

**17 November 2017**

**TO: CATHAOIRLEACH AND MEMBERS OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Report of Chief Executive on the Draft Budget for Wicklow County Council  
for the local financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018**

Dear Councillors,

The Draft Annual Budget and Chief Executive's Report for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 has been prepared in the statutory format, in accordance with S102 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended). The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government has determined that the prescribed period for the holding of the Annual Budget Meeting for 2018 is 1st November to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Accordingly the statutory Annual Budget Meeting is scheduled for 10am Monday November 27th. The Budget must be adopted within a 14 day period commencing on that date.

As you are aware, there are four main stages to the Local Authority budgetary process.

1. Agree the Budget Strategy and Local Property Tax variation.
2. Develop Draft Budgetary plans for the Municipal Districts.
3. Draft and Adopt the Statutory Annual Budget.
4. Prepare the Schedule of Municipal District Works and Service Delivery Plan.

The attached Draft Budget has been prepared in consultation with the Corporate Policy Group taking account of known financial parameters. This includes the decision of the Members to retain the LPT basic rate for 2018. This provides approximately €2.6m towards budgetary requirements which were identified in the report to the LPT Meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

***Local Property Tax***

The Government agreed the Local Property Tax (LPT) Allocations for 2018 with 80% of LPT retained locally to fund vital public services. Wicklow is one of the twelve counties to be a net beneficiary under the national equalisation model, with the balance of 20% to be paid into an equalisation fund. This is to ensure no local authority is worse off when compared to the 2014 General Purpose Grants allocations.

Wicklow County Council's provisional LPT allocation (80%) for 2018 is €13,697,550. Wicklow will receive greater levels of LPT funding in 2018 compared to the level of funding we received from General Purpose Grants for 2014. Consequently the Council has been notified that part of this surplus will be used to fund services in the Housing area thereby replacing central government funding for these areas.

Details on this are provided in Table 1 below and also in Appendix 2 of the Draft Budget Tables.

**TABLE 1 – 2018 Local Property Tax Allocation**

	<b>2018 (Fin 05 2017)</b>
100% of LPT Income Allocations for Wicklow	17,121,937
20% to National Equalisation Fund	3,424,387
<b>80% of LPT to be retained locally</b>	<b>13,697,550</b>
	-
Amount of surplus to self fund housing	1,725,915
	-
Discretionary LPT Funding for Budget 2018	<b>11,971,635</b>

### ***Municipal Districts***

- ***Municipal District Budget Process***

The General Municipal Allocations (GMA) were considered and adopted by the members at the recently held Municipal District budget meetings and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members for their valued input and feedback during these meetings, which I attended along with the Head of Finance. I have incorporated the adopted allocations of €214,500 into the overall Draft Budget. Moreover, an additional provision of €3,000 has been made to the Baltinglass Municipal District in respect of the recent friendship agreement between Carnew and Smiths Falls, Ontario, Canada. The total funding provided under the GMA for 2018 represents a 9% increase on 2017. However, this allocation forms only a part of the overall budget for the Municipal Districts and the Draft Annual Budget also includes significant funding streams under the Schedule of Municipal District Works.

Furthermore, an additional €300,000 is being provided in the 2018 budget for footpath improvements and it is also my intention to release extra funding to the Districts following the distribution by IPB of retained earnings, confirmation of which is expected shortly. I will communicate further details on this matter upon official notification of the amount due from IPB.

- ***Schedule of Municipal Works***

Following the adoption of the annual budget, a schedule of proposed works of maintenance and repairs to be carried out in each municipal district shall be prepared for adoption by the members in early 2018. To this end, it is appropriate that each Municipal District review their 2017 operations to assess how they have delivered on the Service Plan with a view to agreeing the 2018 works early next year. In addition, it is my intention to introduce new procedures to allow for the members to have greater input into the decision making process for the local Roads Programme. The Director of Roads will issue further information on this development in the coming weeks.

### ***Commercial Rates***

#### ***Commercial Rates Income***

Commercial Rate income is estimated at €27.6m for 2018.

#### ***Rates Harmonisation***

Pre-unification there were four rating authorities in County Wicklow with four separate Annual Rates on Valuation (ARV). The Local Government Reform Act 2014 (S29) provides for the harmonisation of the ARVs. This means rate payers within the County transition to a single county rate.

The harmonised ARV of €72.04 was adopted by the Members in 2015. This rate has a materially neutral impact on the finances of Wicklow County Council. The rate means that over 55% of the rate base will see a reduction in their rates bill.

The Base Year Adjustment (BYA) provides for the phasing of increases and decreases on the annual rates. It is proposed to transition to the rate of €72.04 over 5 years. 2015 was Year 1 and in 2015 the BYA applied meant rate payers were charged the same in 2015 as in 2014. The first year of changes to the rate demands was 2016. The timeframe can be revisited and agreed each year at the Annual Budget Meeting.

The base year adjustment for the former four rating authorities is shown in Table C of the budgetary tables. The impact of this for ratepayers is:

- 19% will see an increase of 3% (Former Arklow and Wicklow TC)
- 26% will see an increase of 2% (Former Bray TC)
- 55% will see a decrease of 2% (Former Wicklow CC).

The Draft Budget also provides for the continuation of the Rates Incentive Scheme. The aim of the Scheme is to ease the burden on local ratepayers and address their concerns about the impact of commercial rates. It also helps mitigate the effect of the ARV harmonisation. To this end, a grant of 5%, of the current year bill up to a maximum of €250, will continue to be paid in 2018 as a financial support to occupiers of commercial properties with total annual commercial rates bills of up to and including €10,000, subject to certain terms and conditions.

In fact, approximately 90% of ratepayers currently operating in County Wicklow are small and medium businesses who are deemed eligible to apply under the incentive scheme (see Table 2).

**Table 2 Wicklow Rate Base**

Annual Rates Billing Band	No. of Properties	Rates Base Value	Commercial Rates Value	% of Rate properties	Average Annual Rate Demand per property
€			€	%	€
<b>&gt; to 1,000</b>	949	7,914	569,387	2.05	600
<b>1,000 – 2,000</b>	954	19,571	1,396,228	5.03	1,464
<b>2,000 – 3,000</b>	641	22,085	1,577,411	5.69	2,461
<b>3,000 – 5,000</b>	672	36,626	2,624,641	9.46	3,906
<b>5,000 – 10,000</b>	509	49,783	3,548,286	12.79	6,971
<b>10,000 – 15,000</b>	142	24,483	1,748,386	6.30	12,313
<b>15,000 – 20,000</b>	75	18,241	1,296,951	4.67	17,293
<b>20,000 – 30,000</b>	67	22,924	1,642,636	5.92	24,517
<b>30,000 – 50,000</b>	60	31,323	2,252,451	8.12	37,541
<b>50,000 – 100,000</b>	38	36,924	2,625,536	9.46	69,093
<b>100,000 – 500,000</b>	24	64,900	4,692,590	16.91	195,525
<b>&gt; 500,000</b>	3	50,684	3,771,396	13.59	1,257,132
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,134</b>	<b>385,459</b>	<b>27,745,902</b>	<b>100</b>	

### *Revaluation 2019*

Revaluation 2019 is part of a national programme to modernise the rateable valuation of all commercial and industrial property in Ireland. The programme has already been completed in a number of Local Authorities and commenced in Wicklow in October 2017. As a first step the Valuation Office has written to all owners/occupiers of rated properties who will now be required to complete and return a Revaluation Information Form. The purpose of revaluation is to bring increased transparency and more equity to the local authority rating system. Following revaluation, there will be a much closer and uniform relationship between the current annual rental values of commercial properties and their commercial rates liability. The new valuations will be published in September 2019 will come into effect for rating purposes from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 onwards.

### *Rates on Vacant Premises*

The LG Reform Act 2014 provides for a change to rating law in relation to the refund of rates on vacant properties. The elected members may by way of reserved function vary the levels of rates refund applicable to vacant property in individual local electoral areas. The Act does not make any change to the eligibility criteria for refunds.

