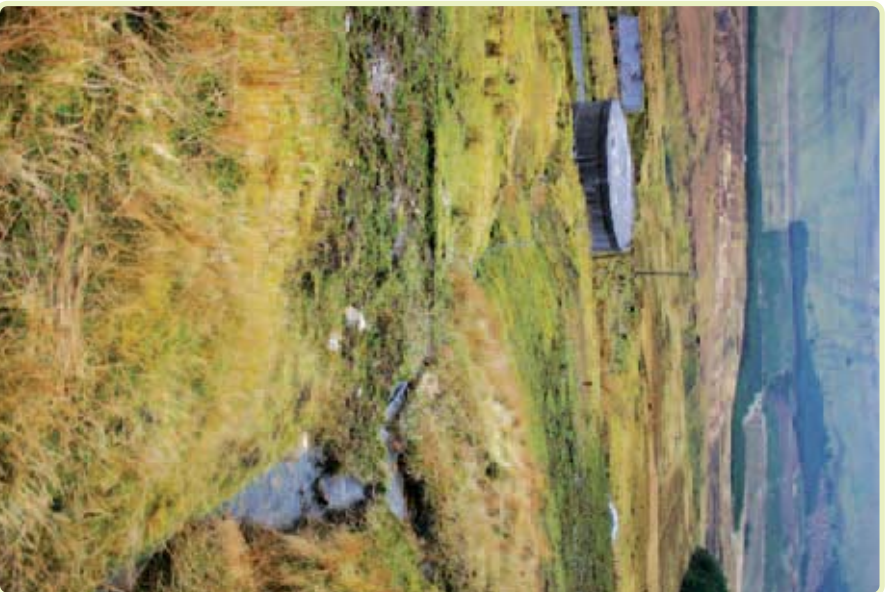
▼ Storm damage being inspected by Liam Kilgallon CSS

▼ Same wall one week later following another storm, leaving adjacent county road and dwelling vulnerable to damage and destruction



SLIGO'S BUSY RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

The current programme of works being delivered under Sligo County Council's Rural Water programme will see twelve Private Group schemes throughout the county benefiting from the construction of new treatment plants, which will deliver a quality water supply that meets EU standards.



▲ Ballinrillick Group Water Scheme

When Sligo County Council embarked on its Rural Water Programme in 1997, it received an allocation of £101,300 for that year. In 2005 this figure had grown to €7 million, which reflects great credit on the people who work tirelessly on this programme. The success of Sligo's Rural Water programme is founded on active partnership among all concerned – Group Scheme Committees, National Federation, Department of the Environment, and of course Sligo County Council.

Cathaoirleach Councillor Barry sees the Rural Water Programme as one of the Council's major 'success stories' in recent times: 'I think the significant levels of funding received by the Department is due acknowledgement for the excellent work being carried out by Sligo County Council and the various Group Scheme Committees on the ground. There is an excellent working relationship between the Council and the local communities; we are all working towards a common objective, the delivery of a good quality water supply that meets the required EU standards.'

1800 houses to benefit

Two 'bundles' of contracts were signed in County Hall in late 2005, with the work to be carried out by Treatment Services Ltd., Kilkenny.

The Schemes included in the 'Northwest Group' are:

- Keelogaboy
- Castletown
- Drum East
- Benbulbin
- Ballinrillick
- Beltra



▲ Ben Bulbin Group Water Scheme

The schemes included in the South East Group are:

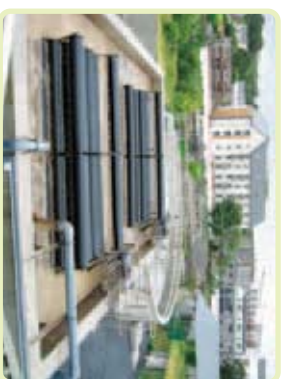
- Geevagh/Highwood
- Culfadda
- Castlebaldwin
- Corrick
- Keash
- Doongeela

When the current programme of work is completed in summer 2006, a quality water supply will be delivered to approximately 1,800 households throughout the county.

PUBLIC SEWERAGE SCHEMES

Sligo County Council has completed new sewerage schemes under the rural water programme at Ballisodare, Cloonacool and Aclare. These works were completed as Design and Build contracts and were awarded following a competitive tender process. Construction completed on Wastewater Treatment Works (WTW) in Dromore West.

This was financed in-house by the County Council and the capital costs recovered from developers who avail of the service.



▲ Public Sewerage Scheme - Ballisodare

WATER SERVICES

COUNTY SLIGO WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

The roll-out of this programme has been very successful in addressing water leaks and wastage. The programme is almost totally grant-financed from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. A new telemetry system was installed in 2005 enabling remote monitoring of reservoir levels, pressures and flows on the water networks throughout the entire county.

SLIGO AND ENVIRONS - WATER SERVICES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Having completed the construction of new trunk lines between Kilsellagh and Farranacardy Reservoir during 2004 and 2005 new pipework was linked to the Reservoir, below Kilsellagh Dam at the Access Culvert in December 2005.

Construction of one of three new intakes at Kilsellagh Dam were carried out as part of the refurbishment programme. The water from Kilsellagh is supplied from three streams - the stream shown is Glackbaun.



▶ Work takes place at Kilsellagh Dam

▶ Glackbaun Stream

CIS DATA CAPTURE PROJECT

The Local Government Computer Services Board in association with Kerry County Council has developed the Complete Information System software for use in Local Authorities throughout the country. Data Capture is carried out by means of a Global Positioning System (GIS) and is funded by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. It is at an advanced stage in Sligo and the water supply element was substantially complete in 2005. It is proposed to continue this work during 2006 with the mapping and validation of wastewater infrastructure in the County.



INTEGRATED SERVICE

The Water Services function for both authorities was combined in the Infrastructural Directorate from January, 2004, and the Council is now giving an integrated service to the borough and county areas.

MAJOR SCHEMES

Construction is due to start in 2006 on Sligo Main Drainage, Wastewater Treatment Works, the largest current Water Services Scheme in the county. The construction of the works is expected to take two years. In addition to catering for the present and future needs of Sligo city, the scheme will also facilitate the development of Carraroe, Rosses Point and Teesan/Lisnalung.

It is planned to go to construction in 2006 on the Enniscrone Sewage Treatment Works. Tenders will be invited also in 2006 for the new Kilsellagh Water Treatment Works, which will cater for Sligo City-North and Environs as well as the Rosses Point Peninsula.

The Council is playing a major role in the development of a number of towns by providing water/wastewater services in such as Aclare, Cloonacool, Ballisdare, Coolaney, Dromore West, Grange, Tubbercurry, Carney and Strandhill.



▶ Public Sewerage Scheme - Cloonacool





▲ CDB members and Staff of Community and Enterprise working on Review of Strategy May 2005
*LR front row – Sharon Boles, Fiona Candon, Sean Tempany, Miriam Scannlan Trill, Jimmy McCarry (Chairman), Míham Kivlehan, Martin Henry, Marian Hargadán Gerry Queenan.
 LR back row – Eamon Haran, Siofra Kivlehan, Bridie Conway, Hubert Keams, Christy McDonaugh, Michael Burke, Cllr. Sean Mac Manus, Michael Quigley, Frank Fox, Hugh Mc Conville, Rita Ann Burke, Tom McGettack, Gerry Mullane, Damien Brennan, Dorothy Clarke*

DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNITY, ENTERPRISE AND THE ARTS

SLIGO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The principal activity of Sligo County Development Board over 2005 was an extensive review of the Integrated Economic, Social and Cultural Strategy 2002-2012 and the development of a three year Action Plan for 2006 to 2008.

The review of the strategy took into account the following developments since its publication in March 2002 - the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), Regional Planning Guidelines, 2002 Census, publishing of Sligo and Environs Plans, County Development Plan and Local Area Plans, Enterprise Ireland's Strategy, Policing Bill, Disability Legislation, establishment of the Regional Drugs Task Force, Joint Ministerial Initiative etc. These have all impacted on the Strategy and it is necessary to update the CDB's objectives and actions in light of these.

The Minister for Environment Heritage and Local Government, Mr Dick Roche, outlined the process which the review should take and Boards were requested to consider their **core co-ordination role** and emphasise in particular the **co-operation and integration** of public sector agencies activities at local level. The process was as follows:

- the selection of a limited number of key priorities and actions which the CDB will concentrate on over the next three years;

- a focus on **integrative actions** aimed at a **more joined-up approach to local service delivery** involving relevant agencies; and
- a clearly defined implementation work programme for 2006 – 2008

The Review has resulted in:

1. Identification of a limited number of key priorities and actions on which the CDB will concentrate over the next three years, with particular reference to achieving the core CDB objective of improved co-ordination of local public service delivery;
2. Identification of key developments at local, regional and national level that have occurred since the Strategies were prepared, and an assessment of their implications;
3. Identification of what has been achieved to date in terms of implementation of the Strategies;
4. Examination of the processes and mechanisms being used to implement and monitor the Strategies;
5. In light of the above, any adjustments needed in terms of priorities and implementation arrangements required for the next three year period, 2006 – 2008 inclusive are now proposed.

SLIGO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Review Process for Sligo CDB was kick-started in early 2005 with a survey of how board members viewed the CDB process to date. The questionnaire was designed to draw out the key strategic and operational concerns of board members before developing its action plan for 2006-2008. All of the existing and former members of the board were invited to participate in the review.

The following is a summary of the main points emerging from the survey:

- The strengths of the Board lie in its **commitment to co-operation, communication and teamwork**
- Operating weaknesses lie in the effectiveness of some of the sub-structures and the need to develop a stronger public profile
- The board identified the need for a more flexible approach to ensure that everyone has a chance to make an effective contribution to meetings
- Keynote speakers on specific topics should be invited to address meetings on priority issues and the CDB should become a forum for debate and discussion
- There is a need to **focus on actions which add-value to the work** of the various organisations on the County Development Board
- Special measures need to be taken to ensure that new members are given adequate support to contribute to the Board
- There is a need for a more focused approach to the monitoring of the CDB strategy
- A need for a **more collective approach to the marketing of Sligo**
- Social Inclusion continues to be a key strategic priority for the Board.

The County Development Board also published its Short-Term Action Plan progress report in January 2005. The following is a summary of the progress in relation to actions in the CDB strategy.

Sligo's CDB Short Term Action Progress Report 2002-2005

Progress Report	Infrastructure	Social Inclusion	Living Culture
No. of actions implemented	19	28	11
No. of actions progressing	11	12	9
No. of actions ongoing	12	14	6
No. of actions that will not be implemented	5	9	0

Review Workshop May 2005

Sligo CDB held a two day review Work Shop in May 2005 to assess progress of activities and to prioritise areas for specific inclusion in the three year Action Plan. This Work Shop was facilitated by an independent facilitator.

Priorities for 2006-2008

The following priorities were identified for the County Development Board:

1. **Delivering on Gateway for Sligo**
2. **Rural Development Strategy**
3. **Social Inclusion and Equality**
4. **Childcare**
5. **Public Safety**
6. **Play & Recreation Strategy**

The action plan in relation to each of these priority areas was approved in principle by the County Development Board in December 2005. Working groups have been established to devise specific actions under each of these priorities. These working groups will oversee the implementation of the actions.

Other Activities of the County Development Board 2005:

- Endorsement of the following Local Development Plans
- Sligo Leader Partnership Social Inclusion Programme
- Sligo County Childcare Committee Annual Action Plan
- Community of Lough Arrow Social Project Bi-Annual Action Plan (CLASP)
- Sligo Northside Local Development Plan
- Submission to Minister for Communications, Marine & Natural Resources on Regional Broadband Programme
- Submission to Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism in relation to special designation for the Model Niliand collection in relation to tax incentives for donations to the collection in recognition of the importance of regional collections
- Submission of proposals for Cohesion Funding 2005 to Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Submission of proposal on behalf of Sligo Volunteer Bureau for funding under the Cohesion Measures
- Facilitation of Sligo Comhairle na nÓg
- Development of an Integrated Working Group for Tubbercurry
- Economic Development Project for Tubbercurry and Enniscrone
- Participation in Regional Infrastructure Group with Leitrim, Donegal County Development Boards
- Participation on submission on Upper Shannon Rural Renewal Scheme Tax Incentive to include supports for business expansion, seed capital and expansion of existing scheme to include all rural village
- Establishment of working group on job losses at Saehan Media
- Establishment of working group on Rural Development
- Submission to the Taxi Regulator
- Input into Sligo County Council Draft Litter Management Plan
- Production of two newsletters in April and October 2005.

SLIGO COUNTY COMMUNITY FORUM

After a year of intensive hard work by its voluntary management committee, Sligo County Community Forum is proud to confirm that there are now almost 500 community and voluntary sector groups affiliated, making it the largest representative body for community and voluntary sector groups in the county.

It is estimated that at least 5,000 community activists and volunteers in the county are now linked into the County Community Forum through their organisations affiliation. The Office of Community and Enterprise has provided both advisory and administrative support to the Forum and has developed a number of projects in conjunction with its voluntary management committee.

