



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Roinn an Airgeadais - Finance Department

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7th December, 2012.

TO: CATHAOIRLEACH AND MEMBERS OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Report of County Manager on the Draft Budget for Wicklow County Council for the local financial year ending 31st December, 2013

Dear Councillors,

The Annual Budget and Managers Report for the financial year ending 31st December, 2013 has been prepared in accordance with Section 102 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Per circular Fin 12/2012 the prescribed period for a County Council to hold its 2013 Budget Meeting is 24th November, 2012 to 13th January, 2013. Accordingly, the Annual Budget Meeting is scheduled for 10.00a.m. Monday 17th December.

Introduction

2012 saw Ireland's sixth austerity Budget in four years. Exchequer figures show the state finances €171m behind target in terms of tax take at the end of November. The Central Bank's Economic forecast in October predicted outturn for 2012 at 0.5% growth in GDP and .4% contraction in GNP. The ESRI describes the Irish economy as "bouncing along the bottom". There can be no doubt we are coming to the end of another difficult year financially and economically.

Predictions for 2013 are slightly more hopeful but we still face another turbulent year. The Central Bank is forecasting 1.7% growth in GDP terms and 0.7% growth in GNP terms. This is based on some recovery in external demand alongside a gradual stabilisation of the domestic economy. But we must remember that Ireland has a small open economy and events in the wider European and international economies can have a profound effect on our economic progress. The projected growth figures are likely to be impacted by the National Budget provisions.

Nationally the budget announced on Wednesday has detailed the requirements for a fiscal consolidation of €3.5 billion in order to deliver a deficit of 7.5% of GDP for 2013 in line with Ireland's requirements under the EU/IMF programme. This includes €2.25billion in public spending cuts and €1.25billion in tax hikes. These national measures have a significant impact on Wicklow County Council and the local economy. The effect of a fall in incomes, inflation and reduction in liquidity directly influence Wicklow County Council's capacity to deliver services. With a shrinking resource base, it is increasingly difficult to maintain the same level of services. However, despite the economic, financial and personal challenges faced by staff, they have demonstrated remarkable dedication to delivering quality services to the County.



Draft Budget Overview

The Draft Budget presented to you provides for expenditure of €90,117,904. As the Council is statutorily required to prepare a balanced budget, expenditure provisions must be matched by income. The Draft Budget has been prepared with the following income projections:

Divisional Income	€48.7m
Rates	€17.3m
Local Government Fund	€14.4m
Pension related reduction	€ 1.5m
County Charge	€ 8.3m

My priorities in preparing this Draft Budget were:-

- Maintain essential services and deliver core responsibilities at a quality level of service
- Meet statutory obligations
- Deliver our services at most economical cost.

In preparing the 2013 Draft Budget, the impact of national fiscal constraints had to be accounted for. Reducing income and the need to maintain services has made the process very difficult. Unlike central government, a local authority cannot budget on a deficit; expenditure must equal income. The contraction of our income sources has required difficult and unpalatable decisions. Every area and service was looked at and options for savings submitted by all departments. Our aim is to reduce costs and achieve further efficiencies in order to protect frontline and essential services. This has been achieved but not without prioritisation of certain services.

Local Government Fund (LGF)

Wicklow County Council's Local Government Fund (LGF) payment allocation for 2013 is €14,357,418, a reduction of 1.83% on the amount originally allocated from the fund in 2012.

The Local Government (Household Charge) Act 2011 provided for the introduction from 1st January 2012 of a household charge of €100 to fund local services. The Act provided for the funding of €160m from the charge for the local authority sector which replaced the previous exchequer contribution to the LGF. As at 3rd December 2012, the charge has been paid in respect of 32,125 properties giving a total compliance level for Wicklow County Council of 70.35%.

I want to thank the 32,125 households who have paid this charge and who are helping to fund service provision in the county and I would encourage those who have yet to pay to do so in order to avoid interest, penalties and the risk of prosecution. It should be noted that Wicklow County Council suffered a cut to the 2012 LGF of €369,163 due to national non compliance with this charge which resulted in curtailment of services in 2012 to this value.

The major funding of the LGF is Motor Tax receipts. With the restructuring of motor tax in July 2008 to base it on CO₂ emissions for cars bought from that date, national Motor Tax receipts have fallen from €1,060million in 2008 to €988m in 2011 and continue to fall in 2012. This has seen Wicklow County Council LGF reduce from €22.0million in 2008 to €14.6million in 2012 but with Pension Levy of €1.6million to accrue to Wicklow County Council also in the year.

The National Budget has announced the cessation of the Household Charge from January 1st 2013 and the introduction of Local Property Tax from 1st July 2013 which will be collected by the Revenue Commissioners. Significant increases in Motor Tax rates were also set out in Wednesday's estimates. These measures are going some way to regaining funding for local services. Wicklow County Council still suffered a cut to its LGF as a proportion of this income is taken as an immediate and necessary measure towards national fiscal adjustment.

Commercial Rates

Wicklow County Council is aware of the significant pressures faced by the business community and is mindful of the role that the business sector plays in the economic and social life of the County. The Enterprise Unit,

together with the County Enterprise Board, are committed to working with the sector and local and national development agencies to promote and develop business in County Wicklow. Despite increasing financial pressures on all income sources and no reduction in demand for services Wicklow County Council has not increased the annual rate on valuation for four years. I have endeavoured to minimise expenditure across all services while maintaining delivery of our essential services and core responsibilities. In light of the current challenging environment it is proposed to continue the restraint for 2013, and the budget has been prepared with a 0% increase in rates giving an Annual Rate on Valuation of 76.78.

Non Domestic Water

Article 9 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) obliges governments to ensure pricing regimes take account of the principles of full cost recovery of the costs for water services and of polluter pays. In 1998, the Government adopted a water services pricing policy framework requiring recovery of “average operational” and “marginal capital costs” of Water Services from all Non-Domestic (ND) users. To recover the operational and marginal capital cost of Water Services to the Non-Domestic sector in Wicklow would require an increase on the 2012 water charges. The Council’s current charge for water and wastewater is still less than the true full economic cost, with the required combined charge estimated at €4.40 per m³. However, in light of the current economic circumstances, consultation with the CPG, meetings with Chambers of Commerce, businesses, etc., the 2013 Draft Budget has been prepared with a 0% increase in the charges. The combined volumetric charge therefore will remain at €3.04 per m³ for 2013. This is the fourth year that no increase has been proposed with the charges remaining the same since 2009 and further progress towards full costs recovery has been deferred to 2014.

Divisional Income

Rents

The rental income from social housing budgeted for 2013 is €5.38m which is unchanged from 2012.

Roads

While the allocation for road grants will not be known until early 2012, current indications are for a significant cut in grant funding for both national and non-national roads. The Draft Budget has been prepared on the basis of a cut of €1.8m in funding from that budgeted in 2012.

Landfill Levy

This has increased by €1.5million to €10.5million. This is collected by Wicklow County Council on an agency basis and paid over to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Planning Fee Income

The decline in commercial and construction activity continues to have a negative effect on planning fee income. Outturn for 2012 is expected to be approximately 90% of budget resulting in a decrease of €53,000 for 2013 budget.

Significant Changes in Draft Budget 2012

Division A – Housing and Building

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Housing Maintenance reduced by	80,000
Carbon Monoxide Monitors 3 year programme (new)	30,000
Support to Capital costs reduced by	40,000
Rental Accommodation Scheme increase (income & expenditure)	1,257,000
Housing Income reduced by	129,000
Loan interest reduced by (reduction in income also)	164,000
Residents Association reduction of	3,000

Division B – Road Transportation and Safety

National roads allocation indicative reduction of	112,000
Non-national roads allocation indicative reduction of	1,690,000
NTA Schemes indicative allocation of	1,000,000

Non national roads own resources reduced by	379,000
Public lighting increase of	63,000
Support to capital costs reduced by	53,000

Division C – Water Services

Operation of water supply decrease of	289,000
Water supply income decrease of	42,000
Domestic Water meter surveying staff (contra) (new)	150,000
Water services training grant reduction (contra)	21,000
Operation of Wastewater Treatment increase of	1,649,000
Waste water treatment income increase of	816,000
Income septic tanks	50,000
Reduction Water Supply Private Houses (contra)	30,000
Private Tappings reduced by (contra)	85,000

Division D – Development Management

Reduction in Planning salary costs	83,000
Increase in Property Management salary costs	27,000
Planning fee income reduced by	53,000
Wicklow County Campus decrease of	11,000
Contribution to Wicklow County Tourism reduced by	10,000
The Gathering 2013 provision of	20,000
MERA & SERA demands reduced by	27,000

Division E – Environmental Services

Landfill Levy Greenstar increase expenditure and income	1,525,000
Fassaroe Historical landfill project finished (contra)	33,000
Leachate payments absorbed in Wicklow sewerage treatment costs	143,000
DOECLG recycling grant reduction of	100,000
Recycling centre income decrease of	33,000
End of vehicle life registration income increase of	45,000
Waste Enforcement costs reduction of	35,000
Fire Services reduction in expenditure of	96,000
Fire Services reduction in income of	50,000

Division F – Recreation and Amenity

Reduction in library costs	15,000
Parks and open spaces maintenance reduction of	18,000
Brittas Bay car park operation reduction	20,000
Glendalough car park operation income reduction of	47,000
Music Generation (new)	12,000
Mermaid Arts Centre contribution reduced by	16,000
Community Grants allocation reduced by	5,000

Division G – Agricultural Education Health and Welfare

Arklow Harbour expenditure and income increase	40,000
Higher Education Grants reduction (contra)	3,432,000
Dog Licences income increase	15,000

Division H – Miscellaneous Services

Machinery Yard activity and rates reduction (contra)	492,000
Stores activity increase (contra)	44,000
Members expenses council meetings	16,000
Motor Tax salary costs reduction (redeployment)	115,000
IPBME Dividend	176,000
Agency Services activity reduction expenditure and income (contra)	393,000

Division J – Central Management Charges

Corporate Building costs reduction	105,000
Corporate Services costs increase (salaries, maternity)	143,000
HR services reduction	50,000
Finance services costs increased by (salaries)	84,000
Area offices costs increased by	140,000
Pensions costs reduced by	287,000

Commentary

There is no doubt we are faced with challenging times ahead. Both nationally and locally we are undergoing a painful process of adjustment. I am fully aware the budget reductions proposed in Draft Budget 2013 are at a time when there is increasing demand for our services. However, the options available to us are limited. Due to a contracting resource base, both staff and financial, we must continue reviewing expenditure and services. Savings cannot be made and the same level of service provided without touching sensitive areas.

The Draft Budget 2013 does not provide for contingencies and this will mean increased need for constant review, monitoring and control over expenditure and income throughout the year. It will also require the continuing drive to reduce costs by proactively pushing rationalisation, efficiencies and economies across all services.

I believe we can continue to deliver core services to the people of Wicklow. Wicklow is a wonderful county and despite the challenges we have faced this year we have had many successes and achievements.