The decision to alter the rate of refund should be taken at the Annual Budget Meeting. It is decided in respect of the entire local electoral area and will apply only for the year to which the budget relates. Each local electoral area can have a different rate of refund. In the absence of any decision the existing provisions re the rate of refund apply. The current rate of refund that applies in Wicklow is 100%.

In weighing the decision to reduce the rate of refund the following issues should be considered:

- Limited localised recovery of commercial sectors in Wicklow
- Additional cost-burden to landlords which may hinder tentative recovery
- Majority of property owners are actively engaged in seeking a tenant and it is not in their interest to leave property vacant
- Challenge and cost to the rates collection process.

Furthermore, new legislation is currently being drafted by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government regarding the governance of commercial rates. This legislation will provide for the introduction of a maximum level of vacancy to be determined by the Minister. The provision for the elected members to further reduce the level of refunds will continue, with any proceeds from further reductions added to the General Municipal Allocation.

In light of these factors, it is recommended that the rate of refund for eligible vacant properties remains at 100% for 2018.

### **Staffing**

There is an ongoing need to recruit staff (indoor/outdoor) to maintain services and the increase in the pay provision for Budget 2018 should go some way to alleviate the pressure divisions/sections are currently operating under.

Budget 2018 provides for additional staff to support Wicklow County Council's Housing Capital Construction Programme. It also provides for the filling of vacancies that have developed over the last few years due to the public sector embargo and for additional staff that are required for the Fire Services, IT section and Libraries.

The additional cost of the Lansdowne Road Agreement to the budget in 2018 equates to approximately €1.1m of which we will receive only 80% compensation from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. As such, the balance of circa €0.2m will have to be met from our own resources.

## **2018 Draft Budget Overview**

The Draft Budget presented to you provides for expenditure of €95,548,436 in 2018. However, as the Council is statutorily required to prepare a balanced budget, expenditure provisions must be matched by income.

The Draft Budget has therefore been prepared with the following income projections:

Divisional Income	€56.1M
Local Property Tax	€12.0M
Rates	€27.6M

Budget 2018 is set at a comparable level to last year so there is limited scope for any significant expenditure increases across divisions/services. In fact we are facing considerable challenges in 2018 due to increasing pension commitments arising from an ageing workforce in Wicklow County Council. . The issue of retirements is a serious concern as up to 248 council staff will be eligible to retire over the next 5 years. This is an area that will have to be addressed by Central Government in the future as it is neither feasible nor sustainable for Local Authorities to continue to cover these increasing costs from existing resources.

In addition, our main sources of income are restricted in that the Local Property Tax allocation remains at a similar level to 2017 as new proprieties cannot be added to the LPT allocation until the end of 2019. We are also in the middle of our rates harmonisation process which also runs until the end of 2019 and until its completion we cannot alter the Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV).

Nevertheless, the identification of savings under certain expenditure lines has allowed for modest increases under a number of divisions/services including such items as:

- Increased funding of towards housing of the homeless.
- Budget provision for the commencement of a Housing Conditional Survey.
- Additional funding for central heating installation of our housing stock.
- Funding for Creative Ireland initiatives.
- Additional staffing provision for Libraries throughout the county.
- Implementation of a new car parking management contract throughout the county.
- Funding provision for new energy saving measures in order to meet our targets for public sector energy consumption.
- Commencement of works required to upgrade Wicklow and Arklow swimming pools to industry standard.
- Retention of the €900,000 Discretionary fund for Municipal Districts in respect of Public Realm works.
- Provision of a €300,000 allocation for local footpath upgrades/maintenance at Municipal District level.
- Increased funding for Arklow, Wicklow and Bray Harbours.
- Additional funding for Burial Ground Extensions.

This increased expenditure has been achieved despite the significant constraints imposed on us in 2018 arising from the impact of the Lansdowne Road Agreement, a decrease in our annual insurance dividend payment by circa 50%, and additional superannuation commitments as a result of an increase in the numbers eligible to retire in 2018.

Key changes in the Draft Annual Budget are summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 - Summary of Major Changes to Budget 2018**

		<b>Cost / (Saving) €000s</b>
<b>Housing</b>	Conditional Survey	43
	Central Heating Provision	25
	Land Loans	(203)
	Homeless Funding	160
	Homeless Income Recoupment Increase	(239)
<b>Roads</b>	Local Road Footpath Renewal	± 300
	Regional Road Winter Maintenance	(50)
	Public Lighting Allocation	(130)
<b>Water</b>	Irish Water reduction in income & expenditure	± 203
	Irish Water secondees	120
<b>Planning,</b>	Planning Income budget increased	37
	Enforcement Legal Fees	(25)
<b>Community &amp; Social Development</b>	Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	(40)
	Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)	(90)
	Rates Incentive Scheme	100
<b>Economic Development</b>	Hazardous Waste Collection	(35)
	Tinahely Recycling Centre	(30)
	Recycling Mobile Collection	(48)
<b>Environment</b>	Creative Ireland	34
	TUS Ambassadors	20
	Library running costs/payroll increase	178
	Playground maintenance	15
	Library Book Fund	(50)
<b>Ag, Ed, H&amp;W</b>	OPW Flood Relief Schemes Match Funding	50
	Wicklow, Arklow and Bray Harbour Net Cost increase	130
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Lansdowne Road Agreement Compensation	(875)
	Rates Write off decrease	(500)
	NPPR increase	(50)
	IPB Dividend decrease	337
<b>Other</b>	Pension & lump sum /gratuity increase & superannuation income reduction	557
	Rates Income decrease	346

± denotes a contra entry

***In Conclusion***

I prepared the 2018 Draft Annual Budget in consultation with the Corporate Policy Group and in accordance with the Local Government Act, 2001 (Section 133). This consultation with the Corporate Policy Group has been a key aspect of the budget preparation. At these meetings significant factors within the Budget were raised and discussed and I am grateful to the Members of the Corporate Policy Group and the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Edward Timmins for their constructive engagement with the budgetary process.

As I have stated in the LPT Report in September, Wicklow's income from the general purpose grant did not compare favourably to other comparable local authorities. Our general purpose grant allocation for 2014 is now been used as our LPT baseline going forward. Comparing the 2017 annual budget figures, Wicklow spends less per person than the national average across all services. We have previously made submissions to central government to address this under-resourcing and I intend to raise the matter again with Department officials in the near future. However, we need to continually pursue this issue at both official level and also through our elected representatives.

The 2018 Draft Budget before you today is a plan of action to best deal with the reformed environment of local government. It allows the Council to build on the continued process of recovery and to work to deliver growth in our community and economy. While significant challenges remain in dealing with the economic realities facing the Council, we can cautiously look to build on the emerging economic growth nationally and translate this to increased growth across the County. The delivery of social and affordable housing continues to be a priority. Moreover we will continue to seek out alternative sources of funding and work in collaboration with the relevant State Agencies, Local Government, Business Community and the Community and Voluntary Sector to maximise all available opportunities to address the local needs and support the economic and social development of County Wicklow.

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.

There is considerable detail contained in the Draft Budget Report to assist the Members in their deliberations. Please take the opportunity to discuss aspects of the Draft Budget with each of the Heads of Function.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Council for their support and look forward to continuing to work with the Elected Members to deliver high quality services for the people of Wicklow.

The Draft Budget preparation required significant input from staff across 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 the Head of Finance, Brian Gleeson and the staff in the Finance Section for their hard work in preparing and framing this Budget.

I recommend the Budget to you for adoption.



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**FRANK CURRAN  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**



## Division A – Housing & Building

<b>Objective</b> 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			
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Total Division Expenditure	€20,701,027	Average Weekly Rental Income	€240,587
Council Tenancy Houses*	4,330	Total Rental Income 2017*	€12.5 M
Tenant Purchase – Houses sold	0	House Purchase Loans	10 approved
Number assessed for Housing*	3,488	Housing Grants*	87 grants awarded
Number of households housed from Housing list (including Transfers and Homeless below)**	53	Rental Accommodation Scheme Units*	702
Transfers made	24	House Purchases	5
Homeless housed	14		

\* Activity level at September 2017  
\*\*Activity level at October 2017  
44 Mobility Aid Grants  
33 Housing Aid for Older People  
10 Housing Adaptation Grants

### **A01 Maintenance/Improvement of LA Housing Units**

The cost of maintaining and repairing housing stock of 4,330 units is included under this heading.