Representational Activities: Local, Regional and National

The 22 members of the management group have met on a monthly basis throughout 2005 and several subgroups have committed time to specific activities including the production of a newsletter, production of an updated community directory, development of the five area Fora, organising conferences and seminars, recruitment of a subgroup. Forum members have also participated in the County Development Board, four Local Authority Strategic Policy Committees, Sports & Recreation Partnership, County Childcare Committee, County Heritage Forum, Regional Drugs Taskforce, Play Advisory Forum, Social Inclusion Measures group and PEACE II Taskforce. Two members of the Sligo Forum were elected to the executive of the National Forum and ensure that the local forum is up-to-date on events at national level.

Strategic Planning Session

In early February 2005 the Forum Management Committee held a think in residential to re prioritize goals and actions for 2005/2006. A work plan was devised detailing a series of actions to be undertaken. The Forum also reviewed its representation particularly in relation to the social inclusion cluster/sectoral interests and set about ensuring that, in addition to Traveller and Disability Group representatives, the management committee would include representatives from youth groups, groups supporting refugees and asylum seekers and older persons groups. Following on this, representatives were sought from Sligo Youth Platform, Diversity Sligo and the Older Persons Parliament (who nominated a representative from local active age groups).

Forum representatives also took an active part in an event organised to review the County Development Board Strategy in May and ensured that a number of the issues identified at their own residential were included in the Strategy most significantly rural development, childcare, social inclusion and amenities for young people.

Research, Seminars and Training

The Forum in partnership with the Office of Community and Enterprise and the County Development Board has conducted an inventory of the community and voluntary sector in the county. Information was collated on general activities; sectors and areas; the level and nature of volunteerism, the main sources of funding etc. This database was complete in 2005 and the findings are currently being analyzed for publication in early 2006.

In April the Forum hosted a very successful seminar entitled Securing Fairness and Well-Being in a Land of Plenty in the Sligo Park Hotel to promote awareness of social inclusion in the county amongst community and voluntary sector activists. Those present were addressed by Fr Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds of the CORI Justice Commission.

Two members of the Forum are currently participating in the ICBAN (Irish Central Border Corridor Network -Cross Border Body) initiative joining up Development Programme. This is a year long programme examining strategic issues of relevance to policy makers in the ICBAN region.

A newsletter was produced by the management committee in August demonstrating some of their activities.

Establishment of Area Forum: Creating Community Power through Knowledge and Information Project

In August the Forum, with the support of the Office of Community and Enterprise commenced an intensive project in order to improve communications between local areas community groups and the management group of the County Community Forum.

From September to December 2005 over 20 area Fora meetings were held in the five electoral areas of the County. Funding was accessed under Peace II's Active Citizenship measure to build the capacity of the area foras to participate in policy- making locally, regionally and nationally. This work was guided by a steering committee made up of Forum representatives from each electoral area and the Office of Community and Enterprise. The priority for 2006 is to develop these structures.

SLIGO COMMUNITY FORUM / SLIGO SOCIAL INCLUSION MEASURES GROUP

Recruitment of Worker

The recruitment process for the Community Forum Support Worker commenced at the end of September 2005. The worker will be part-time and is employed by Sligo County Council and managed by a steering committee made up of the Community Forum and Sligo County Council.



▲ Members for Sligo County Community Forum and Staff from the Office of Community and Enterprise (C&E) January 2005.
L-R Front Row - Paddy Sexton, Roisin Mc Clone, Gerry Creamer, Fiona Dunleavy, Lary Mullin.
L-R Back Row - Stofra Kitchellen (Community & Enterprise), Rita Ann Burke, Tom McGeethrick (Chair), Sharon Boles, Des Caraway, Clodhna Carroll, Sean Callagher, Neasa Cotter (Policy Worker), Brendan Queenan

Community and Voluntary Sector Research Project

The findings of research into the community and voluntary groups in County Sligo reveals a very vibrant sector engaged in a very broad range of activities ranging from community development, youth work, sports and recreation, arts and culture, heritage, enterprise development, support for the elderly, environmental and numerous other activities. The research, commissioned by the Directorate of Community and Enterprise, was aimed at supporting the County Community Forum to obtain a current profile of the sector with a view to publishing a directory of active groups in the County. Meehan and Tully and Associates conducted an extensive survey of groups in the county from the months of July 2005 to December 2005 under the direction of a steering committee. Preliminary analysis of findings based on the returns of 493 eligible groups revealed the following characteristics.

1. The sector has generated job opportunities in the County providing employment for 1391 people or almost 6% of the current population at work. This figure obviously does not reflect the amount of voluntary workers engaged in community and voluntary sector activities.
2. There are very few co-operatives or trusts in the sector. The majority of organisations are associations or committees (72%) and only 24% are limited companies.
3. The majority of groups (77%) hold an annual general meeting and over half have a constitution.
4. There are significant numbers of people in the County involved in community and voluntary activity. Most groups have over 16 members with 14% or 65 groups

- having over 100 members plus. Some respondents were unsure of the total membership. Boards of management generally comprised 1-10 members.
5. The age profile of the sector and in particular the Boards of Management is heavily weighted in favour of the 41-64 age-group - only 5% of groups reported having persons under 21 involved in boards of management. 26% reported having people over 65 involved.
 6. When asked to indicate which electoral area the group was located in the breakdown was as follows: Dromore 48 groups; Ballymote 114 groups; Tubbercurry 52 groups; Sligo/Strandhill 132 groups; Sligo/Drumcliffe 119 groups.
 7. Funding is sourced in the following ways: fund raising (54%); local state bodies (27%); voluntary contributions (27%); membership fees (23%). Significantly only 5% or 24 groups reported accessing EU funding.
 8. 24% of groups stated that they are /have been involved in cross border activity.
 9. 77% of groups stated that they would like to recruit more volunteers and would utilise the services of a volunteer centre to recruit volunteers and receive training and support. Currently 15% of groups have a volunteer policy.

A directory with details of all of the groups will be published in 2006. Funding to complete this project has been received from the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs Cohesion Fund and Sligo Leader Partnership.

SLIGO SOCIAL INCLUSION MEASURES GROUP (SIM)

The Sligo Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) group is a sub committee of the County Development Board set up to co-ordinate social inclusion activity in the county. This Committee is facilitated by the Office of Community and Enterprise and aims to ensure that all local plans to address education, employment, welfare, accommodation, personal & community development, crime and health are co-ordinated in order to ensure positive outcomes for both individuals and the communities they live in. The group also develops integrated plans to respond to the needs of specific groups in society who are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion.

Agencies participating in Social Inclusion Measure (SIM)

FAS, Department of Social and Family Affairs, Sligo Leader Partnership Company, Department of Education and Science, Health Services Executive, County Childcare Committee, VEC, Gardai, Sligo Education Centre, RAPID programme, Sligo County Council, Teagasc, Peace II, Regional Drugs Taskforce, Comhairle, Sligo Community Forum and the Probation and Welfare Service.



SLIGO SOCIAL INCLUSION MEASURES GROUP

Activities 2005

During 2005 the SIM group held five meetings, the focus of which was to ensure that service providers are aware of each other's plans, policies and programmes and that these are co-ordinated to eliminate duplications in service provision and maximise opportunities for synergy. Specific activities include:

1. Developing and monitoring a three year Integrated Plan targeting marginalised single men in rural County Sligo (piloting West Sligo in 2005). Previously there was no agency in the County with a remit for this group despite the high levels of ill health, poor accommodation, poverty, under employment, literacy difficulties and isolation. In developing the plan the SIM group identified clear roles for the various agencies in relation to community development, research, consultation, information dissemination, employment, accommodation and education and health.
2. Advising the County Development Board in relation to the endorsement of local and community plans.
3. Monitoring the RAPID programme.
4. Monitoring and reviewing the County Development Board Strategy 2002-2012.
5. Advisory role to CDB on 2006-2008 Action Plan.
6. Advising on submission to the Cohesion Fund.
7. Agreeing on a template for equality proofing.

Developing Opportunities for Play and Recreation in 2005

Dromore West playground opened to the public in May 2005. Its location adjacent to the community centre in the heart of the village makes it an attractive amenity for children and parents in the surrounding area. The equipment was chosen in line with EU best practice guidelines and the design was based on the outcome of a consultation with local children and the local Playground Committee. This project represents a positive example of a successful partnership between Sligo County Council, the Dromore West Community Council, the local community, the National Children's Office and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Funding was also secured under the National Disability Strategy to develop and improve facilities for people with mobility difficulties at Mitchell Curley Park and Hillside Adventure Park in Sligo City.

Playground Grant Scheme 2005

The Playground Grant Scheme in June 2005 organised by the Office of Community, Enterprise and Arts highlighted a significant demand for community based play facilities around the County. This scheme was developed in response to the DOEHLG's scheme to provide €60,000 to each Local Authority to encourage the development of community based play facilities. This was match funded by Sligo County Council as part of an initiative to encourage Community/Local Authority partnerships as regards the provision of community facilities.

Submissions were received from Riverstown, Coolaney, Tubbercurry, Skreen-Dromard, Geevagh, St Cecilia's School and Enniscrone. A further seven groups who are planning to develop play facilities over the coming years were also in contact.

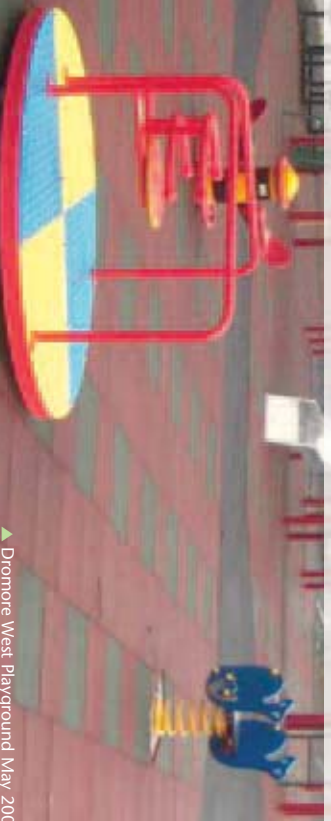
Projects were assessed according to certain criteria including accessibility, safety, community involvement, local contribution, proven demand and consultation with children. It was agreed to support one major play development project (Riverstown) and refurbish an existing playground (Tubbercurry) in 2005.

PLAY POLICY

Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council have recently come together to develop a play policy for the County. A play policy is considered necessary for the following reasons:

- To outline the Local Authorities role in relation to the development of play opportunities in the County through a range of local authority services including planning, arts, community, parks, environment etc.
- To ensure consistency and quality in the provision of play facilities.
- To engage local communities in the development of play opportunities.
- To provide clarity regarding joint management arrangements between communities and local authorities, covering issues of safety, litigation, insurance and funding.

The policy is currently at draft stage and will be presented to both authorities in 2006.



▲ Dromore West Playground May 2005

CIVIC PRIDE AWARDS / OMAGH-SLIGO PARTNERSHIP

GROUPS SHOWCASE LOCAL AREAS FOR CIVIC PRIDE AWARDS

The Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place Competition is a regional / area specific competition which celebrates and showcases community group activities and contributions to society.



▲ Belfast Crystal Trophy awarded to Cranmore Community for Outstanding Estate Management



▲ Sr. Teresa Kilcourse, Phyllis Ridley, Hazel Flynn, Phyllis Barber from Cranmore receiving their prize with Maura Hegarty (Liaison Officer, Sligo County Council).

▲ Phyllis Barber, Phyllis Ridley, Romano Flynn, Hazel Flynn, James Fox, Marie Brennan (Development Worker), Oisín Ceithins and Sr. Teresa Kilcourse (RAAPD Representative) Members of Cranmore Community who travelled to Belfast for the Pride of Place Awards in October, 2005.



It focuses on people coming together to shape, change and enjoy all that is good about

their local area. The emphasis is therefore on how communities interact together to improve local area thereby creating and restoring pride in the area. Too often, the tremendous time and effort that people put into community activities on a purely voluntary basis is overlooked. This competition is unique in that it recognises and rewards people for their vital contributions to their local community.

Sligo County Council joined with Sligo Borough Council for the second year to select three groups to represent Sligo town and County in the Co-operation All-Ireland Pride of Place Competition, the groups nominated for their civic pride initiatives were:

Category 1 (population up to 1,000): Maugherow Intergenerational Project

Category 2 (population between 1,000 and 2,000)

Ballymote Community & Enterprise Ltd

Category 3 (population between 2,000 and 10,000) Cranmore Community Platform

Judging for the National competition took place in June 2005, each group prepared a varied itinerary which included presentations, group discussions, walking tours, visual display of work projects etc. which allowed groups to

showcase the enhancement works undertaken and highlight the level of commitment of the local community who came out in force to support the event.

The National Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place Awards took place in Belfast City Hall on 26 October 2005 and Sligo achieved success again this year with Cranmore Community winning a special award in recognition of its outstanding work in the area of estate management.

THE OMAGH-SLIGO PARTNERSHIP

The Omagh-Sligo Partnership was created in 1995, initially as a Partnership between the Local Authorities in Sligo and Omagh. It has now developed and expanded its membership to include enterprise bodies both sides of the border, communities (rural and urban) and education sporting bodies.

The counties of Omagh and Sligo share many of the same economic and social issues and the Partnership has adopted a joint approach to addressing common problems. The Omagh/Sligo Partnership received funding from Co-operation Ireland to oversee a project to the value of €156,600 under measure 5.1 (Increasing Cross-Border Economic Development Opportunities).

Developments in the political and economic climate on the Island of Ireland have created new opportunities for cross-border co-operation. Within this climate the Omagh-Sligo Partnership acts as a facilitator, deliverer and initiator of cross-border development opportunities and initiatives.