One major success for the County as a whole was winning First Place and Gold at the World LiveCom Awards (International Awards for Liveable Communities). The LivCom Awards are endorsed by the United Nations Environment Programme and have the objective of improving the quality of life of individual citizens through the creation of “liveable communities.” I would particularly like to thank Grainne McLoughlin for her significant contribution in preparing County Wicklow’s entry for this award.

The Ballyhenry Group Housing Scheme for Travellers was officially opening on 19th November 2012. This event took place as part of Social Inclusion Week 2012.

Bray/Shanganagh sewerage treatment plant was officially commissioned in September 2012 which is very positive news for the people in the Bray area. This plant also provides capacity for future development in the Bray environs.

The Local Area plan for Blessington has been adopted. Work is ongoing in relation to the Greystones, Delgany and Kilcoole plan and on the Wicklow Town Environs and Rathnew development plan.

Wicklow County Council in partnership with Music Generation and the VECs has rolled out Music Network, U2’s funded development of music in schools.

All of the above was achieved through the terrific commitment from our staff, members and citizens. These qualities will help Wicklow deal with current difficulties and prepare us to take advantage of economic growth which will follow the current period of austerity. Already 2013 promises to be another eventful and challenging year.

It is hoped that the contract(PPP) for Arklow Rathnew road improvement scheme, which will finally eliminate the single carriageway on this section of road, will be signed in the first half of 2013. It is also anticipated Arklow Library will go to tender in 2013.

Work is ongoing across many areas of Wicklow County Council in preparation for “The Gathering 2013”, a series of festivals and events to celebrate Irish history, culture and genealogy.

The Government decided last December, based on the recommendations of an independent assessment, to establish a public water utility company, Irish Water, to take over the operational and capital delivery functions of local authorities in the water services area. Irish Water has been established as an independent state owned company within the Bord Gais Group. It is anticipated the water/waste water operations will continue to be run by Local Authorities for a number of years under service level agreements.

Significant changes will be brought about as a result of the Local Government Reform document "Putting People First". This will see the establishment of municipal districts and the abolition of Town Councils with effect from the next elections scheduled for June 2014.

The staff of Wicklow County Council have demonstrated their dedication to delivering services for the people of Wicklow. The last twelve months have been difficult with reduced staffing levels and increasing pressures on budget, yet the staff have shown their resilience and ability to adapt to these difficulties and continue to provide quality services. I would like to thank all staff involved in keeping the County working throughout the year.

Conclusion

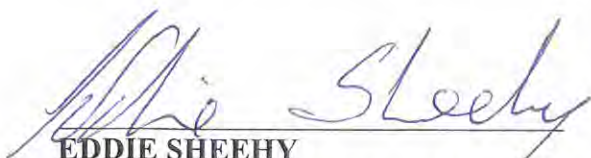
I prepared the 2013 Annual Budget in consultation with the Corporate Policy Group and in accordance with the Local Government Act, 2001 (Section 133). At these meetings significant factors within the Budget were raised and discussed and I am grateful to the members of the Corporate Policy Group for their contributions to the budgetary process. The draft budget has been prepared in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions, and this report, with the accompanying detailed financial tables sets out the position for consideration by the Council.

The 2013 Draft Budget before you today is a plan of action to best deal with the unprecedented economic realities facing the Council at the present time and yet allow us to continue delivering essential services to the citizen.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Council for their support in what has probably been the most challenging year yet for the Council.

The Draft Budget preparation required significant input from staff across all the Council's Divisions. I thank all the Directors and their staff who have contributed to and supported that process. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to Breda McCarthy, Acting Head of Finance, Deborah Cromie, Financial Management Accountant and the staff in the Finance Section for their hard work in preparing and framing this Budget. Finally, I would like to congratulate our Head of Finance, Loraine Lynch on the recent birth of her daughter Liobhan and wish both every happiness and success in the future.

I recommend the Budget to you for adoption.



EDDIE SHEEHY
WICKLOW COUNTY MANAGER

Wicklow County Council

Budget 2013

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Division A – Housing & Building

Objective

Plan for and facilitate the provision of sustainable, high quality social, affordable and cost effective housing accommodation to meet the existing and likely future needs, responsive to the requirements of all categories of persons in the County

Key Indicators

Total Division Expenditure	€10,473,042	Average weekly rental income	€110,726
Council Tenancy Houses *	2,356	Total Rental Income 2012*	€5.75 million
Tenant Purchase – Houses sold*	16	House Purchase Loans	4
Number assessed for Housing*	437	Housing Grants*	€764,354
Number housed from Housing list	83	Provision of New Rental housing units	4
Transfers made	22	Rental Accommodation Scheme units	119
Homeless housed	3		

*Activity level at Nov 2012

A01 Maintenance/Improvement of LA Housing Units

The cost of maintaining and repairing our housing stock of almost 2,356 units is included under this heading.

Progress in 2012

- Construction and completion of 2 houses and a bay at Ballyhenry for members of the travelling community
- Purchase of four properties at Wilton Manor, Rathnew under Part V.
- Five houses transferred from affordable to social in Glending.
- Purchase of eleven apartments at Graham's Court, Wicklow.
- Completion of refurbishment of Vartry Heights, Roundwood.

Objectives for 2013

- Refurbishment of void properties to be closely monitored to ensure minimal delay in turn around times.
- Closer co-operation between the Area Housing Teams and Central Maintenance Management through structured Area Liaison Groups.

A02 Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer

Progress in 2012

- Increased activity levels in all areas addressed.
- RAS growing as part of Housing Allocations.

Objectives for 2013

- Maintain activity levels and links with other Local Authorities and Voluntary Bodies regarding the sharing of appropriate information relating to applicants.
- Change from four separate housing lists to one central housing list for the County, beginning with the Housing needs assessment in Spring 2013.

A03 Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration

Rent Assessment, Rent Accounts and Rent Arrears Management for all Council tenancy dwellings is provided for under this heading. The incomes of all our tenants are assessed and the differential rent is calculated accordingly.

This section also has responsibility for Tenant Purchase Sales and Loans and the management of the old Tenant Purchase Scheme. Applications concluded on the 31st December 2012, with all sales under the 1995 Tenant Purchase Scheme to be finalised by 31st December 2013.

A04 Housing Community Development Support

Estate Development Awards are presented to Residents Associations and Committees at this time of year, usually December, in recognition of the invaluable contribution they make to the maintenance and development of their estates and communities. The Estate Development Officer had commenced a programme of encouraging more sustainable planting in our estates through the provision of fruit trees and fruit bushes, which was very successful.

A05 Administration of Homeless Service

Kildare County Council is the lead Statutory Authority with responsibility for co-ordinating responses to homelessness in the three Mid-East Counties. The Housing Section provides emergency accommodation for homeless persons through the direct provision of hostels and emergency accommodation, and by funding the voluntary sector to provide additional accommodation and ancillary services.

Progress in 2012

We are dealing with an average of 3 or 4 cases a week where this is a significant risk of homelessness. In this regard, we are assessing these applicants as quickly as possible in order to avoid placing them into hostel accommodation. These cases would include young adults leaving care facilities, re-possession of properties etc. However, probably the most common issues in these cases would be applicants who are in receipt of rent allowance for some time at the higher rent allowance threshold – these applicants are now either trying to negotiate with their landlord for a reduction in their rent or trying to secure a new tenancy at the reduced rent allowance threshold before their rent allowance is cut off. We have a close working relationship with the Simon Community, the East Coast Drugs Task Force, and Community Welfare Officers.

A06 Support to Housing Capital Programme

This area covers the provision of administrative and technical support for a wide range of housing development, including social and community facilities. It includes costs incurred in the acquisition/disposal of land for housing purposes.

A07 RAS Programme

The current number of RAS units is 405 plus 29 voluntary units. The 2013 estimate is based on the RAS Section taking an additional 150 units into RAS.

A08 Housing Loans

The Council offers House Purchase Loans to a maximum of €220,000 under the House Purchase Loan Scheme.

It is estimated that approximately 4 House Purchase Loans will be issued in 2013

A09 Housing Grants

There are three grant schemes:

1. **Housing Aid for Older People Grant** is available to assist older people living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out.
2. **Mobility Aid Grant** is available to cover a basic suite of works to address mobility problems, primarily but not exclusively associated with ageing.
3. **Housing Adaptions Grant for People with a Disability** is available to assist in the carrying out of works which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability who has an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment.

Matching funding of 20% is required from the Council's own resources. A provision of €100,000 has been included.

A total of 102 grants were paid out in 2012. It is anticipated that a similar number will be paid out in 2013, depending on allocation from the Department.

Division B - Road Transport & Safety

Objective

To promote and facilitate the provision of all transport in an integrated manner and so to foster social and economic development, having regard to environmental considerations, sustainable development, social inclusion and Health and Safety

Key Indicators

Total Division Expenditure	€17,605,286	Number of Pay & Display Machines – Greystones only	43
Number of kilometres of Roadway	2,150	Number of Traffic Signals	64
Number of Public Lights Maintained	9,750		

B01 – B02 National Road Maintenance and Improvement

National Primary Projects completed in 2012:

- Median verge and drain maintenance of between Beehive and DLRCC border
- Relining of Road Markings and studs completed on the N11/M11 Arklow By-pass and on N11/M11 between Kilmacanogue and Beehive
- Provision of additional signage to address traffic calming on southbound carriageway at Glen of the Downs 80kph speed zone and on northbound carriageway at Kilmacanogue 80kph speed zone.
- Barrier repairs along N11/M11.
- Commence eradication of Invasive Japanese Knotweed along N11/M11
- Commence investigations and development of solution to accident cluster at Glen of the Downs Northbound bend.
- Continue repair of failing N11 pavement between Arklow and Rathnew
- Repair of isolated portions of railing N11 pavement at various locations between Arklow and Fassaroe.

National Primary - Proposed Works 2013

- Continue minor drainage improvements along N11
- Depending on commencement of Rathnew to Arklow RIS, clean and cut vegetation on median and verge of Arklow By-Pass.
- Eradicate vegetation in French Drains cleaned between Beehive and DLRCC border.
- Clean gullies and channels between Beehive and DLRCC border
- Continue eradication of Invasive Japanese Knotweed along N11/M11
- Continue repairs to failing N11 Pavement between Arklow and Rathnew

National Secondary Projects completed in 2012

N81 HD 28 Schemes.

The NRA has introduced document number NRA HD 28/11 entitled 'Management of Skid Resistance'. This is a new method of monitoring skid resistance and identifying sites that require improvement works.

On the N81, seven sites were identified as requiring investigation and a joint NRA/WCC inspection of each site was carried out in June 2012. One of the sites is in the Mullycagh scheme so there will be no need to carry out works there as this road section is being realigned. The remaining sites are:

Site 1924.	South of Baltinglass and north of Carlow Boundary- finished
Site 1927.	Rampere Junction.- completed by end 2012
Site 1937.	Bend south of Annalecky Junction completed by end of 2012.
Site 1946.	South of /R756 Hollywood Junction near Athgreny Stone Circle – not expected to be completed by end 2012
Site 1954.	Section of N81 at or adjacent to R758 Vallemount Junction completed
Site 1955.	Nolan's bend just south of Blessington will be completed by end of 2012

Works are expected to be completed on all of the above in 2012. The scale of works varied between track blasting surface dressing and strengthening/overlay works.