#### **Progress/Pressures in 2017**

Further progress was made in 2017 in addressing issues in a number of defective schemes in Co. Wicklow. These included:

**Glending, Blessington** – All of the Stage 2 Remediation Works at Glending have been completed. These works involved the complete remediation of 18 properties in the estate, 4 of which had never been previously occupied.

Stage 3 Phase 3A – No. 1 to No. 12 Glending Road has been completed.

Stage 3 Phase 3B – No. 1 to No. 10 Glending Square and No. 1 to No. 4 Glending Way – Tenants are currently being moved out of these properties for this phase of the development. The Contractor has been recommended and it is hoped that contracts will be signed in the coming weeks.

**Enniskerry, Parknasillogue** – Remediation works are completed here. This included the pumping of insulation into the cavities of the walls of all of the houses, increasing the amount of insulation in all of the attic spaces as well as providing tanking to the walls of the houses that have floor levels below ground level.

Legal proceedings are ongoing against Wicklow County Council in relation to defects in the houses. To date 3 of them have been resolved. The mediation process due to take place in September was postponed due to the unavailability of legal personnel.

**Hillview Estate Wicklow Town** - Wicklow County Council continued the carrying out of remediation works at the Hillview estate. Roof works are now approximately 50% complete. Bridge works to “F” type houses are due to start shortly. Refurbishment to “B” type houses is 60% complete. Ceiling Repairs following leaks in B & C type dwellings are due to start soon.

**Energy Efficiency / Fabric Upgrade:** Phase 1 of the Fabric Upgrade Works Programme continued during 2017 subject to staff and resources.

**Oldcourt Energy Efficiency Works** - The Council is also continuing with the programme of energy efficiency works in the Oldcourt Estate, Bray in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. Phase 3 is on target to be completed before Christmas this year and Phase 4 will be commencing in January 2018.

**Other improvements:**

Central heating was installed in 15 existing council units at a cost of €75,000. €75,000 was spent on electrical upgrades.

**A02      Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer**

**Progress/Pressures in 2017**

On completion of the 2017 assessment 3,488 applicants remained eligible for Social Housing Support.

- Increased pressure/demand for social housing services throughout 2017
- Limited success in sourcing new properties for RAS/Social Leasing –private stock not being made available to the local authority for a number of reasons including rising rents, involvement of third parties (e.g. financial/credit institutions/receivers) as well as overall lack of surplus housing stock in the County.

**Objectives for 2018**

- Continuing work towards creating more shared initiatives/joint ventures with the Voluntary Housing Sector

**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 tenants are assessed and the differential rent is calculated accordingly.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government introduced a new tenant purchase scheme the ‘Incremental Purchase Scheme’ in 2016. Tenants have been advised of this scheme through social media and the Council’s Website. 120 applications were received in 2016 and to date 20 applications have been received in 2017. To date 90 loan offers have been made. 33 files have been sent to the Law Department for the closing of sales. To date 4 disposals have been completed.

**A04      Housing Community Development Support**

The areas provided for under this heading are: Support to Resident’s Associations. Residents Associations make a valuable contribution to the maintenance and development of all Local Authority Estates. The amount provided generates a very large return on a modest investment. In 2017, Wicklow County Council distributed grant funding via the Municipal District offices.

**A05      Administration of Homeless Service**

**Progress/Pressures in 2017**

Prevention of homelessness is a key focus and the Homeless team provides advice and support to homeless persons or those at risk of homelessness and engages with Landlords, Agents and the Rents Unit to sustain or progress tenancies. Throughout 2017, the Housing Directorate in Wicklow provided a range of homeless support services to a significantly increased number of people, including a marked rise in the number of families presenting.

In the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 there were 298 presentations for homeless support and advice – 130 individuals and 168 families which included 307 children.

In partnership with some Approved Housing Bodies, the Council continues to provide a supported accommodation facility at Kilmantin Hill in Wicklow Town for people experiencing homelessness. Ten individuals are accommodated in medium support, transitional units at the facility. Other smaller supported accommodation units throughout the County are operated by Approved Housing Bodies through a Service Level Agreement. These units provide wrap around, supported accommodation for vulnerable individuals using the Housing First model.

**Objectives for 2018**

A significant budgetary provision has been made for 2018 to address homelessness in County Wicklow as the current allocation from central funding is inadequate to cater for the ever increasing demands.

### **Carrig Eden, Greystones.**

Wicklow County Council will complete the purchase of the property known as Carrig Eden in Greystones in 2017 and will enter into a lease agreement with Tiglin (AHB) which will ensure that the long term needs of the facility's residents will be addressed by their progression into sustainable, long term tenancies via the various social housing supports available. Funding of €182,000 was approved to purchase and refurbish the building (includes €150,000 Wicklow County Council funding.)

### **Fairfield Park, Greystones**

Fairfield Park in Greystones has provided private rented accommodation to households since 1973. In August 2016 48 households were issued with Notice to Quit. The Council immediately and proactively engaged with the landlord and residents and secured the services of a Housing Support Worker from the Dublin Simon Community to work with the Council staff in the provision of Tenancy Sustainment and Housing Support Services. A site clinic was set up which greatly facilitated the residents, many of whom were elderly and/or infirm and resident in Fairfield Park since the 1970's.

The percentage of transitioned households is now at 100% with transitions being achieved through a mix of sourcing private rented accommodation with HAP and RAS support, successful referrals to Approved Housing Bodies (AHBS), allocation of some social housing units and temporary accommodation from family pending Social Housing Support.

CATEGORY	TOTAL
Local Authority Social Housing	7
Approved Housing Body	3
Rental Assistance Scheme	5
Housing Assistance Payment	8
Private Rented	15
House Purchase	2
Family	6
RIP	2

### **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.

**Staffing Resources - New Housing Construction Programme** - Following the publication of the Government's Social Housing Strategy 2020 document on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and the launch of the Rebuilding Ireland strategy in 2016, Wicklow County Council employed further technical staff to ensure sustained progress on the construction programme.

Wicklow County Council currently has 12 schemes at various stages of planning which will potentially yield 171 housing units. Funding of circa €36m has been sanctioned by the Department for these schemes.

Scheme	Units	Current status
Brewery Bends, Rathdrum (Phase 2)	20	Under Construction
Kilbride Lane, Bray (Murphy's Lands)	42	Tender documents issued November 2017
Farrankelly, Greystones (Phase 2)	23	Part 8 September 2017
O'Byrne Road, Bray	1	Contractor to start on site November 2017
Delany Park, Arklow (Phase 1)	17	Contractor to start on site November 2017
Delany Park, Arklow (Phase 2)	25	Part 8 – On display
Sugarloaf View, Kilmacanogue	20	Part 8 adopted – proceeding to tender stage
FCA Hall, Wicklow Town	8	Detailed design being prepared
Kilmantin Place, Bray	4	Detailed design being prepared
Ard Na Mara, Kilcoole	2	Detailed design being prepared
Druids Brook, Kilcoole	2	Detailed design being prepared
Old Library, Arklow	7	Tender Documents issued November 2017

## **Social Housing Funding to Wicklow County Council (WCC) 2016/2017 to date**

Under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 –Targets for Wicklow County Council from 2015 to 2017:438 Units.

**Public Private Partnership (PPP) Social Housing Project (Bundle 1)** – Development Site at Convent Lands, Wicklow. The Department of Housing has dedicated €300 million towards delivery of housing through the public private partnership model in the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan. Wicklow has been included as a project in Bundle 1. The Part 8 was passed by the members at the Council meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017.

### **Housing Acquisition:**

During 2017 Wicklow County Council continued its acquisition programme with the purchase of a further 5 dwellings as a short-term measure while awaiting delivery of units under the housing construction programme.