The Omagh-Sligo Partnership is involved in the implementation of projects relating to several themes including enterprise and economic development, community development and exchanges and innovation in cross-border development.

Projects funded include:

Cross Border Drumming

An exchange took place between MUCAT (Mid Ulster Arts and Community Trust) and MUSAIQ. Members of both groups participated in an 8 week programme in Sligo. All participants learnt the same music and came together with the Samba Band from Sligo to participate in the Omagh mid Summer carnival in June playing Samba Drumming.

Cross Border Exchange Project

Members of Omagh Community Support Forum and Sligo Community Forum have developed a cross border exchange to work together to strengthen local communities. Their aim is to work together and promote capacity building to communities in both Sligo and Omagh.

Omagh/Sligo Regeneration Project

A very successful exchange has developed between Culmore and O Kane Park (Omagh) and Cranmore Community Association (Sligo). These two groups together have participated in workshops exploring common issues.



OMAGH-SLIGO PARTNERSHIP / TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE / TIDY TOWNS 2005

Cross Border Economic Project

The Partnership was successful in securing funding for a programme aimed at looking at environmental and energy efficiency in SMEs located in Omagh and Sligo.

The learning programme was supported by the Sligo County Enterprise Board and Sustainable Energy Ireland.

Under the programme twenty companies were audited and recommendation made to each of them on how to improve their energy and general environmental efficiency.

Cross Border Ethnic Minority Information Evening

The Omagh-Sligo Partnership in association with Omagh Ethnic Community Support Group, Sligo Ethnic Support Group and the Omagh District Council Community Relations Department held the first of two Ethnic Information Evenings in November in Omagh Leisure Centre. The evening was well represented by organisations from the community, voluntary and statutory sector who provided information on public safety, health, council services and leisure activities. The seminar attracted migrant workers from the Polish, Russian, Slovakian and Lithuanian communities. The second information seminar is to be held during March in Sligo.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

The Sligo Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) project was completed in late 2005. This project involved the placing of ducting and fibre optic cabling within the metropolitan area, 25 km of network was provided around Sligo and its environs. This facility will meet the business demands into the future and will provide a platform for the further expansion of existing businesses whilst being a key element in attracting new business to Sligo. The total cost of the network was €4.6m with the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR) providing €3.9m and the Council providing the balance. The MAN network will reduce the need for service providers to install their own ducting infrastructure, as they will operate on a process of open access. The Sligo MAN has now been handed over to E-Net, a company who were

awarded the concession by the DCMNR to manage, maintain and operate all the Metropolitan Area Networks on behalf of the state.

The County and Group Broadband Scheme was launched by the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources in 2004. An information event was organised in Sligo aimed at outlining the key elements of the scheme and stimulating the interest of local community groups and the business sector in rolling out broadband in the County. The roll out of Broadband in County Sligo is seen as a key element to stimulating and sustaining economic and enterprise development in the County and is a priority in Sligo's County Development Board's Strategy 2002-2012. In September 2005, the Strandhill, Ransboro, Ballisodare and Rosses Point areas were connected to the service; with Collooney and Ballygawley due to be connected in early 2006.

TIDY TOWNS 2005

The Tidy Towns Competition is run by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and has been sponsored by SuperValu since 1992. In November 2005, Mr Batt O Keefe, T.D., Minister for State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government presented prizes to North West Award winners at a special ceremony in Sligo.

County Awards

Best Town/Village in the county

Coolaney once again has received the award for securing the highest mark in the county. *Ballintogher* and *Riverstown* were highly commended.

SuperValu Endeavour Award

This award has been presented to *Ballintogher* to recognise the town or village in each County, which has made the greatest improvement on its performance over last year. The local groups who carry out the work in each village are extremely committed to the betterment of their area and to assist them with their efforts Sligo County Council have provided a fund under the Community & Voluntary Grants Scheme.

The overall results of towns and villages throughout Sligo were:

Category	Population	Town / Village	2004	2005	% Increase
A	200 or less	Ballintogher Banada-Tourlestrane Carney Coolaney Mullaghmore	230 178 222 240 205	237 176 226 243 203	3.04 -1.13 1.80 1.25 -0.98
B	201-1000	Collooney Enniscrone Grange Riverstown	173 195 213 229	171 198 218 234	-1.16 1.99 2.34 2.18
C	1001-2500	Ballymote Ballisodare	196 215	197 218	0.51 1.39
F	10,001 and over	Sligo	205	199	-3.00

TIDY TOWNS 2004 / COUNTY COUNCIL LED PEACE II TASK FORCE / BURIAL GROUNDS

Urban & Village Renewal

This is part of a six year programme; the overall allocation of funds for the year 2005 was €426,200. This money was divided equally between three chosen villages and a project in the Borough Council. The three County projects were at Strandhill, Bunninadden and Aclare.

Objectives:

- Liaise with the local community regarding the enhancement of the village.
- Improve existing facilities or provide new facilities where necessary i.e. paving under grounding of lighting cables, car parking, picnic areas etc.
- Achieve an increase in the Tidy Towns mark.

Meetings were arranged with the local communities i.e. Tidy Towns Committees, Community Development Associations and local public representatives to collaborate in the production of a project. The work formed part of an overall plan for each village.

2005 Programme

Strandhill

The open public ground opposite the Strand Bar was identified as a priority, together with improvements to the promenade including low level lighting to the sea wall. Landscaping work took place at the Sligo Road entrance and within the village.

Bunninadden

The local development committee's needs in the village were prioritised. Footpaths in the area of Gormley Villas to the village together with environmental improvements were prioritised.

Aclare

A major issue identified by the Aclare Community Council was the open space area adjoining the river. Major environmental works were carried out to this area of the village.

COUNTY COUNCIL LED

PEACE II TASK FORCE

MEASURE 3.3, 3.4 & 4.2a



The programme is of major benefit to community groups throughout the County. On many of the Peace II projects there is multi-agency involvement such as FAS, Leader, County Enterprise Board, Community Forum etc. Effective interaction with these agencies negates duplication and maximises funding potential for projects.

Blue Raincoat Project

Peace II Task Force supports the cross-border arts & disability module of *Cairde* – an annual festival which celebrates diversity and aims to promote social inclusion. This funding assists to set up multi-disciplinary workshops for performance groups with special needs from the border regions. In the past, workshops have been facilitated by Heart'n'soul, UK and Area 4art collective in Sligo. Future potential groups include Graeae Theatre Company & Amici Dance, both based in the UK and Ramba Zamba Theatre Company; all of these groups specialise in inclusive arts

The module also facilitates performance exchange between border groups; in particular Stage Beyond Theatre Company (Derry) and Footsteps Theatre Company (Sligo)

PEACE II Extension

An extension to the programme was announced during the year, with additional funding of €1,033,000 being provided to the Sligo Task Force.

BURIAL GROUNDS

In 2004/2005 a review was undertaken by the Office of Community & Enterprise which examined the Council's current role in the provision and maintenance of burial grounds in County Sligo.

It was evident from this process that a more structured approach was needed in the form of a *policy* which would form the basis for any future burial ground work programmes. During 2005, this policy was devised and focused on a number of key issues:

- Condition of all Council controlled burial grounds
- Current level of plot space available
- State of buildings/structures in burial grounds

The policy identified the following 10 burial grounds which require urgent action:

Ahamlish (Grange)	Keelogues (Ballinrillick)
Knockbrack (Culfadda)	Carrigans (Maugherow)
Killery (Ballintogher)	Court Abbey (Achonyr)
Kilmacowen (Dromard)	Mount Irwin (Easkey)

The Policy also makes recommendations regarding the future role for the Council and the community in the provision of burial grounds. The Burial Ground Policy 2006-2010 will be presented to the Council in early 2006 for adoption and it is hoped to commence a programme of works in these locations on a phased basis throughout the life of the policy document.

The fund is targeted primarily under three measures, 'Building better Communities', 'Improving our Rural Communities' and 'Marketing the Area as a Tourism Destination'. Under these measures funding is provided for a wide variety of projects that enhance and regenerate rural areas, encourage economic growth and protect the cultural diversity and heritage of the rural areas involved and satisfy the criteria for the County Development Board's 10 year Strategy.



SLIGO RAPID PROGRAMME

RAPID (Revitalising Areas Through Planning Investment & Development) is a Government initiative that targets 45 disadvantaged urban areas in the country. Sligo town has 5 designated RAPID Areas – **Cranmore, Forthill Estate/Cartron Estate, Garavogue Villas/Doorly Park, St Josephs Terrace, St Bridget's Place/Pilkington Terrace, Maugheraboy/Jinks Avenue/Tracey Avenue.**

The RAPID Programme aims to:

- Increase the investment made by Government Departments and state agencies in the 45 communities;
- Improve the delivery of public services through integration and coordination.
- Enhance the opportunities for communities to participate in the strategic improvement of their areas.

The programme is implemented locally by an AIT (Area Implementation Team) consisting of representatives from key agencies and co-ordinated by the RAPID Programme Co-ordinator. The Programme is monitored by SIM (Social Inclusion Measure Group) at a county level and at national level the NMC (National Monitoring Committee) chaired by Minister Éamon Ó Cúiv.

Vision of Sligo RAPID Programme Area Implementation Team

"To work together with a common purpose to eliminate disadvantage within the five RAPID areas of Sligo Town"



Sligo RAPID Programme – 2004

The RAPID Programme is in existence in Sligo town since 2002 and once again 2005 proved to be another busy year for the RAPID Area Implementation Team in relation to accessing additional funding and ensuring priority be given to targeting investment and resources that benefit the RAPID designated communities and areas. The primary focus in 2005 was on the provision of play and recreation facilities, childcare facilities, renovation of existing community centres, services to the youth, estate regeneration, and initiatives targeted at reducing anti-social behaviour. A number of interesting projects were undertaken including a RAPID video project showcasing best practice in relation to different approaches and focuses taken around the country to the development of a range of projects addressing community needs as identified by the RAPID Programme areas. The Video Project was undertaken in association with the RAPID areas of Tuam, Galway, Ballinasloe, Cavan, Navan, Longford and Ennis. The Cranmore Regeneration Project was selected in Sligo featuring the community's experience to date in participating in the Cranmore Regeneration Project and the Cranmore Community Platform structure and remit. The video was shown to the RAPID National Monitoring Committee in June 2005.

The RAPID AIT's role and remit was once again strengthened in 2005 in relation to their endorsement and involvement in the development of Sports Capital funding, CCTV funding, Estate Enhancement funding, Traffic Calming measures, and Playground facilities. Their role in Dormant Accounts was further enhanced through the Dormant Accounts legislation. Dormant Accounts has proved to be a valuable source of funds for projects that impact directly on the Sligo RAPID areas with an investment of over €740,366 from Dormant Accounts in 2004/2005.

Dream Chasers Community Playgroup Committee is a community led project based in the Merville, Maugheraboy RAPID area of Sligo Town. Funding of €743,000 has been allocated to this project by the Dept of Justice Equality & Law Reform under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Funding. The existing Centre will be fully renovated and will provide a range of childcare services including afternoon sessional service, full school aged curriculum, and 2 morning sessional services for pre school children. The service when completed will provide 87 part time childcare

SLIGO RAPID PROGRAMME / SLIGO VOLUNTEER BUREAU / VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

places and employ 5 full time staff and 4 part time staff. In total €1.45m was invested in Childcare facilities in RAPID areas in the past year.

The Equal IT project aims to develop and implement an ambitious digital inclusion initiative at community level in five selected RAPID areas – Sligo, Navan, Clondalkin, Finglas, and Dublin Northside. The objective is to enable *'any woman living in the five participating RAPID areas'* especially those most marginalised to acquire the IT skills necessary to participate in the ever increasing information society and to benefit from the range of social and economic opportunities new technology provides. Each participant is assisted to achieve an *e-citizen* award. Approximately 120 women are expected to participate in the Sligo Programme.

RAPID Leverage Funding: A number of Leverage Funding schemes have been put in place by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs in partnership with both National and local agencies for each of the designated RAPID Areas throughout the Country in 2005. Sligo benefitted from these schemes in the following areas:

- **RAPID Local Authority Estate Enhancement Scheme:** Funding was provided to support small-scale capital works to enhance the physical environment within local authority housing estates and flat complexes in RAPID areas. One allocation of this funding is being spent on the clearing and site preparation of the proposed playground located on Devins Drive, Cranmore. The Garavogue area has also benefitted from this fund with the enhancement of the green area approaching the estate including tree planting, lighting, benches and cycle track.

- **Playground Scheme:** Funding was made available to increase the range of public play opportunities available to children in RAPID areas. The funding is being used to develop the proposed playground in Cranmore with matching funding from the Borough Council and the community.



▲ Plans - Proposed Playground Cranmore

- **Traffic Calming Scheme:** Under the RAPID Traffic Measures Scheme 2005, funding was provided to support small-scale capital works to improve road

safety in RAPID Areas. Eligible works included the provision of speed ramps, pedestrian lights, dishing and improvement works on roads and footpaths. A traffic calming scheme was provided in Cartron Estate area where a table top ramp and associated signing was installed.