N81– Minor Improvements 2012

N81 Knockroe Bends Realignment - Consists of the realignment of 800m section of N81 on Knockroe Bends – archaeological investigation works and preliminary design completed in 2012.

N81 Hearn's Cross to Knockroe Bends - This Scheme is located between the Kildare County Boundary and Knockroe Bends – completed in 2012

Mullycagh Bridge - Rehabilitation works to the bridge at Mullycagh north of the Annalecky junction. Widening of the structure and realignment of the road south of the bridge – completed in 2012

National Secondary - N81 Resurfacing works contracts 2013

Funding has been sought from the NRA for the following projects in 2013

- N81 Knockroe Bends realignment - consists of the realignment of 800 m section on N81 at Knockroe Bends –
- Irish Town West – realignment
- Whitestown – realignment
- Hangman's Bends realignment
- Tuckmill Upper – Realignment

B03 – B04 Non National Road Maintenance and Improvement

Maintenance works on Non National roads are carried out by direct labour units working from 5 area offices and also by private contractors. Maintenance can be broken down into two categories

Planned Maintenance consists of the works programme for the year that is devised following consultation with the area staff and can be subdivided into the following categories: Carriageway and footpath reconstruction or Resurfacing and Winter Maintenance

Grant funding in the amount of €1.337 million was received in 2012, which funded the surface dressing of both regional and local roads throughout the County.

Reactive Maintenance includes everything other than planned maintenance and mainly consists of pothole repairs and works to surface water drainage systems and can also arise from Member's questions and or correspondence and complaints from members of the public.

Specific Improvement Grant works

Works were carried out at the following locations in 2012

Aghavannagh Bridge	Macreddin Bridge
Lacken Falls Bridge	Sheeanamore Lower Bridge
Ballylow Bridge	Coates Bridge
Fortgranite Bridge	Rathdrum Retaining Wall
Newrath Junction	Ticknock Bridge

It is proposed to carry out Restoration Improvement Works subject to grant funding in 2013 at the following locations

R 772 Arklow Bridge	R 747 Baltinglass Railway Bridge
LS 7133 Ballymaghroe Bridge	LP 4262 Ballinguilehill Bridge
LP 4264 Ballinabarney Bridge	R 747 Kiltegan Bridge Upper
Old N11 Bray Silverbridge	R 759 Manor Kilbride Bridge
LS 8762 Drim Bridge	LS 6126 Glenmalure Bridge

Noise Mapping

Progress in 2012

Wicklow County Council is a designated Noise Mapping Body under the requirements of SI140 of 2006 (Environmental Noise Regulations 2006). Under these requirements Wicklow County Council was required to measure noise on Regional Roads with traffic volumes exceeding 3 million vehicle passages (approximately 8220 vehicles/day) and to prepare Strategic Noise Maps during 2012. Data collection was completed in early 2012 and the raw data was submitted to the NRA who was awarded the contract to model environmental noise on Regional Roads.

Work to be completed in 2013

The next stage of work, which Wicklow County Council are required to comply with under legislation, is the preparation of a Noise Action Plan for County Wicklow, which should be completed by mid 2013. As Wicklow County Council does not have the in house expertise for this work, it is intended to appoint a specialist consultant to prepare the plan. There will also be associated costs such as advertising and publishing the plan for public consultation prior to final publication.

B05 Public Lighting

Wicklow County Council entered into a new public lighting maintenance contract in April 2012 which resulted in reduced maintenance costs of approx 2%, however the overall cost of maintaining and improving the public lighting system continues to increase. This is mainly due to:

- Increased energy costs
- Increased numbers of public lights. In 2011 there were approximately 300 lights added to Wicklow County Council's system arising from taking in charge estates, new works etc. In 2012 to date there have been 192 additional lights and as estates continue to be taken in charge by the Council this figure will continue to rise.
- Increases in pass-through charges (Distribution Use of System Charges (DUoS) and Public Service Obligation Levies)

B06 Traffic Management Improvement

The National Transport Authority funded the following projects in 2012

Bray Main Street	R761 Three Trouts footpath
Marine Rd to Greystones Harbour Cycle way	NTA Boghall Road Cycling QOS upgrade
St Laurence's to Kindlestown Cycle way	Blacklion to Tesco Cycle way and footpath
Dunlavin Green	NTA Putland Road Cycle track
R722 Wexford Rd Cycle lanes	Delgany Village Vulnerable Road user Audit
Arklow - Woodenbridge - Shillelagh Greenway	Laragh-Glendalough
Fitzwilliam Square Wicklow	Pedestrian Access to Wicklow Rail Station
Cycle Route from the Port Access road to Wicklow Town	Harbour to Lidl Cycle Route
Baltinglass Traffic Management	Sea Road Kilcoole
Junction Wicklow Gap/Glendalough	Bray To Greystones Cycle way
Bray QBC & Bray Bridge	Design of Strand Road Cycle Scheme
Bray Cycle Network Scheme	Bray /Dublin Road QBC
Bray Dart Interchange	

Projects submitted for funding in 2013 by the National Transport Authority include:

- QBC Street works - Bray Town/ Bray Bridge/ Dublin Road QBC and Traffic Management Scheme
- Strand Road Cycle Track Bray
- R761 Three Trouts Footpath
- Harbour to Lidl Cycle Route Greystones
- Marine Road Dog Walk Cycle Route
- Sea Road Kilcoole – Provide footpaths on Sea Road and improve junction with Main Street Kilcoole
- Glendalough Traffic Control Measures / Glendalough Junction
- Bray Dart Interchange - detailed design
- Baltinglass Traffic Management - design to improve parking and pedestrian movement around the Town
- Fitzwilliam Square Wicklow Town – Redevelopment – design cycle route from Port Access Road to Fitzwilliam Square
- Delgany Footpaths and Traffic Calming
- Wicklow Town Junctions and Access Improvements
- Bray to Greystones Cycle way – preliminary design
- Blessington – signalised pedestrian lights at community School Naas Road
- Blessington to Russborough trails
- Arklow to Shillelagh cycle track – complete feasibility study
- R772 Wexford Road Cycle lanes
- Rathdrum Traffic Management Scheme – improvement of pedestrian facilities and control of parking

- Tinahely Traffic Management - Traffic Management plan for the Square in Tinahely
- Pedestrian crossing on Southern Cross Road Bray
- Footpaths - Hollywood Village/Ashford Village to Sunbeam House Rosanna/ Ballygannon footpath Rathdrum/Rednagh Road Aughrim/Avondale footpath - footpath from Rathdrum to Avondale House/Ballynerrin Wicklow Town - footpath and bus stop
- Enniskerry traffic calming and car parking
- Cycle Lanes at various locations including Upper Dargle Road Bray, Greystones Road, Bray Southern Cross, Killarney Road Bray.

B07 Road Safety Engineering Improvement

Low cost safety improvements works were carried out at the following locations in 2012

R755 Annamoe	R772 Arklow
L1096 Cronroe	L8361 Lugnagroagh
R117 Enniskerry	R412 Tyntepark Cross Roads
R747 Woodfield	

Proposed Low Cost Safety Improvement Works for 2013

R752 Ballygahan	LS6144 Ballinaclash
LP 3232 Ballard Cross Roads	R752 Glenealy
LS 8383 Manor Kilbride	R 755 Kilmacanogue
R760 Enniskerry	LP 1048 Newtownmountkennedy
R725 Main Street Carnew	R752 Glasnarget Rathdrum

B08 Road Safety Promotion and Education

The Road Safety Together Committee, which includes members of An Garda Síochána, The Fire Service, Road Safety Authority and National Roads Authority and Council Officials, meets on a quarterly basis to review road safety in the County. In 2012 a review of the Road Safety Plan for County Wicklow, which covers the period 2010 – 2014 took place. The main objective of the Road Safety Plan is to reduce the number of casualties on County Wicklow's roads and to provide focus on making Wicklow a safer County for both motorists and pedestrians.

B09 Maintenance and Management of Car Parking

Pay Parking was introduced in Greystones in August 2008 with the aim of increasing the supply of short-term parking and reduce the problems caused by illegal/inappropriate parking. Initially following public procurement procedures APCOA were appointed to operate all aspects of the scheme on behalf of Wicklow County Council – this includes the provision of traffic warden service, issue and collection of fines, review of appeals and administration of permits. In 2011 Wicklow County Council invited tenders for a further three-year period and APCOA was the successful tenderer and the current contract runs until 2014.

B10 Support to Roads Capital

This includes technical and administrative costs associated with the capital programme that Wicklow County Council is not permitted to recoup from any Department or agency. Major road improvement projects are charged to the capital programme. Provision is made in the Support to Roads Capital Programme sub-service for payment of loan charges in respect of these projects (i.e. Wicklow Port Access and Town Relief Road)

B11 Agency and Recoupable Services

An agency and recoupable service within each sub-service with the purpose of catering for non-core service carried out by Wicklow County Council including repayable works such as Road Opening Licences.

Division C – Water And Wastewater Services

Objective

To provide and maintain drinking water and wastewater facilities to meet existing and future demand, adhering to the principles of sustainable development.

Key Indicators

Total Division Budget	€17,331,286	Annual Cost of Wastewater Treatment per head Total C02 / Population 126,330	53.65
No. of Discharge Licenses (Section 4 & Section 16)	150	Individual Water Grants paid (130 Grants)	€184,000
No. of Wastewater Discharge Authorisations	10 Licences 18 Certificates	Total volume of water supplied (m3p/d)	29,981
Annual Cost of Water per head Total C01 / Population 126,330	44.30	Volume of unaccounted for water (m3p/d)	7,284

C01 Operation And Maintenance Water Supply

C02 Operation And Maintenance Wastewater Treatment

In delivering on this strategic objective the County Council continues to operate and maintain water supplies and wastewater facilities to the highest standards. Inevitably increased standards result in the necessity for increased expenditure. Notwithstanding this the Council has managed to achieve savings through increased efficiency.

Government's water pricing policy requires Local Authorities to recover the full cost, with charges based on actual metered consumption, for non-domestic water and wastewater services. The current charges for these services continue to fall considerably short of the full cost.

The charge for commercial water/wastewater for 2013 is unchanged from 2012 and remains at €3.04 per cubic meter, being €1.41 for water and €1.63 for wastewater.

It should be noted that the services provided by this Directorate are essential services and include a number of contractual obligations together with legislative requirements.