### **A07 Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS Programme)**

<b>Voluntary Agency Transfers</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Number of Tenant Interviews</b>	<b>1,579</b>
<b>Number of Property Inspections</b>	<b>1,495</b>
<b>Tenancy Agreements/Contracts signed</b>	<b>702</b>

The high demand areas for property are Bray, Greystones and Kilcoole and it is increasingly difficult to identify suitable vacant properties in these areas.

### **A08 Housing Loans**

The Council offers House Purchase Loans to a maximum of €20,000 under the House Purchase Loan Scheme. Ten House Purchase Loans were approved in 2017.

### **A09 Housing Grants to assist private households.**

Wicklow County Council was awarded funding for housing grants for 2017 as follows:

Grant funding for private houses	€1.1M
Grant funding for social houses	€650,000

There are applications on hand to the value of €1.7M.

- **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.
- **Mobility Aid Grant** is available to cover a basic suite of works to address mobility problems, primarily but not exclusively associated with ageing.
- **Housing Adaptations 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.

The following are applications and waiting on Occupational Therapy (OT) reports, Engineering reports, quotes, drawings or planning permissions

12 Mobility Aid Grants	€ 65,076
20 Housing Adaption Grants	€19,000
10 Housing Aid for Older People	€ 44,501

The following applications have been approved

44 Mobility Aid Grants	€24,055
10 Housing Adaption Grants	€168,836
33 Housing Aid for Older People	€201,965

Matching funding of 20% is required from the Council's own resources.

### **A10 Approved Housing Bodies**

Wicklow County Council continued to explore opportunities to work in partnership with the Approved Housing Bodies sector to deliver more units for social housing in Co. Wicklow.

### **Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)**

Four units for the category “Homeless/At Risk of Homelessness” were purchased by an Approved Housing Body under the CAS call for 2016 and 3 of these were allocated in May 2017 with one further to be allocated. Further units will be delivered for people with disabilities under this scheme.

Interest has been expressed by an Approved Housing Body to purchase properties under the CAS as step down accommodation for victims of domestic violence.

Under the Capital Assistance Scheme, Wicklow County Council retains 100% nomination rights regarding all prospective tenancies i.e. all nominations are to be made from the local authority housing waiting list.

### **Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)**

Wicklow County Council continued to facilitate applications from approved housing bodies for delivery of units through the Capital Advance Leasing Facility scheme. This utilises private finance sourced by Approved Housing Bodies on the open market to deliver further units for the accommodation of persons on the Council’s Housing list. The Department of Housing, Planning Community and Local Government funds up to 30% of the costs where the scheme is financially justified and tenants from the Council’s Housing list are housed in the scheme. The Approved Housing Body is responsible for management and maintenance of the units.

Five units were provided under a CALF lease to Co-operative Housing on the Greenpark Road in Bray.

Approval has been sought from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government for a leasing arrangement with Cluid Housing Association to provide 45 units of accommodation on the Council’s site in Ballybeg, Rathnew. Estimated delivery date of these units is quarter 3, 2018.

A new CALF project with Tuath Housing Association was approved on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 for 32 units at Bollarney North, Wicklow Town. Currently no project commencement date or project duration time are available.

### **Expressions of Interest – Social Housing on Council Lands.**

Late last year Wicklow County Council sought expressions of interest from approved housing bodies who have signed up to a voluntary regulatory code who wish to be considered for provision of social housing on Council lands in County Wicklow. These submissions are currently being assessed. A track record of quality design and construction in previous projects, good management and maintenance practice and proven financial capacity to develop the site will be relevant criteria. It is hoped that following this assessment process, partnership arrangements may be considered on Council owned lands where the Council does not currently have resources to advance social housing projects.

### **A12 Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)**

HAP is another form of social housing support currently available and commenced in Wicklow County Council from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016. HAP is welcomed as another form of Social Housing Support for Social Housing Applicants.

HAP was introduced to provide a more integrated system of housing support to be accessed through the Local Authority.

- Any household that qualifies for Social Housing Support will be eligible to apply for HAP. It allows recipients to take up full-time employment and still keep their housing support.
- Current Rent Supplement recipients who qualify for Social Housing Support and are deemed to have a long-term housing need will be transferred from Rent Supplement to HAP on a phased basis.
- Allows HAP recipients option of other social housing supports through transfer list
- HAP supports better regulation of private rent sector and improvement of the quality of accommodation in the private rented market.

HAP recipients find their own accommodation in the private rented market. Under HAP local authorities make payments, subject to rent limits, on behalf of the HAP recipient directly to the landlord in respect of rent. The HAP recipient pays rent based on the household income, not the market rent.

To date 348 households on the housing list in Wicklow County Council have found long-term housing through HAP.



## 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 Programme Expenditure	€21,439,714	Number of Pay & Display Parking Machines	194
Number of kilometres of Roadway	2,282		
Number of Public Lights Maintained	15,600		

### **B01 – B02 National Road Maintenance and Improvement**

#### **National Secondary N81 - Proposed Works 2018:**

- Knockroe Bends
- Baltinglass Resurfacing Works

### **B03 – B04 Non National Road Maintenance and Improvement**

Maintenance works on Non National Roads are carried out by direct labour units of the five Municipal Districts or by private contractors. Maintenance can be broken down into two categories:

**Planned Maintenance** consists of the works programme for the year that is prepared following consultation with the Municipal District staff and can be subdivided into Carriageway and Footpath, reconstruction or resurfacing and winter maintenance.

**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 Members' questions and or correspondence and complaints from members of the public.

#### **Restoration Improvement Works 2017:**

MD Area	Road Number	Works Name
Greystones	L-1028-0, L-1028-23	Templecarrig Road
Greystones	L-1030-0	Bellevue Hill
Arklow	L-2196-0	Ballycoogue-Ballinasillogue
Baltinglass	L-72661-0	Carrig Lane
Bray	R-760-0	Church Hill Enniskerry
Arklow	L-6082-0, L-6126-0	Community Involvement
Baltinglass	L-3217-0	Coolboy
Bray	L-1013-57	Glencree Road South
Arklow	L-6126-0	Glenmalure
Bray	L-1956-8, L-1956-9	Herbert Road Kilbride
Baltinglass	L-3205-24	Kelly's Hill Tinahely
Baltinglass	L-7256-38	Kilcarney Lower
Baltinglass	L-8367-0, L-8367-33	Lacken Gap
Baltinglass	L-8292-0	LS 8292 Tuckmill Lwr
Baltinglass	L-8315-0	LS 8315 Toberbeg
Baltinglass	L-8317-0	LS 8317 Freynestown
Baltinglass	L-8353-18	LS 8353 Togher
Baltinglass	L-7232-0	Minmore-Ballisland
Baltinglass	L-7276-0	Newtownsaunders
Baltinglass	R-412-35	R412 Dunlavin
Baltinglass	L-3134-0	Rathmeague - Knockananna

Bray	L-5033-0	Rocky Valley Drive
Arklow	R-772-610, R-772-615, R-772-620, R-772-622, R-772-624, R-772-626, R-772-628	Templerainey
Bray	R-761-23	Vevay Road
Bray	R-761-28	Vevay Road
Greystones	R-762-27	Mill Road
Greystones	R-762-0	Mill Road
Greystones	R-762-0	Mill Road
Greystones	L-5214-0, L-97625-0, L-97626-0, L-97630-0	Hillside Road
Greystones	R-761-119	Main Street, Kilcoole
Greystones	R-761-111	Kilcoole Road
Wicklow	L-97632-0	L97632 Knockaphrumpa Lane
Wicklow	L-6086-27	Laragh to Ballard
Wicklow	R-115-107	R115 Sally Gap towards Laragh
Wicklow	L-5106-0	Ballinteskin
Arklow	R-752-205, R-752-227	Castlemacadam-Tinnahinch
Wicklow	R-763-24	Ballymaharoe Hill
Wicklow	L-10371-0, L-10371-10, L-10372-0	Seasons Park Estate Road
Baltinglass	L-97561-0	LT-97561 Lugglass Upper
Baltinglass	L-8342-0	LS-8342 Scalp Lane
Baltinglass	R-756-252	R-756 Hollywood Dunlavin
Arklow	L-2128-60	Aughavannagh
Baltinglass	R-725-108	Main St Shillelagh (Phase 2)
Baltinglass	L-3214-0	Coolafancy
Wicklow	L-50701-0, L-50701-12, L-50701-18, L-50701-26, L-50701-4, L-50701-6	Ballinalea Estate Road
Wicklow	R-115-0, R-115-30, R-115-32, R-115-67	Military Road
Bray	L-1955-8, L-1955-9	Herbert Road Bray