- **Grants for Community CCTV Systems:** The grants scheme for Community CCTV systems was an initiative announced under the Dept of Justice Equality & Law Reform. Its purpose will be to support local communities who wish to install and maintain CCTV security systems in their area, with the aim of increasing public safety and reducing the risk of anti-social and criminal activity. Under the scheme two successful applications were submitted and the Cranmore & Forthill areas received approximately €200,000.

- **Sports Capital Funding:** The Mercy College received a total of €325,000 to progress the on going development of their multi purpose sports facility. This brings the total amount of funding received by the Mercy College to date to €975,000 a combination of Sports Capital Funding and the RAPID Area Top Up Grant administered through the Dept of Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs.

PLANS ANNOUNCED TO OPEN SLIGO VOLUNTEER BUREAU IN SPRING 2006

What would life in County Sligo be like without the contribution of volunteers? Who would deliver Meals on Wheels? Who would perform in the Christmas pantos? Would there be a County team to cheer for? The landscape of County Sligo would, indeed, be very different if it were not for the many hundreds of people who give their time generously in order to make our community a better place to live.

International Volunteer Day on December 5th was marked for the first time in County Sligo in 2005 with a celebration to mark the immeasurable work of local volunteers. At a special information evening in the Factory Performance Space, volunteer-involving organisations gathered to celebrate International Volunteer Day and learn of plans to establish Sligo Volunteer Bureau. This is a new and important local resource for volunteers and voluntary organisations.

SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL PIONEERS VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The evening was organised by the Sligo Volunteer Advisory Committee which was set up in July 2005 under Sligo's Volunteer Development Programme. This Programme, initiated under an EU Peace II Task Force Measure by the Office of Community & Enterprise, commenced with the appointment of a Volunteer Programme Development Officer in April 2005. The 14 month programme aims to develop a volunteer network for the purpose of harnessing the potential and enthusiasm for volunteering in Sligo and assisting organisations to adopt policies and best practice that will support volunteers in their work. The role of the Sligo Volunteer Advisory Committee is to advise on the direction of the Volunteer Programme and the set up of the Sligo Volunteer Bureau.

COUNTY SLIGO ARTS DEPARTMENT

In 2005 the County Sligo Arts Plan 2002-2005 The Brightening Air was successfully concluded.

The Plan articulated the strategic role of the Sligo Local Authorities both in terms of the Arts Department's programme, and the broader role played by the County Council in supporting artists, arts organisations and arts development generally both directly and indirectly.



▲ The Gleniff Horseshoe Art Project "Twigs and Earth" was facilitated by artist Diane Roemer with the aim of heightening young people's awareness and appreciation of their environment.

2005 saw the final stages of the three-year **Artists in Context** (Theory Into Practice) and the **Arts in New Technologies projects**, creating new opportunities for artists in their professional development. Since 2003, the learning and experience gained from key-note presentations and workshops delivered by specialists in the fields of Arts and Health, Multiculturalism, Education and Disability, highlighted good practice nationally and internationally. The partnership between the Sligo Arts Department and Sligo Leader Partnership Company facilitated artists on the programme to carry out their own arts projects in communities throughout the County. A brochure for the Artists in Context III was published documenting each of the projects and a showcase exhibition, entitled Hands On was held in the Sligo Art Gallery during December.

Each year the Arts Department invests in **grants and bursaries** for arts programs and projects in the County. The call for applications was advertised through the local media in February and the number of applications was up on the previous year. Through the Community Arts Act Grants, the Arts Department assisted 26 artists, arts groups and organisations in both rural and urban areas to use the arts to build their communities. The Arts Project Fund ran for the second time in 2005 and of the 23 very high quality submissions, six were awarded the opportunity to develop and produce a new work or project. A two week residency at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre which is an artist's retreat and workplace was awarded to three local artists to work on their specific projects in the artforms of music, literature and the visual arts.

In November 2005 the Sligo Arts Department launched the comprehensive website www.sligoarts.ie. The website provides information on all artforms in Sligo, to promote and support the ongoing development of arts projects and those who work in the arts. Important features of the website include a guide to what's on in the region, a directory profiling local artists in all artforms and opportunities available to them and a features section which profiles those who work in the arts, and case-studies of projects.

www.sligoarts.ie - the new website for Sligo Arts Department.



Sligo hosted the Irish part of the International Visual Art Project, **Site-actions**, which involved ten artist led groups from across Europe responding to the theme of Sense of Place. After initial visits to Sligo in the spring, the eight selected artists returned in August for three weeks and worked on their projects and chosen sites. There was a series of lunchtime talks and education projects that took place in conjunction with an exhibition of work in the Model Arts and Niland Gallery. The Site-Actions International 2005/06 cycle of events will be completed in June 2006 with a colloquia taking place in Sligo.

Through the **Arts Advisory/Mentoring Scheme** the Arts Department supported the development of voluntary and community writing, amateur drama and the visual arts. The work carried out through the Mentoring Scheme in 2005 produced valuable findings that will be very useful in contributing to the next Arts Plan 2007-2010.

In 2005, the **County Sligo Youth Theatre (CSYT)** members visited both the Galway and Mayo Youth Theatres and developed links and friendships between the groups, sharing ideas as well as working together on group presentations. CSYT were especially proud to host Our Stories / Their Stories in schools and theatre venues as well as a re-run later in the year. Members of the youth theatre worked together with the Sligo Active Age Group, and directed by members of the Blue Raincoat Theatre Company, performed in the summer Cairde Festival in the Factory Performance Space. Ongoing workshops continued

COUNTY SLIGO ARTS DEPARTMENT

with professional practitioners from a wide variety of performance backgrounds, and the Open Day in September resulted in an intake of new members in both the junior and senior youth theatre groups.

The Arts Department continued to produce and advance the **Sligo Events Quarterly**, an arts and cultural listings brochure throughout 2005. This brochure includes events of all cultural venues in the County, a promotion service free of charge to the venues. The **Sligo Arts E-Bulletin** informed a wide and interested audience on a monthly basis of regional arts and cultural news, events and funding opportunities.

In 2005 the Arts & Health Working Group use themed programmes to demonstrate the potential and benefits of a more strategic approach to arts and health work within the Health Services Executive and Local Authorities. Initiated with St. Anne's Youth & Community Centre, the programme expanded to include new groups in Ballymote, Cahy, Easley and Cliffoey. May is the month to celebrate creativity in older age through the national Bealtaine Festival and this festival provides an opportunity for all groups involved to showcase artwork created as part of the annual programme.



▲ Intergenerational Art Project at Abbeyquarter

The **Intergenerational Arts Projects** continued in Abbeyquarter and Maugherow and a team of artists using various art forms delivered creative workshops to older people from the areas together with the teachers and primary school children. The aim was to improve the quality of people's experience of arts in these contexts and the project budgets were expended on Artists Workshop Fees, Art Materials, Outings to local galleries, mounting annual community exhibition of art work and transport costs.

In music, the May Bank Holiday weekend welcomed the **Vogler Spring Festival 2005**. The focus was on Brahms and Schubert alongside lesser known repertoire by Russian composers and included a wide-ranging mixture of the best of Irish and international chamber musicians and singers. As a local partner in the Vogler Quartet in Sligo Residency Programme, Con Brio produced a very successful annual **Sligo Music Series**, including, for example Homage to Hayden concert in January performed by very special guests from Austria. There was also a look at music from Irish composers Elaine Agnew, Deirdre McKay and Ian Wilson and an opportunity to hear the up and coming Young Con Brio.

The programme of work in 2005 for appointed researcher of **The Vogler Partners** Steering Group involved the analysis of the Vogler primary curriculum support programme. The organising partners intend to channel their enhanced understandings of education and local music development into policy and provision at both local and national level. The music development findings produced by this process will be published in a report in 2006.

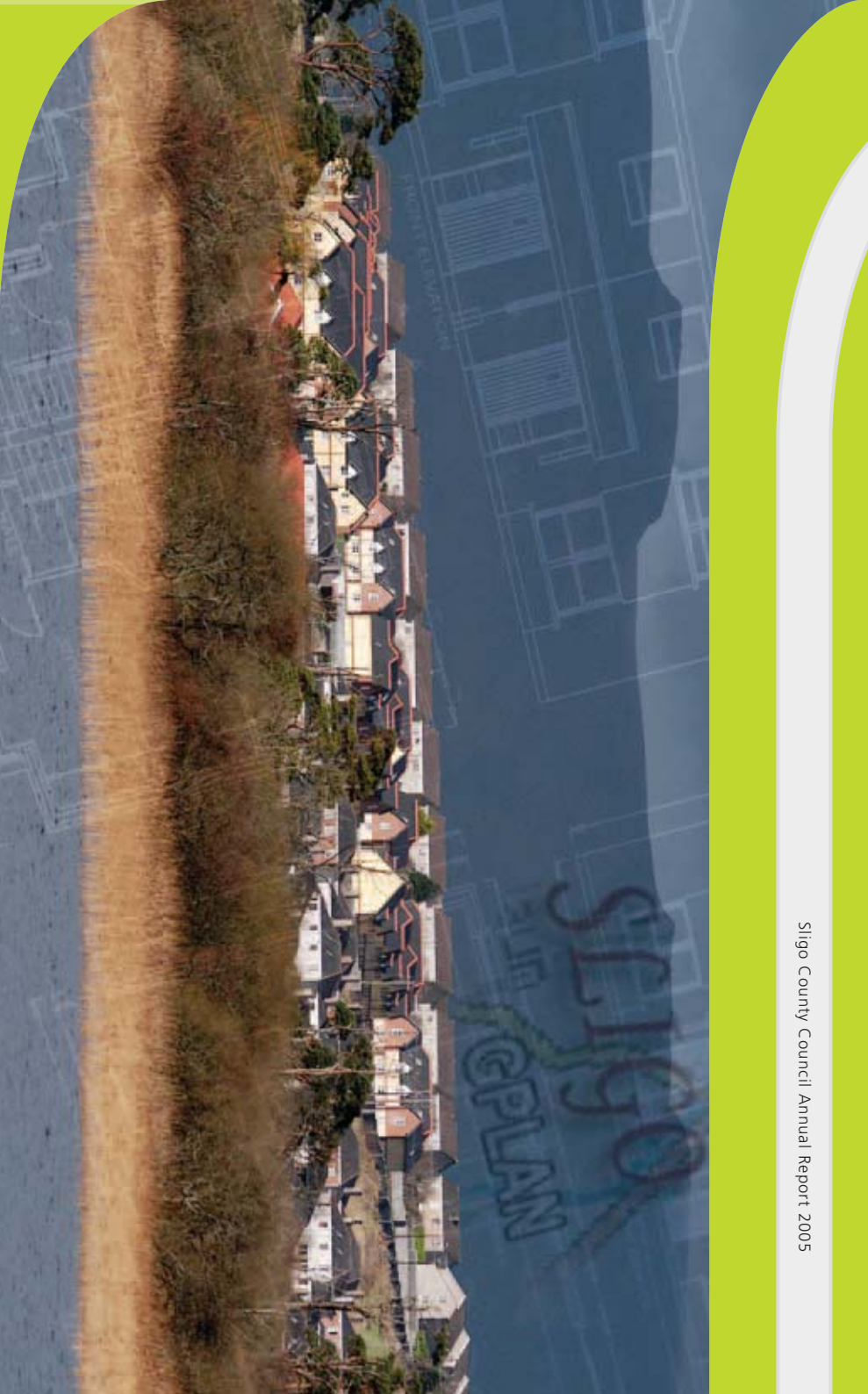
PUBLIC ART

The current series of public art commissions, entitled, **Unraveling Developments** was launched in May by Mayor Declan Bree in City Hall. The ten commissions in the series running from 2004 to 2006 highlight the unprecedented level of capital investment in the infrastructure and housing provision of the Borough and County.

The Per Cent for Art Scheme funded by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government allows the Local Authorities to commission original work from contemporary artists, adding to the impressive collection of art held by the Local Authorities for the public to enjoy.

2005 saw the launch of a CD of Sligo Stories and Songs by commissioned author, Jack Harte in Dromore West. A new music commission by composer, Ian Wilson was launched and aired in public locations in the city in November and over the summer a series of large scale photographs appeared on a billboard in Enniscrone by the artist Dara McGrath. A bronze sculpture by the artist, Elizabeth Caffrey was jointly commissioned with the Grange and District Development Company and was installed in the park in Grange.





PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

During 2005, a total number of 1193 planning applications were received by Sligo County Council which represents a 23% decrease on the number received in 2004, when the 31st December 2004 deadline for the Tax Incentive Schemes promoted an unprecedented level of new applications being submitted. The majority of these applications were determined by the Council within 8 weeks of receipt of the application and the refusal rate was 14%.

The Planning & Development (Draft) Regulations 2004, provides for the introduction of e-planning which will enable Planning Authorities to make planning services available on-line, via e-mail or the Local Authority website. This innovation is a customer focused initiative stemming from the Government's commitment to e-enable Local Authority services. During 2005, Sligo County Council participated in an E-Planning Pilot Scheme sponsored by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. The pilot scheme operated from June-August, when prospective applicants were invited to submit an electronic version of their planning application. A report on the outcome of this pilot scheme has been submitted to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

In anticipation of the introduction of e-planning, Sligo County Council has commenced the practice of scanning planning files and storing the information electronically. It is intended to provide a facility on the Sligo County Council website whereby it will be possible to view planning applications and carry out planning searches. During 2005 a further two seminars were hosted by Sligo County Council for local planning agents. The first of these introduced the E-Planning Pilot Scheme and the second provided information on design, engineering and environmental issues.