Progress in 2012

- Significant progress has been made on the WSIP in Wicklow in 2011 and 2012. Areas progressed or completed include Arklow Water Supply, Wicklow Water Supply Scheme, Lowtown Sewerage Pumping Station in Rathdrum, Watermain Rehabilitation Contracts, under the Dublin Region Water Rehabilitation Project, in Bray and Greystones. Dunlavin Sewerage Scheme and on a new watermain linking Wicklow Town to the Vartry Treatment Works
- The Bray-Shanganagh Sewerage Scheme, which has been implemented in partnership with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, has also reached substantial completion in 2012
- Greystones WWTP has continued throughout 2012 and will be completed in January 2013..
- Work is continuing on the Arklow Sewerage Scheme and good progress is being made on the surveys, investigations, licensing, design and procurement work for the contracts.
- Small Schemes completed or commenced in 2012 include Avoca/ Ballinaclash, Baltinglass PWS, Kilcoole WWTP, Quarry St. WWTP, Ballinaclash WWTP, Barndarrig WWTP and Knockananna WWTP

Objectives for 2013

- The high level goal of the Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) is to ensure that the timing and scale of water services investment facilitates economic development, compliance with statutory requirements for drinking water and wastewater treatment and the achievement of environmentally sustainable objectives.
- Ensure that public wastewater facilities meet national and EU Discharge standards.

- In accordance with the Wastewater Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, applications for discharge authorisations were submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for all Wicklow County Council wastewater discharges.
- The Licences and Certificates have stringent conditions attached so that discharges would meet the EU Discharge Standards. The EPA oversees compliance with the Licence conditions. This presents challenges both financially and in terms of the operation of the treatment plants. This has implications for Planning because loading to the treatment plants must not exceed their capacity to treat wastewater. Discharges, which have yet to be licenced, must comply with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations 2001 and its various amendments.
- Ensure that existing water and wastewater schemes continue to function efficiently and effectively.
- Promote the value of drinking water through public awareness programmes and continue implementation of Water Conservation scheme
- Domestic Wastewater Treatment System, registration will continue and inspections in association with Environmental Protection Agency will commence.
- Bray/Shanganagh Wastewater Treatment Plant in association with Dunlaoghaire/Rathdown will be fully operational in 2013.
- Surveys for the Domestic Water Metering Programme will commence

C03 Collection Of Water And Waste Water Charges

The National Water Services Pricing Policy requires that all non-domestic customers be charged for water and wastewater services on the basis of metered consumption. Wicklow County Council continues to bill all non-domestic users based on the volume of water consumed on a quarterly basis.

Since 2009 the amount collected in water and waste charges has been greater than the invoices billed and our collection rate is slowly increasing.

However considerable work remains to be done to reduce the arrears and improve collection in 2013. This will require consistent strong action using a range of methods up to and including disconnection of supply.

C04 Operation And Maintenance Of Public Conveniences

This area includes operation of Public Toilets in Enniskerry, Greystones, Roundwood, Glendalough and Blessington. Operation includes three automated facilities.

C05 Administration Of Group And Private Installations

- This area of operation includes administration of Water supply to private houses through Well Grant System.
- Progress Small Public Schemes and Group Water Schemes by seeking funding under the national Rural Water Programme and to advance such schemes in a prioritised manner.

C06 Support To Water Capital Programme

Includes costs of Support Service Staff both technical and administrative in support to Capital Programmes.

C07 Agency & Recoupable Services

This area accounts for Connections to public water & sewer network and is a contra item with corresponding income.

Division D - Development Management

Objectives

To provide for proper effective planning, balancing the need for sustainable development, the rights of individuals, social inclusion, the protection of the environment and the social and economic needs of each area of County Wicklow.

To promote through a proactive strategy between the local authorities and the private sector, the industrial development and economic growth of the county.

To develop and promote the social, cultural and economic health and well being of County Wicklow within a partnership framework.

Key Indicators

Total Division Expenditure	€5,487,110	% of applications refused*	13%
Planning applications received*	960	Enforcement - Warning Letters*	255
2012 income from planning application fees*	€196,000	Enforcement Notices*	108
		Proceedings *	41
% of applications granted*	87%	Commencement Notices Received*	215
* Estimated Level of Activity 2012			

D01 Forward Planning

County Development Plan

The current County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 came into effect on the 4th October 2010.

The Plan sets out the strategy for proper planning and sustainable development of County Wicklow, except in the case of the Town Council areas of Bray, Wicklow and Arklow.

Progress in 2012

Four variations to the County Development Plan have been made in 2011-2012, relating to settlement plans for Avoca, Kilmacanogue and Donard. A Land Use and Tourism plan for Laragh – Glendalough was also completed

Local Area Plans/Other Plans

Local Area plans and other development plans must be consistent with the objectives of the county plan. These plans also set out the basis for future development of the area.

Progress in 2012

The Forward Planning unit of Wicklow County Council on behalf of Wicklow Town Council is preparing a joint Wicklow Town, Environs and Rathnew Development Plan. The Forward Planning unit of Wicklow County Council is also responsible for the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive and a Flood Risk Assessment, which will be carried out as part of the plan making process. The draft plan was published in July 2012.

Work commenced on the preparation of the Blessington Local Area Plan 2012. The draft plan was published in August 2012 and was adopted in December 2012.

The process in respect of the Greystones – Delgany and Kilcoole Local Area Plan 2013 commenced and a draft plan is due to be published before the end of 2012.

Other Projects – Progress in 2012

The Forward Planning Section is responsible for providing data and analysis to various internal and external bodies with regard to population, housing construction, and retail development, and other factors as requested. Currently work is being done to establish a more systematic data collection and storage system to allow analysis and outputs to be created more efficiently.

Other responsibilities and functions that were carried out in 2012 and will continue in 2013 include:

- Annual Housing Land Availability Returns
- Retail Surveys.

- Coordination with Regional Planning Authority
- Providing planning expertise in CPO procedures and operation of other departments of the Local Authority
- Identifying and acquiring suitable sites for schools on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills

Objectives for 2013

- Prepare report, setting out the progress made in realising the objectives of the Development Plan since October 2010.
- Complete the adoption process of the Wicklow Town and Environs Development Plan and the Greystones, Delgany and Kilcoole Plan.
- Undertake an analysis of remaining local area and town plans

An Executive Planner within the Forward Planning Section is also carrying out duties in Bray Town Council, two days a week.

D02 Development Management

Development Management Section deals with the planning applications from date of receipt to completion, which includes up to any appeal process to An Bord Pleanála. Pre-planning is also dealt with under Development Management.

Progress in 2012

- The number of planning applications received this year up to the beginning of November is 827. It is expected that this figure will reach approximately 1,000 by year end.
- For the period 1st January, 2011 to 30th October 2011, 277 requests for Further Information have been made.
- 60 time extensions have been granted this year to date.
- 88 applications have been withdrawn.
- A total of 212 invalid applications were received in 2012 to date

Objectives for 2013

- Continue to provide a quality and consistent service
- Continue to provide greater accessibility to planning files using available technology

Section 261 (A) – Registration of Quarries

Section 261(A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) came into force in November 2011, which required the complete assessment of all quarries within the functional area of the Council. Following this assessment, the Council had to issue a determination in relation to each quarry as it related to the provisions of this section of the Act.

Progress in 2012

- A total of 93 quarries were assessed, including historical investigations.
- Following the assessments, notices issued under Section 261(A) (3), (4) and (5) to the operators of 19 quarries.

These notices either required the operator to apply for substitute consent or informed them that the Planning Authority proposed to issue enforcement notices in respect of the quarry. There was an option for the operator to request a review of the determination by the planning authority to An Bord Pleanála.

- Of the 19 notices issued, a total of 8 requested a review of the Council's decision to the Board. These reviews are currently with the Board.

Objective 2013

- Respond to decisions that issue from An Bord Pleanála
- Proceed to issue enforcement notices where appropriate

Other Projects – Progress in 2012

Section 5 referrals relate to the planning authority issuing declarations when a question has arisen as to whether a development is exempted development.

- 39 applications received up to the end of October 2012

Compliance submissions continue to increase, with a compliance assessment carried out, to ensure compliance with the permission granted.

- A total of 581 submissions were received up to the end of October 2012

The Taking in Charge (TIC) and Completion of Developments document prepared by the planning section, sets out the policy for the taking in charge of private housing developments (i.e. a development of two or more houses) and the completion of developments.

- A total of 17 estates were taken in charge in 2012 to date.

In addition, there are

- 110 Live Estates
- 26 taking in charge applications in process;
- 37 estates subject to Enforcement Process;
- 5 estates completion works being carried out by WCC using the bond;
- 42 estates substantially complete, no TIC application received.

The collection of development contributions remains a priority for the planning section, as they are vital for the provision of infrastructure in the county.

Objectives for 2013

- Continue to process Section 5 and compliance submissions in a timely fashion
- Progress the Taking in Charge of the 110 live estates on hand and encourage developers to apply to have their estate dealt with under the TIC policy document
- Continue to pursue and monitor contribution collection rates and ensure the collection of all outstanding amounts

An Executive Planner within the Development Management Section remains seconded to the Regional Planning Guidelines Office, while an Assistant Planner resigned in November 2012

D03 Enforcement

A major objective of the Planning Department is to ensure increased compliance with the planning law and continue a proactive approach to the consistent implementation of Part V111 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The continuation of a culture of enforcement in the County is critical to ensure that the planning control system works properly, and fairly, and for the benefit of the whole community.

It remains the focus of Wicklow County Council to work to resolve situations outside the legal process, e.g. through mediation and negotiations which while not evident to the public, can achieve in practice a more positive outcome in a speedy and more effective manner, which is the ultimate goal of the Council.

Progress in 2012

- From January 2012 to end September 2012, the Council received 116 written complaints.
- A total of 192 Warning Letters, 81 Enforcement Notices have issued with 31 cases referred to legal action.

Objectives for 2013

- Provide effective response to complaints received
- Continue to discourage unauthorised development through rigorous action

Other Projects – Progress in 2012

At 1st January 2012 there were 5 sites on the Derelict Site Register, with one site placed on the register in 2012. During the year:

- Three sites were removed from the register.
- Three sites remain on the register at the end of September 2012 and it is anticipated that one of these sites will be removed by the end of the year following continued consultation with the owner of the site.

Objective for 2013

Continued consultation with owners of sites to have works undertaken to render the sites non derelict

D04 Operation and Maintenance of Industrial and Commercial Facilities

Sites for Enterprise/Employment Uses

Wicklow County Council has invested circa €1.3m on the construction of Avondale Business Park, Rathdrum over the past three years.

The Enterprise Unit continues to liaise with parties in an effort to attract business interests into the Park.

In addition to this site, the Council has some varying size landbanks at a number of locations throughout the County including Arklow, Aghrim, Blessington, Ashford and Tinahely.

The 6.7 acres of land at Ashford forms part of an Action Area comprising two adjoining private landowners. During 2011 Wicklow County Council worked with the landowners in the preparation of an Action Area Plan which was approved in August, 2011. Over the coming 12 months Wicklow County Council intends to continue this close working partnership with a view to examining the possibility of preparing a planning application for the construction of internal infrastructure to service the lands. The Council's vision for the site is for a high quality innovative business park creating up to 200/300 jobs over time.

Progress in 2012:

- On going negotiations regarding land acquisition and land disposal
- Ongoing provision of essential infrastructure at Avondale Business Park
- Ongoing work with existing Enterprise Centres in the County to expand services
- Ongoing discussion with private sector stakeholders to develop land for employment creation.