### Road Maintenance

MD Area	Road Number	Works Name
Greystones	L-1028-0, L-1028-23	Templecarrig Road
Greystones	L-1030-0	Bellevue Hill
Wicklow	L-1076-0, R-755-131, R-763-60, R-763-82	Tomriland to Annamoe
Wicklow	L-5036-0, R-755-255	Ballinastoe
Wicklow	L-5108-63, R-750-108	Brittas Bay
Wicklow	L-5051-0, R-765-0	Slaughter Hill
Wicklow	L-1035-30, L-1036-0, R-755-273	Powers Avenue
Baltinglass	L-8296-17	LS-8296 Castlesallagh
Baltinglass	L-4320-0	LP-4320 Castleruddery Upr
Baltinglass	L-8363-0	LS-8363 Russborough
Baltinglass	L-8858-0	LS-8858 Burgage More
Baltinglass	L-43641-0	LT-43641 Carrig Lane
Baltinglass	L-8361-35	LS-8361 Ballysize Lower
Baltinglass	L-4284-0, L-4284-28	LP-4284 Rampere
Baltinglass	L-8301-0	LS-8301 Manger
Baltinglass	L-8287-0	LS-8287 Lowtown

Baltinglass	L-7260-0	LS-7260 Rathcoyle - Rathduffmore
Baltinglass	L-7754-0, L-7754-29	LS-7754 Ballyconnell
Baltinglass	R-725-138, R-725-152	R-725 Deerpark
Arklow	L-2196-0, L-6197-29	Community Involvement
Bray	R-760-0	Ballyorney Road
Arklow	L-6141-0, L-6141-19	Ballyeustace/Ballymoneen
Arklow	L-6644-0, L-6644-10	1-6644 Ballinaclash
Arklow	R-747-210	R747 Kilvaney/Coolalug
Arklow	L-2180-0, L-2180-19, L-2180-48	L-2180 Beech Road
Bray	R-117-34, R-117-37	Bray Road Enniskerry
Greystones	R-761-105, R-761-111, R-761-119	Kilcoole Road
Baltinglass	L-7219-0	L-7219 Ballyellis
Wicklow	R-763	Devils Glen
Bray	L-1009-0	Ballybrew road

### Specific Improvement Grant Works 2017

Works were carried out at the following locations in 2017:

Rathdrum Bridge  
 Fortgranite Bridge  
 Cherrymount Bridge Avoca  
 Rosnastraw Bridge Tinahely  
 Roddenagh Bridge  
 Beech Road Bridge  
 Knockrath Bridge, Laragh  
 Griffinstown Bridge  
 Ballykilmurray Bridge

### Bridges 2018

L7525 Killabeg Bridge, Coolkenna  
 R-752 Rathdrum Bridge, Rathdrum  
 L-6155 White Bridge, Avoca  
 R-759 Liffey Bridge Upper, Kippure  
 L-50462 Beechdale Bridge, Kilcoole  
 R-760 Tinnehinch Bridge, Enniskerry  
 R-755 Knockrath Bridge, Knockrath

### Speed Limits

County Wicklow Road Traffic Special Speed Limits Bye-Laws of 2017 were adopted by the Members of Wicklow County Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 and will come into force from the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

### Community Involvement Scheme

This scheme encourages a joint approach between the Council and groups of local residents and landowners for the restoration of roads, mainly local or cul de sac roads, and two groups benefited from this scheme in 2017.

- Ballycoog Lower, Woodenbridge
- L7219 Kennystown

### Local Improvement Scheme

The work must be for the joint benefit of two or more adjoining farms, and the benefit to be derived must be reasonably commensurate with the cost. Funding of €10,000 was granted and seven projects are benefiting from this scheme.

Ballard, Roundwood  
 Kilmullen, Moneystown  
 Knockraheen, Roundwood  
 Tomacork, Carnew

Balleshal & Aughrim Upper  
Tinakilly Upper, Aughrim  
Drummin Lane, Annamoe

### **B05 Public Lighting**

There are approximately 15,600 lighting units in the County of Wicklow

**Public lighting** now accounts for approximately **56.5%** of the total energy consumption used by the Council.

**Public lighting** uses **51.8%** of all electrical energy that is consumed by the Council.

Total Electrical Energy Consumption for Public Lighting is in the region of **6,150,700 KWh**.

### **Future /Current Issues**

National/Rationalised Maintenance/Upgrade Contracts RMO

The replacement of Low Pressure Sodium Lamp (SOX) lighting within the County (Local and national issue)

Public lighting maintenance contract is proposed to proceed to tender in early 2018

### **Energy Saving Measures in 2017**

Greystones Park and Ride  
Farrankelly Dual Carriageway – Phase 1  
Bray Southern Cross

### **Proposals for 2018**

Further develop the business case for the entire retrofit of all public lighting with LEDs. This is likely now to be undertaken on a regional basis.

- Expand the retrofit works (replacing the existing lights with LEDs) that commenced in 2016 by retrofitting up to 500 public lighting units when and where feasible. This would have the potential to save 120,350KWH of enrgy per annum.

### **B06 Traffic Management Improvement**

The National Transport Authority funded the following projects in 2017:

Construction and Design of:

- Strand Road, Bray
- Killarney Road Cycle Scheme, Bray
- Bray DART Interchange
- Greystones to Kilcoole Footpath
- St. Laurence's School Footpath, Greystones
- Arklow/Shillelagh Greenway
- Main Street /Bridge Street Pedestrian Improvements, Arklow
- Beech Road Footbridge, Arklow
- Glendalough Traffic Management
- Fitzwilliam Square, Wicklow
- Wicklow Train Station Access from PAR
- Baltinglass Junction Improvements

### **Projects for 2018**

- Advance all uncompleted schemes listed above subject to NTA funding

### **Arklow to Shillelagh Recreational Trail**

The Arklow to Shillelagh Recreational Trail will develop a new walking and cycling amenity, building on the success of the Tinahely Railway Walk and other “Greenway” attractions and extending to connect the other villages and communities along the valley.

In October the community representatives attended a workshop and participants gave valuable and informative feedback on the concept which is now being examined by a team of recreational planners lead by Roughan & O'Donovan Engineers, Tourism Development Intl and Brady Shipman Martin, in order to fully inform the final Feasibility Study which is due to be completed by the end of the year.

### **B07 Road Safety Engineering Improvement**

- Low cost safety improvements works were carried out at the following locations in 2017:
- Realignment Calary Upper section of the R755 road
- The new bridge on Calary Lane has been installed. Works for this year will finish shortly with the resurfacing of Calary Lane and the reopening of the lane to traffic. Since works commenced in 2016, approximately €350,000 Low Cost Safety Improvement (LCSI) grant funding has been allocated to the scheme.
- Funding of €25,000 has been allocated for Adelaide Road/Florence Road junction safety improvement works. The design and specification are being prepared for tendering
- Farrankelly Dual Carriageway

### **Proposed works for 2018:**

- R755 Calary Upper, Roundwood
- R759 Kilbride Townland (The Branch, Manor Kilbride)

### **B08 Road Safety Promotion and Education**

The “Road Safety Together Committee” met on a quarterly basis in 2017. Membership of this group is drawn from An Garda Síochána, Wicklow County Fire Service, Road Safety Authority, National Roads Authority and officials of Wicklow County Council. The purpose of the committee is to review road safety in County Wicklow. The County Wicklow Road Safety Plan continues to focus on reducing the number of serious injuries on County Wicklow Roads and to provide a focus on making Wicklow a safer County for both motorists and pedestrians through Education, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation.