The establishment of a Panel of Approved Consultants to carry out site suitability assessments for On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems should result in a reduction in refusal and further information requests in the future relating to this issue.



PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING UNIT (DPU)

The DPU is responsible for drafting, publishing and reviewing planning and development policy for County Sligo as a whole and for individual settlements within the County. This work is done in consultation with the public, elected members, officials, prescribed bodies and relevant interests. The Unit also makes an input to key development proposals and facilitates plan implementation through staff involvement in follow-up meetings with stakeholders and participation in a range of initiatives, at both local and regional level.

Sligo County Development Plan 2005 - 2011

The year was largely devoted to the completion of the County Development Plan, which was brought through the final amendment stage to adoption by the Members on 18 April. The Plan came into force on 16 May and was published in October. *Sligo County Development Plan 2005 – 2011* comprises three separate parts:



1. The *main document* - including an overall strategy, detailed development objectives, development control standards/guidance and Mini-Plans for Ballysadare, Collooney and Grange (also available as individual publications);
2. The *Record of Protected Structures (RPS)* – providing photographs and location details of 253 no. buildings/structures throughout Sligo County;
3. The *Housing Strategy* – a joint County Council/Borough Council strategy for the entire County.

The County Development Plan is the core document for directing physical development and facilitating socio-economic progress in County Sligo. Its policies and objectives are designed to boost competitiveness, respect resources and enhance quality of life. Given the importance and anticipated usage of the Plan, it was a particular priority to ensure that the publications are informative, attractive and user-friendly.

Plans for Regeneration

Two prominent areas in Sligo city area have been identified as needing major regeneration due to their potential environmental blighting effects (vacant and rundown buildings, unkempt adjacent open spaces and lands, contrasts between upgraded buildings and neighbouring buildings in poor repair, etc.). These areas are as follows:

- a) Courthouse Block – the area is bounded by High Street, Castle Street, Teeling Street and Old Market Street. An urban design framework plan was adopted for the area and this framework plan set out clear principles for the future development of the Courthouse Block, including design guidelines on vehicular and pedestrian access, plot amalgamation, heights and frontages of buildings, protection of protected structures, etc. The proposals are consistent with the previous Centre Block Masterplan.
- b) Sligo Docklands – the port and surrounding area was identified in the Sligo and Environs Development Plan as needing urgent attention in order to upgrade the area environmentally and provide development opportunities in line with the requirements of the Gateway City. A report was prepared on the status of the port and key considerations in any transfer of the functions of the Harbour Board to the County Council, as had been mooted by the Department. With the intended transfer due to take place in April 2006, a masterplan of the docklands area will be prepared. This plan will outline possible development blocks, design criteria, access arrangements and future open space, recreation and reclamation lands, etc. Whilst such a masterplan cannot be finalised until longer term projects, such as the western bypass road, are confirmed the masterplan will prove valuable from an indicative viewpoint and continue to build confidence in Sligo as a progressive centre.



PLANNING

Local Area Plans



▲ Ballymote

With the help of our consultants, the National Building Agency, a local area plan was prepared for the town of Ballymote, following a very well-attended pre-draft public consultation meeting in February. The Draft Plan was put on public display in May and the Proposed Amendments in September. The Plan was adopted by the elected members on 5 December 2005 and came into immediate effect.



▲ Tubbercurry

Tubbercurry is the last of the three Key Support Towns for which a local area plan will be put in place and the DPU has already brought the survey and analysis work to an advanced stage. In November, a pre-draft public consultation event was held in the town and written submissions were invited from the public. To raise local awareness and facilitate community feedback, a display of statutory material was mounted in Teach Laighne. The statutory process will commence in 2006 with a view to having the plan adopted within the year.

Mini-Plans

During the life of the County Development Plan, it is proposed to prepare mini-plans for villages experiencing development pressure throughout the County. A mini-plan is relatively quick to prepare, consisting of a simplified zoning map and a set of general objectives. These plans will generally be tackled in groups of three and incorporated into the County Development Plan by means of the statutory variation procedure.

Once Ballysadare, Collooney and Grange Mini-Plans were complete, the DPU's attention turned to Carney, Coolaney and Dromore West, which have been the focus of considerable residential development in recent years. By the end of 2005, the survey/analysis work for these next three mini-plans was complete and pre-draft public consultation events had taken place in all three villages.

From now on, all plans and variations of plans are subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with EU requirements.

Breifne Tourism

The Breifne Tourism Project is an EU-funded, cross-border initiative that has benefited from a DPU time-investment over the past few years. The project is a joint venture involving Cavan, Leitrim, Roscommon and Sligo County Councils, Fermanagh District Council, the University of Ulster and the Geological Surveys of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The aim is to develop the tourism potential of the region under the brand name of *Breifne*. Phase 1 achievements are nearing completion and include a top-class website, a 200-page travel guide and high-quality documentary film showcasing the region.

ENFORCEMENT

Planning Enforcement and Building Control

The main focuses of the Enforcement Section are as follows:

1. Enforcement of planning control
2. Monitoring of housing estates to ensure their satisfactory completion / taking in charge
3. Collection of financial contributions
4. Bonds & Security
5. Building Control
6. Dangerous Structures
7. Derelict Sites

1. Enforcement of Planning Control

Our role in this area involved random inspections of developments in progress, follow-up on planning conditions which have not been complied with, and investigating complaints by the public with regard to unauthorised development.

In the main, most developers are compliant with the planning laws and regulations. In areas where difficulties arise, the Council try and resolve them by discussion. This is in line with the Council's agreed policy for securing compliance. Where issues cannot be resolved by discussions, appropriate enforcement action is taken.

In 2005 the Council investigated 135 complaints; 15 of which were dismissed, with 17 being resolved through negotiations. 147 Warning Letters and 22 Enforcement Notices were served. 2 cases were prosecuted.

The success of the Enforcement Section can be demonstrated by the payment of €61,633 in respect of application fees for planning permission to retain unauthorised development during the year.

PLANNING

2. Monitoring of Housing Estates / Taking in Charge

The policy & procedure for taking in charge of housing estates, adopted by the Council in 2004, is currently being implemented. Many new housing estates are presently under construction and as a result the workload in this area has increased considerably during the year. The activities of the Enforcement Section are geared towards ensuring that these estates are satisfactorily completed and to allow the Council (where the developer or residents desire) to take them in charge.

This will have financial implications for the Council in terms of ongoing maintenance costs in the future. However, the arrangements presently in place should ensure that these estates are completed to a high standard prior to becoming the responsibility of the Council.

3. Collection of Financial Contributions

The Development Contributions Scheme in place will provide the required funding to improve infrastructure throughout the County. In addition, Special Contributions have been levied in respect of some areas where specific exceptional costs not covered by the Scheme are incurred i.e. Coolaney, Dromore West & Carney. The Council works closely with developers to provide this infrastructure with the cost being borne by them.

A system has been put in place to ensure that financial contributions which are levied are paid in accordance with the requirements of planning permissions granted. Where the contribution is not paid, appropriate enforcement action is taken.

4. Bonds & Security

The amount of security required by the Council in order to ensure that estates are completed to a satisfactory standard has recently been increased. This increase was applied on the basis of experience to date in relation to existing developments and in order to ensure that sufficient monies are available in the event of the developer failing to complete an estate to the required standard. The Council requires that adequate security is in place prior to the commencement of development.

5. Building Control

The objective of the Building Control Section is to encourage good building practice, to ensure that buildings are constructed correctly and that access for the disabled and elderly is provided for in building plans. Inspection rates of 15% were achieved in this area during the year. The Council continues to pay particular attention to compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations (which deals with access for people with disabilities). A high level of compliance has been achieved in this area.

6. Dangerous Structures

Two structures were identified by the Council as being dangerous during the past year.

7. Derelict Sites

The Enforcement Section has taken over responsibility for derelict sites. The focus will be on the development of derelict sites rather than simply improving their appearance.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The Environment Section is responsible for a wide range of services spanning three programme groups as outlined below.



Lough Gill, Co. Sligo

Objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan include the protection and improvement of water and air quality in Sligo, and to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. The focus in 2006 will be to introduce and implement measures to achieve these corporate objectives.

Programme Group 5: Environmental Protection

- Waste Management
- Pollution Control
- Blue Flag Beaches
- Water Safety
- Casual Trading
- Environmental Awareness
- Environmental Enforcement
- Litter

Programme Group 7: Agriculture & Education

- Food Safety

Programme Group 8: Miscellaneous

- Control of Dogs
- Control of Horses

WASTE MANAGEMENT

In November 2005, the draft Connaught Waste Management Plan was published and put on public display. This plan re-emphasises the targets to be achieved by 2013 in order to comply with National and EU targets, namely: Recycle 48%, Thermally Treat 33% and Landfill 19%. Although Sligo's recycling rate for household waste has increased from 4% in 2001 to 18% in 2005, further progress is necessary in this area in order to achieve the required targets. As well as household waste, 2005 saw a particular focus on commercial waste and construction and demolition (C&D) waste. These areas were tackled through the provision of infrastructure, environmental awareness and enforcement measures.

Infrastructure

Dry recyclable wastes are catered for at the two recycling centres in Sligo – Tubbercurry, which opened in 2005 and Greenstar (formerly WDS), based at Finisklin in Sligo town. The range of materials accepted at the Recycling Centre in Tubbercurry caters for as large a range of recyclable materials as possible. Small commercial operators are also encouraged to use the site. A separate kerbside collection of dry recyclable materials is available in Sligo town and a large part of the County. It is hoped that early 2006 will see the extension of the dry recyclable collection throughout County Sligo.

Sligo continues to enjoy a high glass-recycling rate with almost 1,100 tonnes of glass recycled in 2005. This equates to the recycling of approximately 3.7 million glass bottles. This glass is recycled via a network of bottle banks in Sligo town and almost all villages in the County. The upgrade of these banks continued to be a priority in 2005. Creating a positive image at all bring bank sites is imperative in encouraging their use but this is proving difficult at some sites due to incidences of illegal dumping. The purchase of mobile surveillance cameras is now being actively pursued for use at these sites with a view to taking legal action against offenders.

Although there are over 20 permitted sites in the County for the recovery of Construction & Demolition (C&D) material, there is no site in operation for the actual recycling of this material. With the current rate of development in Sligo, the need for a C&D recycling facility in the Sligo area is urgent. As well as being the best option environmentally, a C&D recycling facility should reduce the waste management costs for the construction industry.

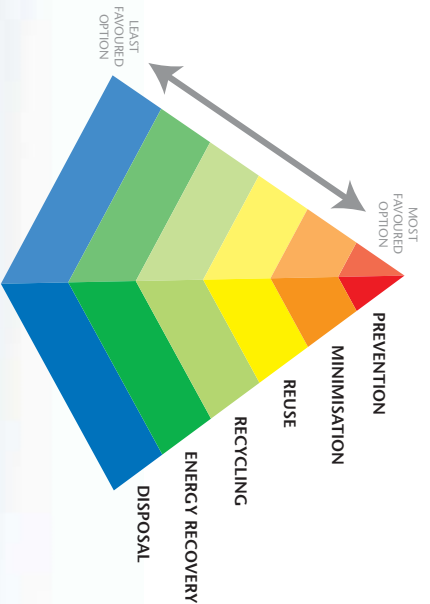
Organic kitchen waste makes up approximately 30% of all household waste generated. Home composting is a positive and simple option to deal with this waste. In 2005, the Environment Section continued to promote the use of

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



home composters and offer them for sale at a subsidised rate. In urban areas that are not suitable for home composting, the ultimate solution is to introduce a third bin for the collection of separated kitchen waste only. In order to do this, a composting or biological treatment facility should be put in place to process this waste.

Green garden waste is a bulky waste fraction that should be diverted from landfill. In 2005 Sligo County Council secured the necessary statutory permissions for a green waste composting facility at Ballisodare, Co Sligo. The provision of this facility shall be advanced with a view to having the facility operational in autumn 2006.



Landfill is the least preferred option in dealing with waste, and is at the bottom of the EU waste hierarchy.

However, landfill is required to deal with the waste that cannot be recycled, composted or thermally treated, which is estimated to be 19% of all waste generated in Connaught. A greater percentage of landfill capacity is required until the necessary infrastructure is put in place to

recycle, compost and in particular thermally treat waste. During 2005 Sligo County Council, in conjunction with the other Connacht Local Authorities, continued to encourage the development of a North Connaught Landfill to deal with this interim waste, and to ultimately deal with the 19% of residual waste by 2013.

Environmental Awareness

It has been widely proven in Europe that education and awareness in waste management best practice is a continuous process. Sligo County Council continued its programmes in this area, which has received significant results to date. Emphasis was placed on waste prevention and minimisation campaigns, along with campaigns to encourage source separation of waste. Encouraging greater use of the two Recycling Centres, Bring Banks, the separate kerbside collection of dry recyclable wastes and the use of home composting was a priority in 2005. Focus was also placed on promoting the WEEE Directive, which came into force on 13th August 2005, and allows householders to bring all waste electrical and electronic goods to the Recycling Centres free of charge.