Objectives for 2013:

- Maximise the potential growth of the business sector to create jobs and develop economic growth in the County working with local and national stakeholders.
- Work with existing enterprise centres to expand existing centres and develop centres in locations where needed.
- Work with/encourage the private sector to provide commercial units for small start up enterprise companies.

Clermont House and College, Wicklow County Campus

Progress in 2012

IT Carlow is a key stakeholder in the Wicklow County Campus Project. In 2012 the number of students registered for the Lifelong Learning Education and Training courses has increased to 240 (circa 200 in previous academic year). In excess of 30 alternative courses were offered to students in the Campus. During 2012 58 students graduated at a Conferring Ceremony held in Clermont.

The County Wicklow Enterprise Board and Teagasc are located on the Campus offering a range of advice/supports for their clients.

Progress in 2012

- The Area Action Plan for the Clermont and surrounding area was approved in 2012.
- Access improvement works to Wicklow County Campus are almost completed.

Objectives for 2013

- To continue with the development of Wicklow County Campus through physical improvements to the campus and the buildings and through the growth of student numbers at the Life Long Learning Centre.
- To encourage other business support agencies to locate at Wicklow County Campus.
- To commence the review of the Strategic Plan for Wicklow County Campus.

D05 Tourism Development and Promotion

Progress in 2012

Some major film productions took place in County Wicklow most notably The Vikings in the new film studios in Ashford. Some 250 shooting days for feature films, television productions and commercials were recorded for 2012, which makes it a very busy year in terms of filming. Some of the most used locations included Glencree, Sally Gap Roads, Luggala Estate, Brittas Bay beach, Silver Strand Beach, Lough Dan, Bray and Killruddery House and Gardens.

Assistance was provided to a number of potential audio-visual projects for 2013 who are now scouting for locations. The free Movie Map for County Wicklow for tourists was distributed throughout parts of County Dublin and County Wicklow during 2012.

Objectives for 2013

- To work with incoming television and feature film productions and to continue to provide assistance to their locations managers in finding and securing public locations.
- To continue to promote the County Wicklow as a prime film location and also to continue to increase the benefits from film induced tourism.

D06 Community and Enterprise Function

The Community and Enterprise function includes:

- The work of Wicklow County Development Board (CDB).
- Monitoring the implementation of a number of CDB related strategies, including: Traveller Interagency Strategy for County Wicklow; Wicklow's Anti-Racism and Diversity Strategy. (ARDS); County Wicklow Outdoor Recreational Strategy and Recreational Trails; Voluntary Groups Network in County Wicklow, the County Wicklow's Network for Older People and the County Wicklow Community Forum
- Input into the Planning and Development process.
- County Wicklow Playbus Project (Buala Bus) , which is a mobile interagency facility, offering play opportunities for children and family support and adult education for adults and youths in areas throughout the County that have limited social and community services.
- The Children Services Committee (involves a number of agencies including: HSE, VEC, Gardai and Wicklow County Childcare Committee)
- The Community, Cultural and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development)

The Bray RAPID Programme aims to alleviate the spatial concentration of poverty and social exclusion within designated areas of Bray, through resources and better co-ordination and closer integration in the delivery of social services.

Projects during 2012:

- **Community Gardens** – In Fassaroe
- **Strengthening Families Programme** – This programme offers advice and assistance to families in socially and economically deprived areas.
- **Training programmes** – With the Local Community Groups, FAS and the Probation Services

Projects planned for 2013:

- Community Gardens in the Oldcourt and Deerpark Estates.
- Training/community service programme in conjunction with the Probation Services, FAS and Local Community Groups.
- Training programme for unemployed young people in the RAPID areas.
- Improve co-ordination and integration in the delivery of social services
- Review and improve Community participation structures.

Social Inclusion

The Social Inclusion Unit (SIU) function involves:

- Wicklow Local Anti-Poverty Strategy. (LAPS).
- Wicklow Anti-Racism and Diversity Committee.
- Wicklow Anti-Racism and Diversity Strategy (ARDS) and the Traveller Interagency Strategy.
- County Wicklow Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Group. Implementing the workplan.
- Statistical research and data on Social and Community and Economic Development.
- Analysis and dissemination of societal related data emanating from Census 2011.
- Co-ordinating a Programme of Events for County Wicklow Social Inclusion Week.
- Supporting the work of the Regional Drugs Taskforce, Co Wicklow Network for Older People, the Traveller Interagency Group and the Wicklow Children Services Committee.

- Supporting of the Wicklow Playbus Project (Buala Bus).
- The Community Smoke Alarm Scheme.

D08 Building Control

The main objective of the Building Control section is to ensure that building control regulations and standards are adhered to. Site visits and continuous communications with those undertaking construction works form the basis of ensuring this.

Progress in 2012

Commencement & 7 Day Notices registered	266	Recoupment of Enforcement Notices costs	0
Percentage of new buildings inspected	30%	No of new dwellings commenced	96
Warning & Enforcement Notices issued	0	No of Access Cert & Part M Applications	77

Objective for 2013

Continue to enforce the Building Control Acts

D09 Economic Development and Promotion

Progress in 2012

Networking and Collaboration with Local and National Development Agencies

During 2012 the Enterprise Unit met regularly with representatives of EI and IDA, informally and formally via the County Development Board's sub-group on Economic development. Networking continues with the Local Chambers of Commerce and the County Wicklow Chamber to promote and develop business in County Wicklow and develop job opportunities in County Wicklow.

The Enterprise unit took part in the Wicklow County Enterprise Board's Information day for business earlier this year and also were present at both information evenings to assist with information for the unemployed hosted by the County Wicklow Partnership.

Google eCounty Awards

In September 2012 the Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council accepted the Google Award on behalf of the County after Wicklow was ranked number two in the Country for embracing the internet for economic growth. County Wicklow came second in the awards listing which ranked the 26 counties by the number of businesses that are growing online and contributing to the local and national economy. County Wicklow finished just behind Dublin.

The Google eCounties Awards celebrate the counties whose businesses are growing online and contributing to future economic growth. The awards are presented to counties that rank the highest in Google AdWords and Getting Irish Business Online penetration.

Objectives for 2013

Continued engagement with Local and National Stakeholders to work together in the creation of employment in county Wicklow.

D10 Property Management Costs

Property Asset Register

The project team which was formed in 2009 has been strengthened with the appointment of a dedicated conveyancing solicitor on a 2-year contract basis from January 2012, and a Property Manager in a part-time (2 days/week) role from mid-2012.

The task of the project team is to secure Council-owned property, and to implement consistent business processes for acquisition, disposal, management and leasing.

Considerable work has already been done to compile a mapped inventory of the Council's property ownership and current usage; it is estimated that this register of property assets is now 95% complete. Cross-checking of compatible registers such as the financial asset register and mapped social housing continues with GIS support.

During 2012, focus has been on bringing our legal title with the Property Registration Authority up to date with landholdings. At end November 2012, approximately 240 land registry rectifications had been lodged; it is anticipated that this volume of work will continue during 2013.

The Property Manager will initially focus on any encroachment or leasing issues on council-owned lands. A register of leases will be completed before end 2012 and audited for compliance, with required actions identified. A register of known encroachments has been created; investigations are ongoing to prioritise actions for relevant sections (e.g. regularisation of leases, disposal of land where appropriate).

D11 Heritage and Conversation Services

The Heritage Officer has responsibility for:

- Input to the Strategic Environment Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening processes for development plans
- Provides best practice for other departments in relation to historic graveyard management, management of trees, protection of natural habitats, architecture, archaeology and the development of walks
- Coordinate the Wicklow Heritage Forum
- Production and implementation of actions in the Heritage and Biodiversity Plans
- Secure finance from the Heritage Council to carry out these actions
- Coordinate activities for Heritage Week
- Assess applications for Structures at Risk grant applications

Progress in 2012

- Four meetings of Wicklow Heritage Forum took place to monitor and implement actions of Heritage Plan
- Phase 2 of County Wicklow Wetlands Survey completed
- Biodiversity Audit of Bridges and Culverts in the county completed
- Development of new website dedicated to the heritage of County Wicklow
- Participating in pilot project to develop a GIS viewer to present natural and built heritage information
- Applicant for Interreg supported project to record and promote the former mining heritage at Glendalough and Glendasan
- Over 100 events organised for Wicklow Heritage week
- Submitted and had approved, two applications for grant aid under the Structures at Risk Scheme
- Continued to develop, with Wicklow Uplands Council, the provision of visitor interpretation panels in Tinahely, Kilmacanogue, Newtownmountkennedy, Enniskerry and Rathdangan
- Assisted in the development and adjudication of the PURE mile competition

Objectives for 2013

- Continue to co-ordinate the Heritage Forum
- Ensure successful completion of Heritage plan actions
- Organise Heritage week events
- Seek funding from Heritage Council
- Seek funding from Structure at Risk Scheme

Division E - Environmental Services

Objective

To protect and enhance the natural environment of County Wicklow in accordance with the principles of sustainable and balanced development, in partnership with all sections of the community, having regard to national and EU policies and programmes.

Key Indicators

Total Division Budget	€20,715,879	Total no. of Recycling Centres	5
Tree Planting Grants to Residents Groups and Tidy Towns Associations	€4,557	<i>Total tonnage of household waste:</i>	
Tidy Town Awards	€7,350	Collected from kerbside	31,451
Projects Funded under LA21 Grants 2011	€22,000	Collected and sent for recycling	8,803
Litter Grant Aided Projects	€27,000	Household waste recycled collected at recycling centres	6,722
Special Environmental Community Awards	€1,200	Tonnage of household waste collected sent to landfill	22,649
Total no. of houses provided with a waste collection service	35,545	No. of Environmental Complaints received and investigated	2,045
Total no. of Bring Sites in Local Authority Area	148	Total no. of incidents in respect of other emergency incidents	95
		Total no. of incidents in respect of fire only	602

E01 Operation, Maintenance, And Aftercare Of Landfill

Rampere landfill closed for the acceptance of waste for disposal in 2011. The landfill and the landfill at Ballymurtagh will continue to produce leachate and landfill gas for a number of years. Provision is made in the estimates for this together with funding to enable the Council to comply with the waste licence.

E02 Operation And Maintenance Of Recovery And Recycling Facilities

Progress in 2012

- Continued support to Tinahely Development Association in operating community-recycling centre at Lugduff, Tinahely.
- The continued downturn in the economy is reflected in the fact that the quantity of recyclables collected continues to reduce.

Objectives for 2013

- The continued operation of 5 Recycling Centres across the county.
- Provide and Maintain Reuse and Recycling Facilities which incorporate education throughout the county
- Promote Ethical and Sustainable Routes for all recovered materials
- Increase environmental awareness and responsibility through the Council's Environmental Awareness Programme
- The Council continue to work in the area of Environmental awareness through the following projects/activities: -
- Green Schools, Community Education, Workshops, Children's Summer Activities, Local Authority Prevention Network Programme, Environmental Competitions, Waste Prevention and Reuse promotion, School Book Exchange, Oxfam and Five Loaves Community Shops, National Council for the Blind in Ireland, Composting, Seasonal Recycling, Schools Recycling, Reuse in the Garden, Commercial recycling, Tidy Towns and Tree Planting

E04 Provision Of Waste Collection Services

Progress in 2012

- The PURE (Protecting Upland and Rural Environments) project has been highly successful in reducing the visible amount of waste dumped on public areas in the county but also in raising the issue of illegal dumping and the harm it does to the environment and tourism.