### **B09 Maintenance and Management of Car Parking**

The Wicklow Parking Bye-Laws 2017 were adopted by Wicklow County Council members at a meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and came into effect on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2017

Paid parking is in operation in Bray, Greystones, Arklow and Wicklow Towns. Additional traffic wardens will be appointed to Bray and tenders for the management of car parking in Arklow, Greystones and Wicklow are currently progressing.

### **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 also made in the Support to Roads Capital Programme sub-service for payment of loan charges in respect of these projects (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.

### **M11/N11 Corridor Study – Junction 4 to Junction 14**

- The Needs Assessment Report has been commissioned by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in support of the M11/N11 Corridor Study. The Study was initiated to assess the needs of the M11/N11 National Road corridor between Junction 4 (M50/M11) and Junction 14 (Coyne’s Cross) against the backdrop of the following policy documents:
- The project moves within TII from the Strategic & Transport Planning Department to Capital Works Department
- TII have made a submission for the M11/N11 to be considered for funding in the mid-term review of the National Capital Infrastructure Investment Plan.
- Funding and works are contingent on the outcome of this review
- Wicklow County Council will engage with TII to seek to progress elements of the proposals under alternative funding streams.
- Report:  
[http://www.tii.ie/tii-library/strategic-planning/strategic-reports/M11\\_N11\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_Report.pdf](http://www.tii.ie/tii-library/strategic-planning/strategic-reports/M11_N11_Needs_Assessment_Report.pdf)



## 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**

\*\*All Based on 2016 Indicators

Total Division Budget 2018	€7,422,227
Irish Water Overall Annual Service Plan Compliance by Wicklow Co Co	90.7%
Number of Water Supplies Monitored	545 Monitored 2015 - Irish Water
Number of Boil Notices lifted from Private Supplies / Supplies Closed	16
Number of Letters / Directions issued requiring improvement of Private Supplies	26 Letters & 5 Directions
Number of Letters / Directions files closed after improvement of Private Supplies	16
Number of Groups funded under RWP	9 groups
Number of Private Septic Tanks inspected	25
Number of Domestic Waste Water Properties Registered	11,220 - 93%
Number of Advisory Notices served/Inspection fails	10
Number of Advisory Notices closed	20
Section 4 Discharge Licences - Number of Licences / Review Applications Processed	3
Number of Licences Monitored	84
Number of Letters/ Enforcement Actions requiring improvement in Licence Compliance	23
Number of Letter / Enforcement Action files closed after improved Licence Compliance	53
Private Well Improvement - Grants processed /paid	151

With effect from 1st January 2014, Irish Water assumed responsibility for the provision and maintenance of Water and Waste Water Facilities nationally. Wicklow County Council entered into a Service Level Agreement to provide services to Irish Water with respect to Water Services functions and accordingly the Agreement defines and provides a framework for the relationship and delivery of service over a 12 year period.

Irish Water has responsibility for the areas of:

- C01 Operation and Maintenance Water Supply
- C02 Operation and Maintenance Wastewater Treatment
- C01 & C02 now include the Water & Wastewater Quality element of Pollution Control & Enforcement
- C03 Collection of Water and Waste Water Charges
- C06 Support to Water Capital Programme
- C07 Agency & Recoupable Services

Wicklow Local Authorities will retain responsibility for the areas of:

- Operation and Maintenance of Private Water Supply & Operation and Maintenance of Private Wastewater Treatment
- C04 Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences
- C05 Administration of Group and Private Installations
- C08 Local Authority Water & Sanitary Services

## **C01 Operation and Maintenance Water Supply**

### **C02 Operation and Maintenance Wastewater Treatment**

#### **Progress in 2017**

- Irish Water and Wicklow County Council work collaboratively, under the terms of this Service Level Agreement to provide efficient and quality public water and wastewater services, and this is measured under an Annual Service Plan which covers areas of Customer Metrics, Internal Process & Compliance, Financial Performance and Learning & Growth.
- Wicklow County Council have consistently reached very high levels of performance across all areas of service delivery and the latest performance scores for Wicklow County Council to September 2017 are the highest they have received to date. Wicklow Co Co has also been commended by Irish Water in having the highest scores, of any Local Authority, across the Eastern region.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

- Continue to operate and maintain public water supplies and public wastewater facilities to the highest standards and continue to deliver high quality water and wastewater services in County Wicklow while meeting the objectives and requirements of the Service Level Agreement and the Annual Service Plan in conjunction with Irish Water.
- Ensure that public water and wastewater schemes continue to function efficiently and effectively.
- Promote the value of drinking water through public awareness programmes and continue the implementation of the Water Conservation Scheme.

## **Water & Wastewater Quality – Pollution Control & Enforcement**

Wicklow County Council, on behalf of Irish Water, will continue to monitor and control water and wastewater pollution in accordance with legislation and EU regulations.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

- Continue to deliver high quality water & wastewater pollution monitoring and enforcement services in County Wicklow and to meet the objectives and requirements of the Service Level Agreement and the Annual Service Plan in conjunction with Irish Water.

## **C03 Collection of Water and Waste Water Charges**

With effect from September 2016, Irish Water assumed responsibility for all non-domestic water customers. Wicklow County Council continues to read Commercial Water Meters as part of Service Level Agreement. All customer queries are through Irish Water call centres.

## **C04 Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences**

This area includes the operation of Public Toilets in Enniskerry, Greystones, Roundwood, Glendalough and Blessington. There are also public conveniences in Brittas Bay and Glendalough carparks and upgrades are required to these blocks in 2018.

The operation includes three automated facilities. Wicklow County Council retains responsibility for this area.

## **C05 Administration of Group and Private Installations**

Wicklow County Council retains responsibility for this area of operation that includes:

- Administration of water supply to private houses through Well Grant Scheme.
- Progression of 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 with Irish Water. There are National proposals for a Regional Water Capital office and this should be up and running in 2018.

## **C07 Agency & Recoupable Services**

This area traditionally accounted for connections to public water & sewer network. Applications for connections will continue to be received by Wicklow County Council on behalf of Irish Water, however there will be no costs or income applicable to the area of Agency Services in 2018, as all of this area is now covered under the Service Level Agreement and areas of C01 & C02 above.

## **C08 Local Authority Water and Sanitary Services and other matters**

This covers water and sanitary services carried out by Wicklow County Council with respect to our own properties.

## Division D – Development Management

<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Total Division Expenditure	€1,234,651	% of applications refused*	16%
Planning applications received*	1,650	Enforcement - Warning Letters**	175
2017 income from planning application fees*	€694,839	Enforcement Notices**	52
		Proceedings *	15
% of applications granted*	84%	Commencement Notices Received**	385

\* Estimated Level of Activity 2017                            \*\* Activity up to September 2017

### **D01 Forward Planning**

The role of the Forward Planning Section is to ensure that planning and development take place within an agreed framework, developed in consultation with the Members, the public and other stakeholders. In particular, the Forward Planning Section, in co-operation with the elected Members, is responsible for preparing and progressing to adoption, the County Development Plans and local development plans for towns and their environs, including the carrying out of all statutory reports and reviews and the preparation of variations to plans as required.

The Forward Planning Section also provides mapping expertise, inputs, data and analysis to various internal and external bodies with regard to population, housing construction, economic and retail development, and other factors as requested.

#### **Progress in 2017**

##### **Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022**

Completion of the County Development Plan process, which continued into early 2017 on foot of receipt of Ministerial Direction.

Publication of Variation No. 1 to the County Development Plan in August 2017

##### **Rathdrum Local Area Plan 2017-2023**

Local Area Plan for Rathdrum adopted in May 2017.

##### **Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017-2023**

Draft Local Area Plan for the Bray Municipal District area published in August 2017. Total of 2,882 submissions received. Chief Executive Report prepared and issued to members in late 2017.