The Environmental Awareness Officer organised a number of initiatives with community groups and organisations but one of the most successful in 2005 was the Green Schools Campaign. Approximately 100 school visits took place in 2005 focusing on dealing with good waste management practices, the problem of littering along with water and energy conservation themes. The visits are designed to enable schools to link into local waste management services, to inform students of the difficulties with landfilling and of the need to adopt a more sustainable approach to waste. The second primary objective of visits is to equip students with information that will help affect the waste habits of their families. The litter section of the visits includes a presentation on the litter laws, project work (litter pledges, litter audits, school litter patrols, creative activities such as poem writing, poster making) interclass competitions, the litter free challenge etc.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



▲ Be Waste Aware Campaign

During 2005, over 40 schools were involved in the Green Schools Programme. To date Sligo has 18 green flags with another 24 schools currently registered with An Taisce.

Other initiatives which continued in 2005 included: Green Christmas Campaign, anti-litter awareness competitions for community groups and schools and the Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund which helps fund a variety of community based projects on the theme of waste awareness and reduction. The month of April was dedicated to promoting the National Anti-litter Campaign – National Spring Clean in which over 120 groups took part. Tidy Towns Committees shall continue to receive support through the provision of bags, litter pickers and gloves.

The Environmental Awareness Officer uses the local media in the form of radio and newspaper advertisements, press releases, interviews and the Council's website, to promote the campaigns as they arise in all areas of the environment including water quality and pollution control.

Waste Enforcement

Since the Waste Management Act came into being in 1996, a large number of Waste Regulations have followed, covering a wide range of waste management activities. The priorities for Sligo County Council are to ensure that waste is collected by a collector holding a valid waste collection permit for the type of waste they are collecting, and that all waste is transported to an appropriately licensed or permitted facility. There are 152 waste collectors permitted to collect wastes in Sligo ranging from household recyclables to industrial hazardous wastes, and 28 permitted sites, mostly for the recovery of C&D material. During 2005 the Waste Enforcement Officer carried out regular inspections of these facilities and activities as well as any unauthorised facilities or activities that came to the attention of the council. Waste enforcement was a priority in 2005 and this was reflected in the achievements made in the area of illegal waste activity. Approximately 300 inspections were made and over 30 legal notices were served for unauthorised activities.

Other target areas in the waste enforcement area included the illegal burning of waste, the farm plastics levy, and the Packaging Regulations. A particular focus will be placed on the Packaging Regulations in 2006, which require all producers of packaging, from corner shops and pubs to major supermarkets and retail outlets to separate the packaging waste produced on the premises and make it available for separate collection by a recovery operator. The Enforcement team along with the Awareness Officer will work closely with the commercial sector to implement these regulations thus diverting further recyclable waste from landfill.

Waste Presentation By-Laws

In 2005, Sligo County Council adopted Waste Presentation By-Laws which will come into effect on January 01 2006. The purpose of these by-laws is to ensure that waste is presented for collection by the householder where a collection service is available, and to ensure that all waste that is presented for collection is segregated appropriately and does not cause an environmental nuisance. The enforcement of these by-laws in 2006 should reduce the incidences of illegal dumping and burning of waste and also eliminate litter generated by waste presented for collection.

LITTER

The issue of litter continues to be a major challenge. In 2005 activity was increased and particular emphasis was put on the issue of illegal roadside signage, which not only detracts from the amenity of an area, but also poses a risk to road users. The Environment Strategic Policy Committee commenced work on the development of a signage policy, which will outline the dos and don'ts for temporary roadside signage under the Litter Pollution Act 1997-2003. The relevant Roads & Planning legislation will also be included in this policy, which, will be adopted by the full Council in 2006.

161 on-the-spot fines were issued for offences ranging from sweet wrappers and illegal signage to 2 or less bags of refuse illegally dumped on public property. Larger quantities of refuse dumped are dealt with under litter & waste management legislation. Non payment of fines result in legal action being taken by the Council and by the end of 2005 the Council had secured 8 prosecutions (7 District & 1 Circuit Court sitting) with court fines ranging from €50 to €1,900. It is expected that any outstanding cases for 2005 will be prosecuted in early 2006. In addition to this, two Section 9 notices were sent to private property owners directing them to clear their lands of litter (where it is visible from a public place). This is a very powerful tool in the fight against litter, and it is envisioned that it will be used more frequently in future. A zero tolerance approach is being taken to littering at bring bank sites.

Under section 6 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997, occupiers of premises fronting onto the footway within the town limits are obliged to keep the area in front of their premises free of litter. Not to do so is an offence and can attract an on-the-spot fine of €125. *Operation Clean Sweep* involves

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

a partnership approach between Sligo County Council's Environmental Awareness Officer, Litter Warden and the business community. The Council has introduced Operation Clean Sweep to the towns of Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Enniscrone and will continue to introduce it into other towns and villages throughout 2006.

2005 saw the introduction of an inter town/village Litter League. A large number of participants entered the knockout competition which was judged by Sligo County Council staff based on the amount of litter observed on inspection day. The competition proved very successful and the judges were very impressed with the high standard of cleanliness in most of the towns/villages.

In 2005 a review of the Litter Management Plan took place in conjunction with Sligo Borough Council. This Plan is prepared pursuant to Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997-2003 and it aims to identify and quantify the litter problem, establish Council and Community responsibility and develop ways of tackling and eliminating the problem. It is hoped that the Draft Litter Management Plan will be put before the full Council in early 2006 for adoption.

Finally, the Environmental Awareness Officer continued to highlight the problem of litter through various programs of work and methods of advertising including competitions, newspaper and radio advertisements, posters, displays, signage and the publication of leaflets. Through the Green School's programme a huge amount of awareness activity took place with litter competitions, discussions and debate.

WATER QUALITY

In 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published the document Water Quality in Ireland 2001 – 2003, which reviews the water quality in Ireland for that period and includes rivers, lakes, estuarine, coastal and groundwaters. The report is based on monitoring carried out by both the EPA and Local Authorities. Results of Sligo County Council's extensive annual monitoring programme are forwarded to the EPA for use in this review.

This latest water quality report confirms that Sligo's water quality remains above the national average with 95% of Sligo's river channel length categorised as unpolluted. However 5% of Sligo's river channel length remains polluted ranging from slightly polluted to seriously polluted.

All 13 of the Sligo lakes, including water abstraction lakes, monitored over the reporting period, have satisfactory water quality. However, some downward trends have been observed. The water quality in Lough Talt, a major water abstraction lake, has deteriorated slightly over the reporting period, thus requiring close monitoring and control by our staff. Heavy shoreline algae observed on Lough Arrow indicates over enrichment by phosphorus. This highlights the need to reduce phosphorous inputs to this important brown trout fishery lake. Zebra mussels have been identified in both Lough Arrow and Lough Gill. Zebra mussels, although not of a health significance, are expected to have an influence on the long-term quality of these lakes. A campaign is underway which aims to reduce the risk of the spread of Zebra mussels to unaffected waters. The campaign called Western Zebra Mussel Control Initiative hopes to achieve this through extensive media and awareness campaigns, which began in 2005 and will continue in 2006.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



▲ Zebra Mussels

The challenge for Sligo County Council and all stakeholders in Sligo's waters is to continue to improve the quality of unsatisfactory waters and maintain the quality of satisfactory waters throughout the County. Sligo County Council carry out a range of measures to achieve this including enforcement measures under the Water Pollution Acts, and developing best practice guidance documents for sectors that impact on water quality. All industrial discharges to waters require a licence from the Local Authority. Extensive water quality monitoring and catchment survey work was carried out in 2005.

Western River Basin Management Project

The approach to water quality monitoring and management over the coming years will be influenced greatly by the EU Water Framework Directive which rationalises and updates existing water legislations and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin districts. Most of County Sligo is contained within the Western River Basin District, along with most of counties Mayo and Galway, and parts of Leitrim, Roscommon and Clare. During 2005 Sligo County Council has been actively engaged with the other Local Authorities in the development of this project, and in gathering all the required background information.

The overall objective of river basin projects is to establish an integrated monitoring and management system for all waters within a River Basin District, to develop a dynamic programme of management measures and to produce a River Basin Management Plan, which will be continuously updated.

The main responsibility for the implementation of this Directive lies with the EPA and Local Authorities, to be supported by a number of other public bodies. In 2005, a characterisation report was prepared by consultants on behalf of the Local Authorities, with input at all stages from Local Authority staff. This involved gathering all existing data on all waters within the Western River Basin District and characterising each water body into one of four risk categories: at risk; probably at risk; probably not at risk; not at risk. Over the next few years, a comprehensive

monitoring programme will be put in place to determine the definite risk category of the two current probably categories. Sligo County Councils current water monitoring programme may be tailored to meet some of the requirements of the Western River Basin District's monitoring programme, but this shall be determined in 2006.

DRINKING WATER MONITORING AND LABORATORY

Sligo continues to enjoy a very high standard of drinking water throughout the County. Sligo County Councils laboratory staff carry out testing of all public supplies on a regular basis in accordance with the EC (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2000. These regulations came into effect on 01 January 2004 and to quote the EPA: *"This set of drinking water regulations is radically different from its predecessor and will entail very significant changes in virtually all aspects of implementation, including sample number, parameters, parameter classes, extent of coverage, and so on."* Laboratory staff have embraced these new regulations and have implemented new procedures to deal with the significant changes. During 2005 the full program of monitoring required for the County under the regulations, was carried out by our staff. Most of the analysis was carried out in the Council's well equipped environmental science laboratory.

Sligo County Council's laboratory staff also monitored the effluent discharges from all the Local Authority's Waste Water Treatment Plants in accordance with the 1994 Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations, as well as all discharges from licensed premises in accordance with the conditions of the discharge licence issued.

BLUE FLAG BEACHES

In 2005 Sligo was again awarded 3 Blue Flags for Rosses Point, Mullaghmore and Enniscrone. The EPA carry out regular monitoring of these bathing waters during the summer season on behalf of Sligo County Council, in accordance with the blue flag criteria and the Bathing Water Regulations. The required water quality testing programmes were carried out in full in 2005, and the water quality met the blue flag criteria at all three beaches. Sligo County Council are optimistic of retaining all three Blue Flags in 2006. To receive a Blue Flag, a bathing site, in addition to maintaining a high standard of water quality, must meet specified objectives with regard to the provision of safety services and facilities, environmental management of the beach area and environmental education.

WATER SAFETY

During June, July and August 2005, Sligo County Council provided a beach-guard service on five beaches in the County. The beach-guards worked on a full-time basis at Enniscrone, Mullaghmore and Rosses Point beaches and weekends only on Dunmoran and Streedagh beaches. A beach-warden service for Strandhill is also operated under this budget throughout the summer months. Pending the provision of additional resources, Sligo County Council intend to provide full-time beach guards at all 5 beaches in 2006, as well as full-time wardens at Strandhill for the



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

summer season.

AIR POLLUTION

Sligo enjoys excellent air quality and is fortunate in not having heavy industry discharging to the atmosphere. The Environment Section continue to enforce legislation in relation to backyard burning of waste, and the use of smokeless fuels in Sligo City.

FOOD SAFETY

The Council, under a service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, supervises the operation of meat plants in the County. There are currently three abattoirs in operation, and these require pre- and post- slaughter checks on all animals along with continuous monitoring of hygiene and welfare standards and BSE controls. In preparation for the upcoming changes in Food Safety rules, two of these premises have undertaken training in HACCP which is a food safety management system and have introduced HACCP plans in their premises. The third abattoir is currently reviewing its future plans. Of the two Small Meat Manufacturing Plants, one is registered and the second is in the process of being registered.

The inspection of liquid milk producers has continued throughout the year. All producers have been visited during 2005. The number of producers is falling as the sector is currently undergoing a period of consolidation.

ANIMAL WELFARE

The Control of Dogs Act, The Control of Horses Act and the Sheep Scab orders (Diseases of Animals Act) are the main pieces of welfare legislation for which the Council has responsibility.

Following a review in 2004 the Dog Warden Service is now being operated by the warden under contract to Sligo County Council. This arrangement has resulted in savings to the Council and will be reviewed each year. The benefits of a full time warden can be seen in an increase of 24% in the number of licences taken out in 2004 and again in 2005. There has also been an increased level of enforcement in problem areas which has led to a reduction in complaints. Following discussions with the Housing Sections in the Borough and County during the year, changes have been made to the Tenancy agreement which limit the number and type of dogs which can be kept in new tenancies in Local Authority houses. This is to counteract an increase in the number of pit bulls and other unsuitable and potentially dangerous breeds which have become more common in recent years.

The issue of stray horses continues to be monitored. The introduction of new Bye-Laws in 2004 has given the Council increased powers to deal with the problem and while no seizures were made in 2005 the option is available if necessary.



▼ Archaeology at Maughheraby

COUNTY SLIGO HERITAGE OFFICE

The aim of the County Sligo Heritage Forum:

'To secure benefits for the heritage of County Sligo and to increase awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of it for all.'

The Heritage Office is responsible for developing policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of Sligo's heritage. It also seeks to assist the development of the Local Authorities heritage strategy and policy, advising on heritage impacts and consequences. Central to the services provided by the Heritage Office, is the promotion of interest, education, knowledge and pride in the heritage of County Sligo, and in so doing, increasing awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of the County's heritage for all.