Objectives for 2013

- Facilitate the Provision of an Effective Waste Collection and Disposal Service through the Waste Collection Permitting System

E05 Litter Management

Objectives for 2013

- Implement the Strategies set out in the Litter Management Plan
- Litter pollution and quantification surveys carried out as part of National Litter Monitoring System

E06 Street Cleaning

Street Cleaning & Litter Bin Service is provided in association with Area Offices

E07 Waste Regulations, Monitoring And Enforcement

New legislation in the area of Waste Management continues to impose a cost burden on this service.

Objectives for 2013

- Enforce Environmental Legislation and the Polluter Pays Policy
- Continued work with National TFS office, appointed as competent authority for all hazardous waste movements in Ireland

E08 Waste Management Planning

Waste Management Plan - Under the EC (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011, all waste management regions are obliged to evaluate and, if necessary, amend their waste management plan. A central coordination group has been established under the DECLG to ensure that all 10 regional plans are coordinated to reflect national policy for both hazardous and non-hazardous waste. Local variations will then be incorporated as part of National Policy.

Objectives for 2013

- Completion of new Waste Management Plan in 2013

E09 Maintenance Of Burial Grounds

There are approximately 30 burial grounds currently in use, which are controlled by Wicklow County Council. Wicklow County Council employs part time Registrars to sell grave spaces and maintain registers and works with voluntary communities in the maintenance and upkeep of burial grounds.

Objectives for 2013

- Continue to identify burial grounds that may require extensions. The focus will be in higher populated urban areas.

E10 Safety Of Structures And Places

Civil Defence

There are currently 130 registered Civil Defence Volunteers, 90 of whom are active.

A new Civil Defence Building will commence in 2013 and training will continue for Civil Defence Members.

Dangerous Structures

Environment services will continue to inspect and act on reports of potentially dangerous lands and buildings.

Water Safety

The Water Safety Programme will continue in 2013 under the direction of the appointed Water Safety Officer.

E11 Operation Of Fire Service

Wicklow County Council operates a retained fire service deployed from 10 fire stations.

Progress in 2012

- Regular meetings of Major Emergency Management Committee
- Co-ordinated meetings and training with all Principal Response Agencies including An Garda Síochána, HSE and Defence Forces
- New Fire Tender

Objectives for 2013

- To provide an efficient and effective Fire Service and secure compliance with fire safety standards, in order to protect and save lives.
- Regularly review and update the Major Emergency Plan, ensure personnel are trained and exercised regularly for roles assigned in the plan.
- Provide effective training programmes, including safety and health, for all Fire Service personnel.
- Continue to upgrade existing fire stations and to provide new stations where required.
- A new fire tender is currently under construction with expected delivery in early 2013.

E12 Fire Prevention

Objectives for 2013

- Carry out inspections of works under the Fire Services Act, 1981 and 2003 to ensure compliance and bring enforcement proceedings where appropriate.
- Complete review of Major Emergency Plan
- Continued development of National Standard Operating Guidelines
- Carry out fire safety education programmes to increase public awareness.

E13 Water Quality, Air And Noise Pollution

Wicklow County Council monitors and controls air, noise and water pollution in accordance with legislation and EU regulations.

Progress in 2012

- Wicklow County Council is committed to ensuring that Pollution Control legislation is strictly enforced. The increase in pollution control legislation is placing a heavy burden on the existing resources, of both finance and personnel, in Wicklow County Council. A RMCEI (Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspection) Plan forms the basis of controlling environmental pollution
- Action Plans for sub-catchments within the River Basin Districts have been developed and implemented on a prioritised basis. The measures to improve and protect water bodies were operational in 2012
- The Council has part-funded a NDP project to upgrade the Groundwater Protection Scheme for Co. Wicklow, which will refine the areas of extreme vulnerability, Irish Sea Till permeability, Western valleys permeability, sand/gravel aquifers and provide improved mapping
- The Council continues to process applications for certificates under the Emission of Volatile Organic Compounds for Organic Solvents Regulations 2002 and Deco Paints Regulations 2007. Dry cleaners and Vehicle Refinishers are amongst those activities that must be registered and the registers are published on the Council's website

Objectives for 2013

- To protect the environment by preventing pollution thereby achieving a clean safe, healthy and sustainable environment.
- Ensure adequate enforcement of all pollution control legislation and meet the requirements of national and EU policy directives in relation to water quality requirements
- Compliance with River Basin Districts National Monitoring Programme (Eastern & South Eastern River Basin Districts)
- Compliance with catchment management, Protection of drinking water Programme
- Prepare/update/implement Air Quality Management Plan
- Lab Accreditation
- Groundwater Source Protection Plans
- Wicklow County Council continues assigned responsibility for operational and investigative monitoring of rivers and lakes under the Water Framework Directive national monitoring programme.

Division F – Recreation and Amenity

Objective

To maintain designated parks and open spaces and to promote Blue Flag Beaches within the county.

Key Indicators

Total Division Expenditure	€4,126,075	Total Library Opening Hours	334 per wk
Number of Public Library Points*		Number of Library Visits*	
Full Time	5	Full Time Libraries	417,969
Part time	8	Part Time Libraries	91,583
Mobile Library	1	Mobile Libraries	20,993
Library Membership*		Number of items loaned (included downloaded Audio Books 3,408)*	549,321
Active 3 years	51,399	Public Internet Access Sessions*	34,428
Active 1 year	33,261		
Number of Blue Flag Beaches	3	Caravan Park Licences issued 2012	14
*Indicators refer to 2011 year			

F01 Leisure Facilities Operations

Wicklow County Council pays an annual contribution to Shoreline Ltd to operate and maintain a Skatepark and Playground facilities in Charlesland in Greystones.

F02 Operation of Library and Archival Service

Library Service

Wicklow County Council Library Service operates thirteen branch libraries throughout the county. The Mobile Library serves a further 34 locations throughout the county. A library service is also provided to Avoca IT Centre and Shelton Abbey Open Prison, and to twenty nursing homes including Carnew Community Care, Cheshire Home Shillelagh and St. Coleman's Hospital, Rathdrum.

Membership and Items Issued.

Wicklow County Council provides a quality library service to the public. The Council's policy of free library membership ensures that the public library service remains accessible to everyone. Some 300 books are downloaded monthly. This service continues to grow.

Activity Programme in 2012 included:

Regular class visits.	Historical talks.
Exhibitions.	World Book Week activities.
Culture Night events	Olympic Reading Challenge across a number of libraries.
Book Clubs for adults and teenagers.	Music circle.
Arts and crafts activities.	Story reading for children.
Quizzes.	

Fás E-Learning.

This programme enables the public to work through a structured IT programme with qualified trainers at Arklow, Ballywaltrim, Baltinglass, Blessington, Bray, Carnew, Greystones and Wicklow Town.

Wi-Fi Access.

This programme was introduced to a number of libraries during 2012 and will continue to be rolled out in 2013.

Objectives for 2013

- Maintain a full-time library service (30+ hours per week) at the five full-time libraries and a part-time library service at the eight part-time libraries.
- Continue to provide a branch library from Tinahely Market House.
- Retain and develop the Mobile Library service - Wicklow County Council's Mobile Library visits 34 locations throughout the county on a fortnightly basis. The Mobile Library is the third busiest library

service per hour open, with some 42 items borrowed every hour. The Mobile Library service registered membership was over 2,000 in 2011.

- Retain and develop Wicklow County Council's Library service and downloadable audio book facility to Nursing Homes throughout County Wicklow.

Arklow Library.

Lead Consultants for the Architectural Design and Project Management Services have been appointed for the new Arklow Library project. This project will take approximately two years to complete.

New Technology and IT.

The Library Service has created a page on **Facebook** to engage directly with users and other Agencies to advertise and promote events, facilities and new services as they come on-stream.

Family History Centre

Wicklow Family History Centre

The Wicklow Family History Centre is a genealogy research service established in 1987 by Wicklow County Council and FÁS and has computerised County Wicklow's Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland parish registers.

The Irish Family History Foundation (IFHF)

The Irish Family History Foundation represents over 30 Irish county centres and administers the *Rootsireland* site.

Online Research Service – Pay per View records on www.rootsireland.ie

The *Rootsireland* site currently holds over 19 million records. The Wicklow Family History Centre feature on this worldwide site, offering Irish parish records as a genealogical resource.

County Wicklow Heritage Forum

The Heritage Forum promotes County Wicklow in terms of genealogy and heritage tourism.

Wicklow Family History Promotions in 2012

- The service co-hosted a genealogy stand at *Kildare Village Summer Festival* in July 2012 and the *Back to Our Past* Show at the RDS in October 2012.
- Family History talks were presented throughout the year and at Baltinglass and Wicklow Libraries during Heritage Week.
- An article on Family History research in County Wicklow will feature in the upcoming UCD publication *Archives and Archivists Volume II*.
-

Projects

The genealogy service continues to process Research Projects for diaspora families with 'Wicklow roots'.

The **County Wicklow Heritage Website**, as part of a network of heritage websites created by the National Museum of Ireland. Wicklow will be the first county site in this network and the site will provide information on Wicklow's genealogy, history and heritage. This site will be launched for the Gathering 2013.

The Gathering Ireland 2013

The County Wicklow Steering Committee for the Gathering 2013 is supporting numerous events in the county and a calendar of events will be compiled for 2013.

Wicklow County Archives Service

Projects

School Records Collection Project:

- Avoca National School is the latest to offer its collection of school records.

Records Management Programme:

- The archives service has developed documented systems for the retention and disposal of the records of Wicklow County Council, in partnership with *Filestores*. The programme continued in 2012, with the transfer to archives of the County Council's large collections of Housing Section and Environment Section records.

F03 Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations

This includes the operation, maintenance and improvement of the following facilities:

- Charlesland Sport and Recreation Park and Skatepark.
- Playgrounds (existing) at Baltinglass Recreation Park; Blessington; Enniskerry; Greystones; Kilmacanogue; Newcastle; Rathdrum; Tinahely (MUGA)
- Public parks and open spaces
- Licensing and inspection of caravan parks
- Public Carparks (Brittas Bay & Glendalough are franchised)
- Designated Beaches - Retention of Blue Flag is key.

Objectives for 2013

- Playgrounds (future planned in Partnership with County Wicklow Partnership LEADER) at Ashford; Ballycooge; Dunlavin; Enniskerry; Kilcoole; Knockananna; Newtownmountkennedy; Rathnew; Shillelagh; Tinahely (Children's)

F04 Community, Sport and Recreational Development

County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy

The County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Committee was established in July 2009, as a sub-committee of the County Development Board, to implement the strategies as outlined in the County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy.

This strategy is managed by County Wicklow Partnership in partnership with Coillte, Fáilte Ireland, Irish Sports Council, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Wicklow County Council, Wicklow IFA and Wicklow Uplands Council.