##### **Arklow & Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023**

Draft Local Area Plan for Arklow and Environs published in July 2017 Chief Executive Report prepared and issued to members in autumn 2017. Plan amended and placed on second display in late 2017.

##### **Vacant Site Levy (VSL)**

Completion of Stage 1 of VSL process, including assessment of all ‘regeneration’ sites in towns; and addition of first set of sites to the register in December 2017.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

##### **Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022**

- (1) Commence review of village boundaries Q1 2018
- (2) Commence review of Record of Protected Structures (RPS) Q1 2018
- (3) Commence 2 year review in Q4 2018

##### **Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017-2023**

Completion of plan adoption stages, culminating in adoption in Q2 2018

##### **Arklow & Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023**

Completion of plan adoption stages, culminating in adoption in Q1 2018

### **Newtownmountkennedy LAP 2018-2024**

Commence plan preparation process, with view to publishing draft plan in Q2 2018

### **Blessington LAP 2018-2024**

Commence plan preparation process, with view to publishing draft plan in Q2 2018

### **Vacant Site Levy**

Commence Stage 2 of VSL process, including assessment of all ‘residential’ sites.

### **Other Projects**

The Forward Planning Unit has a number of other responsibilities and functions that were carried out in 2017 and will continue in 2018 including:

- Detailed analysis of CSO / ESRI data including population and housing development and employment trends
- Coordination with Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government with particular regard to the forthcoming National Planning Framework (replacement of the NSS)
- Coordination with Regional Authority and participation in regional technical working groups, with particular regard to the forthcoming Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy
- Participation in the implementation of the Local Economic & Community Plan and the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank
- Providing zoning and housing development updates to the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government

### **D02 – Development Management**

Development Management Section deals with planning applications from date of receipt to completion, up to and including any appeal process to An Bord Pleanala.

The decision making process is governed by the policies and objectives of the Wicklow County Development Plan and other plans adopted by Wicklow County Council. It is also governed by the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Once again this year we have seen an upturn in activity in the area of development management, particularly in relation to large scale housing developments and commercial developments. We are also now engaging with applicants under the Strategic Housing Development provisions, prior to their submissions to An Bord Pleanala. This increased activity in applications received, also results in increases in the areas of pre-planning, third party submissions and compliance submissions. We have also seen considerable increase queries from solicitors and the public for house sales and general queries as confidence in the economy continues to grow.

### **Progress in 2017**

The number of planning applications received continues to increase. Up to the end of September, a total of 1,184 applications were received. This represents an approximate increase in applications since 2014 of 25%.

For the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 416 further information submissions were received, being a 7% increase on 2016 figures.

- 100 time extensions have been granted this year to date
- 97 applications have been withdrawn.
- A total of 312 invalid applications were received up to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017

### **Objectives for 2018**

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

### **Other Projects – Progress in 2017**

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

- 56 applications were received up to October 2017, similar to the amount received in 2016
- Compliance submissions are assessed to ensure compliance with the permission granted.
- A total of approximately 460 submissions were received up to the beginning of October 2017

The Taking in Charge 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.

Eleven estates have been taken in charge in 2017 to date, while further 15 estates will be advertised for Taking in Charge and will be taken in charge before the end of the year. 87 Live Estates, with 19 under construction. Developments being monitored include:

- 403 residential units in 4 developments in Greystones/Delgany
- 860 residential units in a development in Newtownmountkennedy
- 341 residential units in 5 developments in Wicklow/Rathnew/Ashford

Commercial developments being monitored include two nursing homes and a business park.

Enforcement proceedings are instigated in relation to some developments where it is deemed necessary.

We are continuing to target the assessment of estates in the former functional areas of the Town Councils.

The collection of development contributions remains a priority for the Planning Section as they are vital for the provision of infrastructure in the County. Up to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017, a total of €3,708,248 has been collected in development contributions. A total of 215 new developments commenced during 2017 and of these 60% have paid in full. We continue to monitor and engage with those that owe contributions prior to 2017, with a total of 791 customers being monitored during 2017.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

- Continue to process Section 5 and compliance submissions in a timely fashion
- Progress the Taking in Charge of the 107 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

#### **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). This is critical to ensuring that the planning control system works properly, and fairly, and for the benefit of the whole community. It is essential that enforcement provisions of the Planning Acts are applied to ensure that the integrity of the system is maintained. Wicklow County Council continues to actively pursue those person/persons who breach and/or continue to breach the Planning Laws.

It remains, however 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 2017**

- From January 2017 to September 2017 the Council received 141 written complaints.
- From January 2017 to September 2017 a total of 163 Warning Letters and 41 Enforcement Notices have issued.
- 10 Cases have been referred for legal action.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

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

#### **Other Projects**

##### **Derelict Sites**

At the 1st January 2017 there were 7 sites on the Derelict Sites Register. This figure includes all sites in the functional area of the former Town Councils. During 2017:-

- 2- sites were placed on the register
- 2- sites were removed from the register
- 14 – notices issued under the Act
- 2- sites were levied and a total of €2,500 collected
- 53- inspections were carried out

The Planning Department continues to consult and engage 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 some €1.3M on the construction of Avondale Business Park, Rathdrum. The park is divided by four roads, linked by a main roundabout. The bulk of the work has been carried out to Road nos. 1 and 2 and also to the new roundabout with most of the utility providers' ducts and pipes laid on Road nos. 1 and 2. High quality fencing has been erected to the front perimeter of the site as well as construction of entrance pillars and gateway etc.

Work was completed on the construction of the first business premises which is now operational since late November 2014. This is a very positive step for Avondale Business Park, having regard to the current economic conditions which overtook activity and discouraged private investment somewhat in the past. The Enterprise Unit is in communication with businesses that have expressed an interest in locating to the Business Park, and the Council will continue to push forward with its plans for the development of the site into the future.

The Council has some varying size landbanks at a number of locations throughout the County including Dunlavin, Baltinglass, Arklow, Aughrim, Blessington, Ashford and Tinahely.

The Council's 6.7 acres of land at Ashford forms part of an Action Area and Wicklow County Council will work with the landowners in this Action Area with a view to developing a high quality innovative business park in the future.

### **Objectives for 2018:**

- To support the work of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support Strategic Policy Committee.
- To promote entrepreneurship, foster business start-ups and develop existing micro and small businesses in conjunction with the Local Enterprise office.
- To facilitate and support the development of community enterprise centres.
- To drive job creation and to provide accessible high quality supports for new business.
- To continue to promote Wicklow as an ideal location for entrepreneurs/businesses to invest/relocate to etc.
- To continue to promote and develop Wicklow County Campus as a centre of excellence in enterprise innovation and education.
- To implement the recommended actions contained in the Local Economic Plan and the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank Action Plan.

## **Clermont House and College, Wicklow County Campus**

### **Progress in 2017**

IT Carlow is a key stakeholder in the Wicklow County Campus Project. In 2017, the number of students registered for the Lifelong Learning Education and Training courses has increased to more than 400. In excess of 30 alternative courses were offered to students in the Campus. At a triple conferring ceremony in November 2017, over 170 students graduated.

The Wicklow Local Enterprise Office (LEO) and Teagasc are located on the Campus offering a range of advice/supports for their clients. In Spring 2016, the second floor in Clermont House was rented out to a local Architecture company. Some of the grounds are used by the Wicklow Area Office, Civil Defence and the Housing Section.

The offices and class rooms in Clermont are also available for hire to other training providers during the day.

During 2017 the LEO hosted a number of high profile events in Clermont including the 'Grow Your Business: Focus on Finance' Open day during Local Enterprise Week in March, numerous Trading Online and finance seminars, the Irish Best Young Entrepreneur Award ceremony and the Student Business Awards. LEO Wicklow also hosted a visit by Minister Breen, a twinning exchange with Hainan province and numerous film production companies. In September 2017 the RTE series 'Striking out' starring Amy Huberman was filmed on location in Wicklow County Campus for a number of days.