The delivery of a co-ordinated heritage strategy at county level is being achieved through the County Sligo Heritage Forum and the co-ordination and implementation of the County Sligo Heritage Plan 2002-2006 which focuses on:

1. **Collection of heritage data**
To advise on, and contribute to, the development of a comprehensive heritage database for Sligo, and to ensure the effective use of heritage data in policy formulation and decision-making.
2. **Local Authority heritage management**
To propose high quality advice to Sligo Local Authorities on policies and priorities relating to Sligo's heritage and to support them in the integration of heritage conservation into their activities.
3. **Raising heritage awareness**
To facilitate awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Sligo's heritage among the community.
4. **Promoting best practice**
To promote, and advise on, best practice standards for heritage conservation and management.

The County Sligo Heritage Plan, launched in 2002, was one of the first of its kind in Ireland. It is a concerted effort to establish objectives and set priorities for our shared heritage. The emphasis is on shared responsibility for the protection and conservation of Sligo's heritage resource. Copies of the County Sligo Heritage Plan 2002-2006 are available from the County Sligo Heritage Office or can be downloaded from the council's website.

COLLECTION OF HERITAGE DATA

- Achievements in 2005

- Database of industrial archaeological sites - The construction of a database which describes and collates all data available on over 1000 industrial archaeological sites in County Sligo.

LOCAL AUTHORITY HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

- Achievements in 2005

- Provision of high quality advice to the Sligo Local Authorities on policies and priorities relating to heritage and to support them in the integration of heritage conservation into their activities. This is achieved through heritage appraisal of development plans and local area plans, and the development of heritage training and the structured input of heritage advice.

RAISING AWARENESS

- Achievements in 2005

- Hosted heritage exhibitions
- Articles in local press
- Promotion of the Heritage in Schools Scheme

COUNTY SLIGO HERITAGE OFFICE

PROMOTING BEST PRACTICE

- Achievements in 2005

- **The Field Monument Advisory Scheme** was increased to a 3-day week at the end of 2005. The scheme advises landowners and farmers on best practice with regard to national monuments on their land. This on-going scheme has been very well received and is a long-term priority action for the Sligo Heritage Forum.
- **Ongoing provision of advice** to communities/individuals developing heritage initiatives and facilities such as heritage groups, tidy-town committees, graveyard management groups.
- **Conservation Plan for Carrowkeel** – In recognising the conservation importance of the archaeological landscape of Carrowkeel and the need for consensus on how best to manage the site, a conservation plan was drafted in 2005 to provide a framework for the future sustainable management of Carrowkeel. This draft will be put to public consultation in 2006 before adoption.
- **Biodiversity Guidelines for Local Authorities** – In recognising the responsibility local authorities have to help achieve biodiversity targets at local level, *Biodiversity Advice* notes were produced for all council staff. The guidance will ensure Sligo local authorities will enhance and conserve biodiversity in all aspects of its work. A training programme will be carried out in 2006 to disseminate this information and raise awareness of biodiversity issues among council staff.

▼ Carrowkeel, Co. Sligo

- **Community Heritage Grant Scheme** – On behalf of Sligo Local Authorities, the Sligo Heritage Office administers an annual community heritage grant scheme to support local communities and individuals to participate in heritage activity in the county. In 2005, €13,000 was distributed by the Heritage Office in respect of 12 grants.

LOCAL AUTHORITY PHYSICAL HERITAGE PROJECTS

- Achievements in 2005

A grant of €40,000 was secured from the Urban & Village Renewal Regional Operational Programme 2000-2006 for the Sligo Cemetery Gate Lodge to carry out conservation works during 2006.

Almost €340,000 has been allocated for the conservation of protected structures in County Sligo since 1999. Buildings included in the Sligo Local Authorities Record of Protected Structures are eligible for funding from the Protected Structures Grant scheme administered by the Heritage Office of Sligo County Council. This year €89,000 was allocated to Sligo from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Works were funded on 9 buildings across the county in 2005 including structural roof repairs to Calvy Parish Church, The Mall and emergency repairs to parapet guttering on St John's cathedral.



CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS

UCC Business Conference, Cork 20th January 2005	HIV Conference, Dublin 17th June 2005
Agrivision 2015, Cork 20th – 22nd January 2005	Confederation of EU Councillors – Summer Seminar, Mullingar 23rd – 24th June 2005
Merriman Winter School, Bunratty 28th – 30th January 2005	Byrne / Perry Summer School, Gorey 24th – 26th June 2005
Media Skills for Councillors, Castlebar 29th January 2005	Conference - Future of Rural Tourism, Tulisk 23rd – 25th June 2005
Mid West Regional Authority Conference, Ennis 3rd – 4th February 2005	SICCDA Realising Rights Conference, Dublin 30th June 2005
National Energy Conference, Mallow 10th – 11th February 2005	Childcare Seminar, Dublin 1st July 2005
AMAI Spring Seminar, Letterkenny 11th - 12th February 2005	Douglas Hyde Summer School, Strokestown 15th – 17th July 2005
Stop Suicide Conference, Dromahair 18th – 19th February 2005	Parnell Summer School, Wicklow 14th – 19th August 2005
Carlow Tourism Conference, Carlow 24th - 25th February 2005	Merriman Summer School, Lisdoonvarna 20th – 27th August 2005
Colmcille Winter School, Letterkenny 25th – 27th February 2005	Humbert Summer School, Ballina 23rd – 28th August 2005
GCCC Annual Conference, Meath 3rd – 5th March 2005	Irish Rural Dwellers Association Conference, Killee 31st August – 1st September 2005
Library Conference, Cork 10th – 11th March 2005	EPA Environment Conference, Dublin 7th September 2005
Wexford Historical Society Conference, Wexford 41th – 13th March 2005	Tom Johnson School, Kells 9th – 11th September 2005
Galway Co International Genealogical Conference, Galway 19th – 20th March 2005	Irelands National Monument to the Fighting 69th, New York 13th September 2005
LAMA Annual Conference, Cork 31st March – 1st April 2005	Launch of WDC Annual Report 2004, Donegal 16th September 2005
Roscrea Historical Spring Conference, Roscrea 1st – 3rd April 2005	La Touché Legacy Seminar, Wicklow 30th September – 2nd October 2005
Cork County Council's Annual Mayor's Conference, Bantry, 14th – 15th April 2005	Planning Conference - Urban vs Rural, Killybegs 5th – 7th October 2005
Common Agricultural Policy Conference, Killee 14th – 15th April 2005	Substance Abuse Conference, Killarney 6th – 7th October 2005
Air Pollution Conference, Cork 21st – 22nd April 2005	Felle Frank Mc Gann, Roscommon 6th – 9th October 2005
Duhallow Conference, Cork 21st – 24th April 2005	Association of Irish Regions Annual Conference, Carlow 7th October 2005
Trade Unionism – North/South Experience, Drogheda 28th – 30th April 05	Confederation of EU Councillors Overseas Conference, Berlin 12th – 14th October 2005
Kerry Environmental Recognition Conference, Kerry 4th – 7th May 05	Migrant Workers & Human Rights Law Conference, Dublin 15th October 2005
Western Rail Corridor Conference, Castlebar 13th May 2005	Reform of Local Govt Finance Conference, Carlow 21st October 2005
European Constitution Conference, Galway 19th May 2005	Roger Casement Annual Symposium, Dublin 22nd October 2005
SEI Wood Energy Conference, Wicklow 19th – 20th May 2005	Report of the Democracy Commission, Dublin 26th October 2005
Westport Town Council Annual Conference, Westport 19th – 20th May 2005	Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees Conference, Bundoran 27th October 2005
Local Partnerships Conference, Mallow 19th - 21st May 2005	Roscrea Autumn Conference, Roscrea 28th – 30th October 2005
Media Skills for Councillors, Wicklow 21st May 2005	LAMA Winter Seminar, Letterkenny 4th – 5th November 2005
Combat Poverty Agency Conference, Portlaoise 23rd – 24th May 2005	Brother Walfrid Memorial Unveiling, Celtic Football Club, Glasgow, 5th November 2005
IPA Training Seminar for Chairs of SPC's, Meath 26th May 2005	SPC2 Visit to Environmental Facilities, Copenhagen, Denmark 20th – 23rd November 2005
Irish Public Bodies AGM, Dublin 26th May 2005	Clare Tourism Conference, Ennistymon 24th – 26th November 2005
Implementing the Agreement, Dublin 27th May 2005	Local Government Budget Conference, Wexford 10th December 2005
Leitrim CDB Conference, Carrick-on-Shannon 16th June 2005	

CATHAoirleach's YEAR PHOTO DIARY



▲ Cathaoirleach honours Ballymote U14 Tag Rugby Team



▲ Cathaoirleach welcomes Drumdiffe U13 Girls Soccer Team at County Hall



▲ Cliffoney Grange Soccer Team U15 Girls, Community Games Champions



▲ Cathaoirleach with Dromore West Templeboy Under 10 Draughts Team



▲ Cathaoirleach with guests and elected members at Cathaoirleach's Awards Ceremony

CATHAOIRLEACH'S YEAR PHOTO DIARY



▶ Cathaoirleach awards ceremony 2006



▶ Cathaoirleach with Martin McCloin (Cathaoirleach Awards 2006)



▶ Michael Gilmartin, Scoil Naomh Molaise visits County Hall



▶ Cathaoirleach making a presentation to Kathleen McNamee, High Park NS



▶ Sinead Hallinan, Dromore West CNS being honoured at County Hall



▶ Shane O'Boyle, Rathcornac NS



▶ Cathaoirleach with Anne Healy, St Marys NS Killyshegheer



▶ Cathaoirleach making a presentation to Oisín Staunton, Ransboro

IN MEMORY

Sligo County Council remembers Padraig Flanagan, Angela Henry and Paddy Callaghan who passed away in 2005

PADRAIG FLANAGAN

Padraig Flanagan had the distinction of being one of the longest serving members of staff of Sligo County Council. He joined the Council in 1959 at the age of 15, and would serve the next 45 years as a loyal and dedicated member of the Roads Department.

Padraig took enormous pride in his work, and his expertise and attention to detail can be seen in the many road projects he was associated with throughout the county. For the last number of years he worked as Chief Technician, and his work in the Roads Design Department brought him into regular contact with members of the public. They invariably found him a man of honesty and integrity.

Padraig's colleagues recall that one of his great characteristics was his desire and ability to see a project through to the end. He was good at his job, making decisions, coming up with new ideas and proposals, keeping others interested in their work. When working outdoor on schemes he preferred to start very early, which was his way of leading by example. Not only did he supervise the work, but he built the blocks, laid the pipes and mixed the concrete.

Senior Engineer Jimmy Harney (retired), recalls that 'he was a most kindly man as all of us who knew him will always remember the many things we learned from him, we will remember with great affection and it was a pleasure to have known him and a privilege to have been his friend for over 40 years'.



Padraig Flanagan, RIP

In Memory



Angela Henry, RIP

ANGELA HENRY

Angela Henry was born in Sligo and lived there all her life, apart from a short time spent in Dublin. She attended Ballintogher N.S. and then Mercy College Sligo. On leaving there she took up a post with Dublin Health Authority based at James' Street, Dublin. She was offered a position in the Health Section of Sligo County Council. Sligo had more than good scenery to attract Angela as her husband to be, Danny, would have been the principal reason for Angela's return to Sligo. She spent many happy years with Sligo County Council in the offices at the Courthouse. Angela and Danny married in 1973 and Angela gave up work to care for her two sons, Donagh and Enda.

She enjoyed this career break but missed the interaction and social side of work outside the home. As Donagh and Enda grew up she joined a 'Back to Work FÁS course and went back to full time employment in 1995. Angela was a lively person who loved to chat and debate. She did things thoroughly. If she held an opinion it was difficult to convince her otherwise – she had complete confidence in her own ability. She loved her job, enjoyed her career in the Roads Section. She made many good and loyal friends, and is remembered fondly by her colleagues in Governor's House. Angela bore her illness with immense courage and dignity. The Angela we all remember shone through especially at that time.

PADDY CALLAGHAN

One of Sligo's best known and loved fire-fighters Paddy Callaghan passed away in 2005. Paddy fought bravely against illness before passing away on 16th July at his home supported by his wife Betty, sons Mark, Patrick and Darren and his family and friends.

Paddy's untimely passing is an inconsolable loss to his family and he will be sadly missed by his friends and colleagues in the fire service. Paddy was well known to all living locally, his love for football and support for Sligo Rovers was well combined with his enthusiasm for life making him one of the happiest people greeting all he met with a smile and chat. He continued so to the day he passed away. He worked very hard throughout his life, both for his family and the community. During his service in Sligo Fire Brigade he worked at some of the most difficult incidents the brigade has had to deal with. The professional manner both he and his colleagues worked has saved many lives and numerous properties. He did so selflessly and beyond the call of duty.

Paddy befriended all he met and it as a friend we shall all remember him. May our good friend rest in peace.



Paddy Callaghan, RIP
with his grandson Keenan

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2004

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure. It shows the surplus/ (deficit) for the year.