The five strategic objectives for outdoor recreation in County Wicklow for the period 2009 – 2013 are:

- Integrated outdoor recreation management.
- Improving opportunities and facilities for sustainable outdoor recreation.
- Supporting conservation through outdoor recreation.
- Promotion, education and raising awareness of outdoor recreation.
- Stimulating outdoor recreation tourism and entrepreneurship.

Co-operation Ireland All-Island Pride of Place Awards 2012.

Wicklow Historic Gaol and Tearmann Community Garden represented County Wicklow in the 2012 Annual Co-operation Ireland All-Island Pride of Place Awards.

Wicklow's Historic Gaol took one of the top Special Awards under the theme of Cultural Tourism, which is for entries whose work, or aspects of it, is unique.

The judges described the visitor experience as atmospheric, realistic and thought provoking. They believed it to be one of the best examples of Community and Local Authority collaboration. They said "the positive impact of this 'sustainable visitor attraction' is undoubtedly far reaching and makes a huge economic contribution to its locality.

Wicklow Local Sports Partnership

The objectives of Wicklow Local Sports Partnership are identified in its Strategic Plan 2010-2013.

1. **Sports Training and Development:**
Work in partnership with sports in County Wicklow to increase participation.
Deliver quality training to sports leaders.
Increase opportunities to support people with a disability.
2. **Physical Activity:**
To increase physical activity opportunities in primary schools, pre-schools and the wider community.
3. **Leadership and Management:**
To provide effective leadership and management of the Local Sports Partnership.
To provide funding and grant aid to priority groups.
4. **Marketing and Communications:**
Launch a successful communications initiative to brand, link and promote the Local Sports Partnership with its members.

Raise the profile of sport, physical activity and the work of the Local Sports Partnership through the website, (www.wicklowlsp.ie), communications and newsletter.

Communicate with key stakeholders.

Identify and track participants who are involved in Local Sports Partnership programmes.

Wicklow Local Sports Partnership is on Facebook and Twitter.

F05 Operation of Arts Programme

The role of the Council's Arts Programme is to nurture and develop a wide range of vibrant artistic and cultural activities taking place in the visual arts, music, theatre, literature, sculpture, youth arts, community arts and festivals.

Advice and support is offered to individual artists, craft practitioners, arts facilitators, art centres, art groups, art organisations, festival committees, schools and community groups in relation to the Arts in County Wicklow.

Wicklow County Arts Office is involved in Absolutely Wicklow, Music Generation, Artist Residencies, Artists seed funding grants and other creative industries which promote tourism, enterprise, culture and employment.

The Council's Arts budget for 2013 will continue to support Artistic and Cultural practices in the county. The Arts Council funding is provided on a match-funding basis.

Arts Programme For 2013 Includes:

Visual Artist Development Programme.

Development of a Music Educators Network.

Artist Residencies – in education and community contexts.

Grants and Bursaries.

Youth Dance, Theatre and Music Programmes

Visual Arts Discussion Group.

Artlinks Programme.

Absolutely Wicklow.

Wicked Young Film Makers Programme.

Music Generation

F06 Agency and Recoupable Services

Youth Project and Culture Nights are run through Agency Services through the Wicklow Arts Office.

Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare

Objective

To protect public health, animal health and animal welfare.

To administer the Higher Education Grant Scheme in an efficient manner

Key Indicators

Total Division Budget	€3,469,520	No. of dog licences issued	5,685
No. of ante and post-mortem inspections	149	No. of general dog licences issued	12
No. of hygiene inspections	171	No. of stray/unwanted dogs surrendered / brought to the pound	282
No. of cattle inspected	332	No. of dogs reclaimed by their owners	56
No. of sheep inspected	1,518	No. of dogs re-homed	148
Microbiological analysis (meat)	72	No. of dogs euthanised	79
Microbiological analysis (water)	22	No. of on-the spot fines issued	7
Veterinary residues analysis	2	No. of prosecutions	0
Chemical Analysis (meat)	20		
Number of Higher Education Grants (Academic Year Sept 2011-May 2012)			1,086

G01 Land Drainage Costs

This is provision for pension payments relating to the former County Committee of Agriculture.

G02 Operation and Maintenance of Piers and Harbours

Wicklow County Council assumed responsibility for the operation of Arklow Harbour on the 1st January 2012.

Objectives for 2013

- Steel sheet piling
- Water mitigation
- New slipway for small boats
- Offshore Site Investigation for disposal at sea

G03 Costal Protection and Flood mitigation works

Works in association with the Office of Public Works continue.

G04 Veterinary Services

Objectives for 2013

- Carry out hygiene audits of all abattoirs and meat manufacturing plants based on risk assessment.
- Promote best practice in relation to animal welfare.
- Work with the statutory bodies in order to ensure a comprehensive inspection service of food premises.
- Wicklow County Council will continue to work with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, the Health Service Executive and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine during 2013
- Requirements under Dog Breeding Establishment Act will be enhanced.

G05 Educational Support Services

Higher Education Grants

Wicklow County Council acts on behalf of the Department of Education & Skills in administering the Higher Education Scheme, under the Student Support Act 2011 and supporting legislation. All monies paid in respect of maintenance and fees are recoupable with the exception of a fixed contribution of €6,019.83, which the Council is obliged to pay under the 1968 Act.

Progress in 2012

Over 1500 students in County Wicklow applied for a Higher Education Grant in the 2011/2012 academic year. After all applications were processed, 1086 students were awarded a grant, with expenditure of over €4,918,809.

For the 2012/2013 academic year a new centralised authority, Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) was introduced to deal with Higher Education Grants for first time college students. This reduced the number of applications being made to Wicklow County Council, as only renewal students are now being processed locally.

To date in 2012, 693 applications have been received and processed with 630 students awarded a Higher Education Grant. Wicklow County Council will continue to accept applications until the end of March 2013.

Objectives for 2013

The Higher Education Grant Section aims to continue to:

- Assess fully completed applications received, within three weeks of submission of application.
- Make payments on a monthly basis and post to the colleges in a timely manner.
- Complete all statistical returns and recoupment claims to the Department in a timely manner
- Respond to queries raised by students and/or colleges as efficiently as possible.

Division H - Miscellaneous Services

Objective

To prepare, maintain and publish the Register of Electors for County Wicklow each year.

To work in partnership with the Gardaí and community interests to consult, discuss and make recommendation on matters affecting the policing of the area.

Key Indicators

Total Division Expenditure	€10,909,929	Total Motor Tax Receipts 2011	€16,578,421
No. of designated casual trading spaces (reviewed 2011/12)	17	Net receipts due to Local Government Fund	€16,524,152
Number of voters included in the Register of Electors 2012/13	93,351	No. of Motor Taxes issued	94,961
No. of Casual Trading licences renewed (6 month & 12 month)	11	No. of Drivers Licences issued	18,850
		No. of cars newly registered	2,290

H01 Profit/Loss Machinery Account

Wicklow County Council own 115 items of Plant consisting of small and large vans, jeeps, pick up trucks frost gritters etc. They are discharged on a weekly basis out to the 5 engineering areas. Some items of plant for example frost gritters and surfacing machinery are seasonal and only discharged at certain times of the year. Any profit made from the discharge of the machinery yard is used to continually maintain and update the plant stock.

H02 Profit/Loss Stores Account

Wicklow County Council operate a central stores for the supply of all general building materials such as cement, pipes, water fittings and electrical items. The stores also purchase and issue fuel to the various areas from three depots one in Wicklow, Raheen in Roundwood and Tinahely. The stores have recently taken on the purchasing and distribution of paper and office supplies.

H03 Administration of Rates

Wicklow County Council's Rates Office bills and collects rates from 1,532 customers in the county each year. Rates are a property tax levied on the occupiers of all commercial and industrial property. The Valuation Office in accordance with the Valuation Act 2001 determines the valuation of each property. The valuation of each property is multiplied by the annual rate on valuation (ARV) to give the amount of rates payable by each occupier per annum. Wicklow County Council sets the annual rate on valuation.

H04 Franchise

Under the Electoral Acts, Wicklow County Council is charged with preparing and publishing the Register of Electors for the County each year. A Draft Register is published on 1st November annually and, following a period for display and amendment, a final Register of Electors is published on 1st February of the following year. This comes into force on the 15th February.

The total local government electorate on the 2012/2013 register is 93,351

The Council strives to provide a comprehensive and accurate Register of Electors to facilitate the democratic process at election time. Through extensive local advertising and initiatives, both web based and traditional, coupled with the efforts of a well trained and resourced team of field workers covering the county, a Register is produced which is tested at each election and referendum. Every opportunity is provided to any qualified person to be included in the Register.

A team of 38 fieldworkers is employed to visit every household in the County during the months of July, August and September each year.

The Budget provision includes for payroll and travel expenses for the field-staff and office staff along with local advertising, postage and printing.

Progress in 2012

2012 has been particularly busy due to the Referendum on the Fiscal Treaty held on the 31st May and the Children's Rights Referendum held on the 10th November, resulting in the need for the preparation of 2 Supplements to the Register of Electors 2011/2012.

The percentage turnout in the Wicklow constituency at elections and referendums is consistently higher than the national average. The standard of accuracy of the register is a major factor in that achievement.

Objectives in 2013

The objectives for the 2012/2013 Register are to continue with the high level of accuracy which has been achieved to date and to build on the competency of the 38 Fieldworkers in supplying the most accurate and up to date information available.

H05 Operation of Morgue and Coroner Expenses

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer with responsibility under the law for the medico-legal and forensic investigation of certain deaths occurring in County Wicklow. If a death is due to unnatural causes for example in a road traffic collision, suicide, accident at work or by drowning then an inquest must be held by law.

There is a legal responsibility on the Doctor, Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Funeral Undertaker, Householder, An Garda Síochána and every person in charge of any institution or premises in which the deceased person was residing at the time of death to inform the Coroner. The death may be reported to a Sergeant of An Garda Síochána who will then notify the Coroner. However, any person may notify the Coroner of the circumstances of a particular death.

Wicklow County Council retains the services of two Coroners.

H06 Weighbridges

Costs included here are for the maintenance of weighbridges.

H07 Operation of Market and Casual Trading

Objectives for 2013

Continued implementation of Casual Trading Acts and Wicklow County Council Casual Trading Byelaws 2012

H09 Local Representation and Civic Leadership

Wicklow County Council Joint Policing Committee – Public Meetings

Section 36(2)(c) of An Garda Síochána Act provides that the function of a joint policing committee is, inter alia, to 'arrange and host public meetings concerning matters affecting the policing of the local authority's administrative area.'

The Wicklow County Council JPC held two public meetings during 2012, in Roundwood and in Shillelagh. In deciding where to hold the public meetings the committee had regard to the County's geographical area, the locations of its towns and the existence of the four other JPCs in each of the Town Council areas of Arklow, Greystones, Bray and Wicklow.

Progress in 2012

Two public meeting held in strategic locations in County Wicklow.

Continued engagement with community interests regarding policing in the area

Objectives for 2013

Continue to work in partnership with the An Garda Síochána, local public and community representatives and community interests regarding policing in the area.

H10 Motor Tax

Wicklow County Council provides Motor Taxation services from three offices. In line with the Croke Park Action Plan, two of these offices were rationalised in the year 2011 and operate reduced hours.

Current Motor Tax Hours are

Wicklow	Monday – Friday	09.00 – 15.30
Bray	Tuesday – Thursday	10.30 – 14.00
Blessington	Tuesday	09.00 – 12.30 and 14.00 – 15.30

H11 Agency and Recoupable Services

This includes the cost for services provided by Wicklow County Council on behalf of third parties and the associated income.

NPPR income is also budgeted here.

Central Management Costs

Central Management Charges are overhead costs incurred in Wicklow County Council. These costs are reallocated to the services within each Division to get a true cost of the provision of that service. This reallocated cost appears as part of the service support costs of each service. Central Management Charge overheads are reallocated on the basis of cost drivers as follows:

Order of Allocation	Cost Pool	Cost Driver - Division	Cost Drive - Service
1	Pensions & Lump sums	Salary and Wages costs	Salary and Wages costs
2	Corporate Buildings	m ² per division	Salaried Staff per service
3	Corporate Affairs	Salaried Staff numbers	Salaried Staff numbers
4	IT	PC nos. or % usage	PC nos. or % usage
5	Human Resources	Staff nos.	Staff nos.
6	Finance	No. of transactions	No. of transactions
7	Area Offices	% Usage	% Usage

Pension and Lump Sum

Wicklow County Council currently pays 328 pensioners at a cost of €3,282,457 (outturn 2012). Included under this heading is a provision for €3,581,831 for 2013. This includes an amount of €272,200 for lump sum payments.

Corporate Buildings Overhead

This includes costs for heating and lighting, building and grounds maintenance, caretaking and cleaning, file storage, recycling, rates and insurance and loan charges.

Corporate Affairs Overhead

The salaries and administrative costs for staff providing general corporate services are provided here. Areas for specific mention include:

Freedom Of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 1997 came into effect for local authorities on 21st October 1998 (amended by Freedom of Information Act 2003). All records created after this date come within the scope of the FOI Acts and can be requested subject to the exemptions provided.

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts 1997 and 2003 establish three statutory rights

1. A legal right to access information held by public bodies
2. A legal right to have information relating to oneself amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading
3. A legal right to obtain reason for decisions affecting oneself

Progress in 2012

The total number of requests received during 2012 was 35 at end of November 2012.

Being processed	3	Refused	6
Granted	9	Withdrawn/Deemed Withdrawn	7
Part Granted	7	Handled outside of FOI	3

Objectives in 2013

To continue to process all Freedom of Information requests in accordance with the statutory deadlines as set out in the Act.

Accessibility

Throughout 2012 Wicklow County Council has continued its commitment to promote 'equal access for all'. The 'Wicklow Local Authorities Disability implementation Plan 2005 – 2015' continues to be the main focus of the local authority and a number of further actions have been completed.

Progress in 2012

During the year the services of the Access Officer became part time and no further funding from the Disability Strategy Fund became available which limits the actions that could be carried out.

The Access Officer strives to ensure that all the legal obligations in relation to accessibility are met.

Objectives for 2013

To ensure that all documents and plans are proofed against the current disability plan and to make them accessible on request.

To update the current Disability Plan and to increase awareness amongst staff of accessibility issues experienced by the public when availing of Local Authority services.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. Wicklow Local Authorities Internal Audit unit endeavours to provide this service across the organisation and including the Town Councils. An Annual Audit Plan is compiled following a consultative process with the Council's Management Team and the perceived needs of the organisation. Internal Audit attends the meetings of the Audit Committee and presents reports on an on-going basis. Progress with the implementation of the Audit Plan and audit reports is monitored by the Audit Committee

Audit Committee

Wicklow Local Authorities has a five member Audit Committee. Two of the members are elected Councillors with the remaining three being external appointments who bring their professional expertise and experience to bear on the work of the Committee. The Audit Committee has two principal roles,

- Review the Council's financial and budgetary reporting activities and procedures
- Foster the development of best practice in the internal audit function

The Audit Committee meets quarterly and presents an Annual Report on its activities to the members of the Council. The Audit Committee is supported by the Head of Finance and the Director of Corporate Services who, along with the Internal Audit Unit, attend each of its meetings.

Information Technology Services

The Council's I.S. Department's Operational Plan for 2012 has been substantially progressed against a background of reduced budget and resources. The operational plan supports the objectives of the Corporate Plan and is the agreed prioritised list of projects and ongoing support for the Departments and Functions that I.S. serve. Strict adherence to the I.S. budget was a feature of operations in 2012 as in other years.

The highlights of 2012 include:

- A two-year Managed Print Service (MPS) contract was concluded during the summer. This provides a full Printing/Copying/Scanning/Faxing and related service. Provided initially to County Buildings, Wicklow and possibly later extending to all the councils in the county, the contract envisages high levels of cost effectiveness, energy efficiency and rapid response to maintenance calls.
- Property Interest Register (PIR). Work is ongoing in supporting a dedicated in-house solicitor to perfect title to Council-owned lands. All social housing has been mapped, as have other property assets belonging to each section. A corresponding audit of the financial asset register is scheduled for completion by end 2012. Review of existing land leases continues, as does strategic land assessment.
- Wicklow's mapped data is now fed through to public map viewers myplan.ie and mypp.ie, as part of an all-Ireland viewer. It is envisioned that additional Wicklow data will be shared during 2013 under the INSPIRE directive.
- The IS section provides an in-house GIS technical service to streamline and improve decision-making processes, e.g. considerable time has been dedicated to the production and support of Strategic Environmental Assessments during 2012.

Given the level of new systems development and implementation over the past number of years, there has been a significant increase in the burden of support on I.S. staff which has been managed very well with support being kept to previous year's high standards. Operational support and maintenance for critical Council systems continues including Financial System (Agresso), Revenue Collections, Housing, Planning, Fire Service, Environment, Payroll, Roads, Library, Voter Registration, Major Emergency Planning, etc.

Plans for 2013 include:

- Providing assistance towards the implementation of the “Putting People First” programme, as required,
- Support the national Transforming Public Services strategy and the Croke Park sectoral plan especially on the eGovernment initiatives,
- Continue to support national and local shared services initiatives,
- Reduction of monetary and carbon costs where possible,
- Continue to support PIR with title registrations, formalised business processes, strategic land use, audit of completed CPOs, linkage with financial and other systems during 2013.
- Implement any infrastructural changes required with the aim of improving network performance and its protection from external and internal threats,
- Support as required for upgraded regional water & drainage systems.
- Support water metering rollout,
- Test the backup and recovery of systems and data in the event of a disaster,
- Implement a common map viewer for public and staff to provide access to location of services and facilities provided by the Council
- Continue to provide support to utilise digitally mapped data from various sources in decision-making processes.

Objectives for 2013 are:

- Reduction of costs to ensure best possible value for money in all I.S. contracts and operations,
- Extension of Shared Services initiatives where appropriate,
- Support the optimisation of business processes within the Council through the use of I.S. solutions,
- Management of technology and data resources and supporting effective evidence based and co-ordinated decision making,
- Improvement of internal communications and the development and sharing of best practice,
- Provision of Business Continuity and risk reduction by the use of advanced fault tolerant data storage and disaster recovery solutions,
- Improved I.S. security and data protection policies

The importance of I.S. to the functioning of the Council has grown in line with the modernisation programme and in the delivery of new automated business systems in the past number of years.

Human Resources Function**Human Resources, Payroll & Superannuation Project**

In recognition of the major changes facing local government, the Local Government Management Services Board commissioned PA Consultants to undertake a wide-ranging review of the HR function in local authorities in order to address the structures, resources and processes required to meet the various strategic and operational requirements of local authorities.

Following a tender process completed in January 2007, Core International was selected as the supplier of a Human Resources, Payroll and Superannuation integrated system for the local authority sector and the system has now been substantially implemented in Wicklow Local Authorities.

As Core is an integrated HR, Payroll and Superannuation system, Wicklow Local Authorities are now able to implement any statutory changes in legislation, or requirements from the Croke Park Agreement in a more efficient and timely manner.

Progress 2012

The Training module went live in 2012.

Objective 2013

Phase 2 of the project is underway with it being envisaged that the Health & safety and Performance Management modules will be rolled out in 2013.

Health and Safety

Wicklow County Council subscribes to a dynamic and interactive Health and Safety process. Accordingly the Health and Safety Office avails of every opportunity to reflect these principles in terms of consultation, training and the development of a comprehensive Health and Safety Management System.

Training is provided throughout the year on a proactive basis. Training provided includes: Safe Pass, Safety Awareness, Basic and Advanced Chainsaw, Confined Spaces Entry, Abrasive Wheels, Manual Handling, Construction Skills Certification Scheme (C.S.C.S.), Managing Safely in Construction Projects, First Aid, Chemical Awareness, Signing, Lighting & Guarding and Locating Underground Services.

Policies and procedures in Wicklow County Council are constantly being reviewed in line with new best practices and legislative changes. Staff participation in the process is encouraged and the input of the Safety Representatives is valued.

The Corporate Safety Statement is reviewed on an annual basis. In addition Ancillary Safety Statements/Local Safety Statement for each Department are reviewed annually.

The Health and Safety Management Committee meet on a monthly basis and the Safety Representatives Committee meets every two month. Health and Safety is a permanent item on the agenda of the Management Team

Progress in 2012

- Commenced review of Draft National Local Authority Policies & Procedures
- Working closer with the Regional Training Centre to ensure value for money on all training courses provided.
- Ongoing audits of workplaces.
- Ongoing review of H&S Statements etc.

Objectives for 2013

- Commence the roll out of the National Local Authority Policies & Procedures
- Commence the roll out of the new risk assessment procedures to all staff
- Continue implementation of a Safety Health and Welfare Management System.
- Ongoing Health and Safety training for Staff.

Training And Development

Wicklow County Council recognises that training and development assists staff to realise their full potential and can lead to greater organisational performance and job satisfaction and therefore is committed to ensuring that every member of staff has the opportunity and support available to them.

Staff members also regularly attend seminars and conferences directly related to their area of work and expertise. The Council also encourages and assists staff to undertake relevant further education at all stages of their career.

Progress in 2012

Training was delivered to staff throughout the year on a wide variety of topics including: Health and Safety, Customer Care, Personal Development Training, Agresso Training, Legislative Training, IT Training, Risk Management Training, Disability Awareness Training, Managerial Development Training, and Water Services specialised training. In addition Computer Training was offered to Elected Members earlier this year.

Objectives in 2013

To continue to offer training and development to all staff members and elected members to ensure greater organisational performance and personal job satisfaction.

Finance Function Overhead

This includes the salaries and administrative costs for Finance staff and financial costs such as bank charges incurred in Wicklow County Council.

Area Office Overhead

There are five Area Offices in county Wicklow in Arklow, Wicklow, Bray/Greystones, Tinahely and Blessington, which operate in conjunction with most Directorates to provide services to their areas.