Expenditure by Programme Group	Gross Expenditure	Net Income	Net Expenditure	Expenditure
	2005 (€)	2005 (€)	2005 (€)	2004 (€)
Housing	2,772,758	2,414,011	358,747	212,193
Road Transportation	22,652,710	17,704,304	4,948,406	3,754,393
Water Supply and Sewerage	5,941,611	1,894,808	4,046,803	3,892,485
Development Incentives and Controls	2,979,922	1,170,176	1,809,746	1,680,000
Environmental Protection	4,727,636	991,944	3,735,692	3,390,387
Recreation and Amenity	2,811,562	390,268	2,421,294	2,219,247
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	4,015,745	3,659,566	356,179	660,228
Miscellaneous Services	5,326,061	3,158,407	2,167,654	2,073,972
Total Expenditure / Income	51,228,005	31,383,484		
Net cost of Programmes to be funded from				
Rates and Local Government Fund	19,844,523			17,882,905
Local Government Fund	15,161,087			13,910,355
County Rates	3,473,854			3,140,510
County Demand	2,469,600			2,352,000
Surplus / (Deficit) for Year before Transfers	1,260,018			1,519,960
Transfers from / (to) Reserves	(1,120,477)			(1,409,362)
Overall Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	139,541			110,598
General Reserve at 1 st January	(1,826,077)			(1,936,677)
General Reserve at 31 st December	(1,686,536)			(1,826,079)

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2005

	2005 €	2004 €
Fixed Assets		
Operational	191,418,910	183,539,876
Infrastructural	1,400,552,301	1,285,276,361
Community	8,890,420	8,890,420
Non Operational	-	-
	1,600,861,631	1,477,706,657
Work - in - Progress and Preliminary Expenses	90,472,149	129,474,890
Long Term Debtors	19,802,020	19,623,892
Current Assets		
Stock	228,774	184,150
Trade Debtors and Prepayments	4,735,571	6,549,925
Bank Investments	1,804,376	1,141,299
Cash at Bank	2,432,897	2,785,854
Cash on Hand	466	467
Urban Account	1,190,318	1,256,446
	10,392,402	11,918,141
Current Liabilities		
Bank Overdraft	-	-
Creditors & Accruals	6,635,594	6,409,671
Finance Leases	-	-
	6,635,594	6,409,671
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)	3,756,808	5,508,470
Creditors (Amounts greater than one year)		
Loans Payable	49,995,443	49,156,588
Finance Leases	-	-
Refundable Deposits	1,390,672	996,896
Other	-	-
	51,386,115	50,153,484
Net Assets / (Liabilities)	1,663,506,493	1,582,160,425
Financed By		
Capitalisation Account	1,600,861,631	1,477,706,657
Income WIP	65,927,844	132,110,758
Specific Revenue Reserve	1,103,774	1,707,152
General Revenue Reserve	1,686,537	1,826,079
Other Balances	2,700,219	27,538,063
	1,663,506,493	1,582,160,425

Finance Department

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

MOTOR TAXATION OFFICE

The Motor Taxation Offices at the Development Centre, Cleveragh Road, and Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry, continue its efforts in providing a quality and improved service to the public. The latest figures indicate that 85% of our customers call to the offices and carry out counter transactions, with the remaining 15% availing of postal transactions. In 2005, 89% of postal applications for disc licences were dealt with on the same day.

The Vehicle Registration Unit in Shannon, Co. Clare is directly linked with Motor Taxation Offices nationwide, in providing up to date information on vehicle and driving licences through the NVDF System. The VRU also provide on line for the renewal of motor tax for private vehicles.

Our Motor Taxation office in Tubbercurry continues to increase its share in business in 2005, taking over €1.63 million – which represents a steady increase to 17% of the County.

Number of Transactions

	2005	2004
Road Taxes	52,310	47,741
Roadworthiness Certs	3,711	2,765
Driving Licences	7,275	8,313
Miscellaneous	1,380	5,945
Total	64,676	64,764
Total Receipts	€9,887,736	€9,467,354

SERVICE INDICATORS – SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2005

ARTS & CULTURAL SERVICES

Indicator	2004	2005
A & C1 Arts Grants		
- Number of arts grants paid	109	96
- Total value of arts grants paid per 1,000 population	11,718	9,228.47

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & CO-OPERATION

Indicator	2004	2005
CP 1 Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/ Comhairle na n-Og scheme	40%	88%

CORPORATE ISSUES

Indicator	2004	2005
C1 Percentage of working days lost to sickness through: - certified leave - uncertified leave	3.34% 0.48%	3.71% 0.52%
C2 Expenditure on Training and Development as a percentage of total payroll costs	6.4	6.5

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Indicator	2004	Total
WATER		
E1 Percentage of river channel which is: a) Unpolluted b) Slightly polluted c) Moderately polluted d) Seriously polluted	92% 4% 4% 0%	95% 4% 4% 0%
E2 Percentage of drinking water analyses results in compliance with statutory requirements with regards to: - public schemes - private schemes (where appropriate)	96.1% 89.4%	97.05% 88.52%
FIRE SERVICE		
E3 Average time, in minutes to mobilise fire brigades in: - full time stations - part time stations (retained fire service)	N/A 4.8	N/A 4.3
E4 Percentage of attendances at scenes where: - first attendance is at scene within 10 minutes - first attendance is at scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes - first attendance is at scene after 20 minutes	65% 26% 9%	57.6% 28.45% 13.95%
E5 Fire prevention total number of fire safety certificate applications: - received - processed	131 116	212 183
WASTE MANAGEMENT		
E6 Percentage of households provided with segregated waste collection	N/A	N/A
E7 Household waste collected which is sent for recycling - Tonnage	N/A	2,742
- Percentage of household waste collected	16.6	18.5
E8 Household waste collected which is sent to landfill - Tonnage	N/A	12,135
- Percentage of household waste collected	83.4%	81.5%

SERVICE INDICATORS – SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2005

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (continued)

Indicator	2004	2005
E9 Recycling facilities		
GLASS		
Number of Bring Sites	49	49
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	1	2
Total Number of Facilities	50	51
Number of locations per 5000 of population	4.3	4.4
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per 5000 of population	67.99	94.32
CANS		
Number of Bring Sites	49	49
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	1	2
Total Number of Facilities	50	51
Number of locations per 5000 of population	4.3	4.4
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per 5000 of population	2.92	5.95
TEXTILES		
Number of Bring Sites	4	4
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	1	1
Total Number of Facilities	5	5
Number of locations per 5000 of population	4.3	0.43
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per 5000 of population	2.3	3.14
BATTERIES		
Number of Bring Sites	4	4
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	1	2
Total Number of Facilities	5	6
Number of locations per 5000 of population	0.43	0.48
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per 5000 of population	0.9	0.368
OILS		
Number of Bring Sites	0	0
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	0	0
Total Number of Facilities	0	0
Number of locations per 5000 of population	0	0
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per 5000 of population	78	0
OTHERS		
Number of Bring Sites	27	0
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	1	2
Total Number of Facilities	28	2
Number of locations per 5000 of population	2.4	0.17
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling per 5000 of population	42.6	32.02

SERVICE INDICATORS – SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2005

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (continued)

Indicator	2004	2005
E10 Litter		
Number of full-time litter wardens	2	2
Total number of part-time litter wardens	0	0
Number of litter wardens (both full and part-time) per 5,000 population	0.68	0.17
Number of on-the spot fines	305	225
Number of prosecution cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	20	12
Number of prosecutions secured	0	4
Percentage of areas within the local authority that are:		
- unpolluted (i.e. litter free)	15%	15%
- slightly polluted with litter	41%	41%
- moderately polluted with litter	33%	33%
- significantly polluted with litter	6%	6%
- grossly polluted with litter	5%	5%
Litter Analysis of Situation		
- Percentage litter free and slightly polluted	56%	
- Percentage significantly and grossly polluted	11%	
E11 Environmental Complaints and Enforcement		
- total number of cases subject to complaints concerning environmental pollution (relating to waste, litter, water pollution, noise pollution, air pollution)	1181	1239
number of complaints investigated	1030	1138
number of enforcement procedures taken	284	306
E12 Percentage of Schools participating in environmental campaigns		
- primary schools	40%	59%
- secondary schools	70%	82%

HOUSING

Indicator	2004	2005
H1 Total number of dwellings in local authority stock	1,701	1,780
Overall % of dwellings that are let	96.18%	94.78%
Overall % of dwellings that are empty	3.82%	5.22%
% of empty dwellings subject to major refurbishment schemes	29.23%	20.35%
% of empty dwellings unavailable for letting	80.43%	73.45%
% of empty dwellings available for letting	19.57%	26.55%
H2 Average time taken to relet dwellings available for letting	3.5 weeks	3 weeks
H3 Number of repairs completed as a percentage of the number of valid repair requests received	95.56%	63.75%
H4 Average time taken to inform applicants of local authority's decision on applications for:		
- the shared ownership housing scheme	12.5 days	9.25 days
- housing loans schemes	15 days	14.5 days
- local authority housing	13.75 days	9.5 days
H5 Traveller Accommodation		
Total number of traveller families accommodation as a percentage of the targets set in the local traveller accommodation programme	66.67%	23.07%

SERVICE INDICATORS – SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2005

LIBRARY SERVICE

Indicator	2004	2005
L1 Public Opening Hours		
- average number of opening hours per week for full-time libraries	39	39
- average number of opening hours per week for part-time libraries (where applicable)	15	15
L2 Number of registered library members as a percentage of the local population	28%	24%
L3 Number of items issued per head of population (county/city wide) for		
(a) Books	2.63	3.23
(b) Other items	0.43	0.09
L4 Percentage of Libraries that offer Internet access to the public	100%	100%
L5 Number of internet sessions provided per 1,000 population	448.32	1232.00

MOTOR TAXATION

Indicator	2004	2005
M1 Number of motor tax transactions which		
- are dealt with over the counter		42,851
- are dealt with by post		7,562
- are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)		7,372
M1 Percentage of motor tax transactions which		
- are dealt with over the counter	82%	74%
- are dealt with by post	18%	13%
- are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	0%	13%
M2 Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc/driver licence issued) from receipt of the application		
(a) On the same day	8118	6651
(b) On the third day or less	2518	686
(c) On the fifth day or less	479	200
(d) Over 5 days	390	125
M2 Percentage of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc/driver licence issued) from receipt of the application		
(a) On the same day	71%	89%
(b) On the third day or less	22%	8%
(c) On the fifth day or less	4%	2%
(d) Over 5 days	3%	1%
M3 Public opening hours:		
- average number of opening hours per week	33	32.5

PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Indicator	2004	2005
P1 Planning Applications - Decision Making		
INDIVIDUAL HOUSES		
No. of applications decided	56	251
No. of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	769	935
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	79%	71%
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000		71
Average length of time taken (in days) to decide a case where further information was sought	66	91
% of grants	81	84
% of refusals	19	16
% of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanála	87	81
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	13	19

SERVICE INDICATORS – SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2005

PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL (continued)

Indicator	2004	2005
P1 NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT		
No. of applications decided	102	118
No. of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	71%	48
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	82	58
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000		15
Average length of time taken (in days) to decide a case where further information was sought		95
% of grants	80	82
% of refusals	20	18
% of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanála	37	50
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	75	50
Other: NOT REQUIRING EIA		
No. of applications decided	457	288
No. of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	78%	230
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information		55
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000		7
Average length of time taken (in days) to decide a case where further information was sought	76	86
% of grants	95	93
% of refusals	5	7
% of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanála	46	86
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	54	14
Other: REQUIRING EIA		
No. of applications decided	1	5
No. of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	25%	3
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information		2
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000		0
Average length of time taken (in days) to decide a case where further information was sought	20	70
% of grants	25	80
% of refusals	0	20
% of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanála	0	0
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanála	25	100
P2 Planning Enforcement		
- total number of cases subject to complaints that are investigated	251	152
- total number of cases subject to complaints that are dismissed	0	19
- total number of cases subject to complaints that were resolved through negotiations		20
- number of enforcement procedures taken through warning letters	374	158
- number of enforcement procedures taken through enforcement notices	34	24
- number of prosecutions	17	2
P3 Public Opening hours		
- average number of opening hours per week	35	35
P4 Consultations		
- Number of pre-planning consultation meetings held		1524
Average length of time from request for consultation with local authority planner to actual formal meeting for pre-planning consultation	10	10
P5 Buildings Inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	18%	15%

SERVICE INDICATORS – SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2005

RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Indicator	2004	2005
Rec 1	Number of children's playgrounds per 1,000 population:	
- directly provided by the local authority	0.034	0.034
- facilitated by the local authority	0.034	0.51546
Rec 2	Number of visitors to local authority facilitated swimming facilities per 1,000 population	4181, 6494
	3892	

REVENUE

Indicator	2004	2005
Rev1	House Rent	
(a) Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	84%	88%
(b) Percentage of arrears:		
(i) 4-6 weeks old	1%	1%
(ii) 6-12 weeks old	3%	3%
(iii) More than 12 weeks old	94%	92%
Rev 2	Housing loans	
(a) Amounts collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	90%	89%
(b) Percentage of arrears:		
(i) 1 month old	3%	3%
(ii) 2-3 months old	3%	3%
(ii) more than 3 months old	93%	93%
Rev 3	Commercial Rates	
Amounts collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	93%	90%
Rev 4	Refuse Charges	
Amounts collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	N/A	N/A
Rev 5	Non-Domestic Water Charges	
Amounts collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	52%	61%

ROADS

Indicator	2004	2005
R1	Local and regional roads surface dressed per annum (square meter)	381,00
	273,607	
	Percentage of local and regional roads surface dressed per annum	3.3%
	2.72%	