### **Progress in 2017**

- A 'Community Employment' worker as well as a 'Gateway' worker continued to assist with the maintenance and caretaking of the buildings and grounds.
- During 2017 classroom 204 was refurbished and fitted with tiered seating in order to cater for the growing student numbers taking courses through the IT Carlow Life Long Learning Centre on the campus.

- Considerable maintenance works were carried out during the year such as the painting of classrooms, outbuildings canteen and along the corridors. The entrance road to one of the car parks around Clermont House was resurfaced and roof repairs, painting and plasterwork repairs were carried out on a continual basis.

### **Objectives for 2018**

- 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 roll out the actions identified in the Strategic Plan for Wicklow County Campus.
- To continue to market Wicklow County Campus for class room hire, event hire and film location hire etc.
- To establish a hub for the Audio-Visual industry in County Wicklow.
- To further develop the main hall in Clermont into a state of the art conference centre.
- To develop the second floor in the college into classrooms to cater for further expansion of the Life Long Learning Centre as well as Enterprise space.

## **D05 Tourism Development and Promotion**

### **County Wicklow Film Commission**

#### **Progress in 2017**

- 2017 has seen record breaking levels of film making in County Wicklow. The County was used by a large number of international and national feature film and television productions. Feature films and high end television productions that used Wicklow locations include ‘Vikings VI’, Into The Badlands III, ‘The Rhythm Section’, ‘Striking Out’, Fergie the little red tractor I, II, III’, ‘The Widow’, ‘Black 47’, and ‘End of Sentence’. The US television series ‘Younger’ shot in Tinahely for one day and X Factor UK shot around Blessington for a day also.
- The sixth series of internationally popular ‘Vikings’ was again located in the new film studios in Ashford.
- More than 450 shooting days for feature films, television productions and commercials were recorded for 2017, which makes it one of the busiest years recorded 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 Kilruddery House and Gardens, Enniskerry, Bray Promenade, Powerscourt House and Waterfall, the Blessington lakes and Manor Kilbride.
- Assistance was provided to a number of potential audio-visual projects for 2017 who are now scouting for locations.

### **Objectives for 2018**

- 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 County Wicklow as a prime film location and also to continue to increase the benefits from film induced tourism.
- To liaise and work with location managers and production managers as well as local and national film industry related stakeholders and agencies.
- To update the website, as well as the Moviemap for County Wicklow, marketing and promotional collateral.
- To develop a locations map for ‘Vikings’ as well as promotional video.
- To sponsor the ‘Step into the world of ‘Vikings’, photo exhibition in the Mermaid Theatre.
- To work with the Local Enterprise Office Wicklow.
- To develop Wicklow County Campus as a hub for the Audio Visual industry through the South Eastern Creative Corridor Initiative.

## **D06 Community, Cultural & Social Development Function (CC&SD)**

The Community, Cultural and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC), considers and supports a wide range of Policy issues.

### **SPC – Policy Development and Monitoring Implementation:-**

- Wicklow County Council’s Play Policy Programme.
- Community Awards Scheme//Ballynagran Small Grants Scheme//Katie Taylor Bursary Award Scheme.
- Sport and Recreational Amenity Policy Programme.

- Community Development Policy.
- Community Playgrounds and sustainable Community Development/Facilities and Social Infrastructure.
- Input into Wicklow County Council’s Planning and Development process to reflect the sustainable Social Infrastructure, Community Development and Sport and Recreational Amenity needs of Communities, to ensure integrated and sustainable Planning that promotes Community Cohesion and Social Capital.
- County Wicklow Local Sports Partnership.
- Reviewing the Community Strand of Wicklow County Council’s Development Levies Contribution Scheme (Class 3’s).
- Development and rollout of the Library Services Development Plan 2016 – 2020 and the Library Programme and Service.
- Development and rollout of the Wicklow County Arts Strategy 2016 - 2019 for County Wicklow and the Arts Programme.
- Wicklow County Council’s involvement in a range of Community / Voluntary based Awards Schemes, including the Annual IPB Co-operation Ireland All-Island Pride of Place Awards.
- County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy.
- Wicklow Way Partnership.

### **The Local Government Reform Act 2014**

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 is the legal basis for the reforms proposed under the Government’s 2012 Plan, “Putting People First”.

The Act has resulted in a changing and expanding role for Local Authorities, beyond their traditional functions. Under the Act, Local Authorities are considered to be “the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level, leading economic, social and community development”. The remit of Local Government now includes a more central role in local and community development. Creating and supporting stronger inter-agency collaboration and improved targeting of public funding are the critical elements of this new direction in governance.

Section 36 of The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides for the establishment of Local Community Development Committees (LCDC).

The LCDC is a committee of the Local Authority responsible for co-ordinating, planning and overseeing local and community development funds in that area and is responsible for public funded, community focused programmes, which seek to develop the wellbeing of our communities.

The membership is a mix of public and private representatives from key local interests, community and voluntary; social inclusion; business; local development; education; health; enterprise; agriculture and Local Authority Members.

### **Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**

The Membership of the County Wicklow LCDC comprises **19 Members** as follows:

3 Elected Members

2 Local Authority Representatives (Chief Executive and Local Enterprise Officer)

4 HSE/KWETB/DSP/Other Agency

### **Private**

5 PPN (Comm./Vol. = 2 ; Social Inclusion = 2 ; Environment = 1)

2 Partnerships

1 Farming

1 INOU

1 Business

Ten meetings have been held to date in 2017.

### **Purpose of LCDC's**

- Primary responsibility to bring better co-ordination, planning and oversight to the delivery of local and community development
- Bring a more coherent approach to the implementation of local and community development programmes and interventions. Bring together representatives from the area to make decisions on local issues
- Drive meaningful citizen and community engagement
- Ensure a more efficient administration of local and community programmes and delivery structures
- Explore and pursue opportunities for additional funding resources for the area.
- Develop the community elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

### **Functions of Local Community Development Committees:**

- To prepare the community element of a 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)
- To implement or arrange for the implementation of the community elements of the LECP
- To review the community elements of the LECP
- To co-ordinate, manage and oversee the implementation of local and community development programmes
- To seek to ensure effectiveness, consistency, co-ordination and avoidance of duplication between public funded local and community development programmes
- To consider and adopt a statement for consideration of the Council in respect of the economic elements of a draft of the LECP prepared by the Local Authority

Calls for submissions and many meetings and consultation workshops were also held, during 2016, on the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

### **Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)**

One of the key provisions of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 is the formulation by every Local Authority of a LECP.

The LECP is a 6 year Plan, developed after extensive public consultation and identifies how to tackle the main areas of concern for our community, education; youth services; integration; mental health; unemployment; health; lifestyle; literacy; age friendly; disabilities; tourism; local development.

- Economic element of the plan to be prepared by the Local Authority.
- Community element to be prepared by LCDC.
- Two elements to be prepared in parallel.
- Cross-consultation is specifically provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014.
- Combined plan (LECP) then adopted by the Local Authority.

### **Collaborative Action/Areas of Common Interest**

- Economic Plan as part of LECP.
- Employment opportunities.
- Social Entrepreneurships.

The Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016 – 2022 was officially launched by Minister Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, at a ceremony at the National Ploughing Championships at Scraggan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

The Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016 – 2022, represents a major collaborative initiative between local community development and local economic development in the County and reflects the strengthened role of the Local Authority in both areas of activity.

As part of the process, extensive stakeholder engagement has been carried out with our partner Agencies, local business and the wider community. Engagement with the Public Participation Network (PPN) has ensured that the voice of the local community and voluntary sector has been heard. Equally, interaction with the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank (CWETT) has ensured that the actions proposed in the CWETT Action Plan are embedded in the LECP.

The LECP contains the measures necessary to promote and support community and economic development in County Wicklow and will also be the primary mechanism, at local level, to bring forward national programmes, such as the Action Plan for Jobs and the Report of the Commission for Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA).

Annual implementation plans will contain the detail of the actions in the LECP, along with indicators and timeframes to monitor progress and impact.

An implementation team is in place to ensure that the objectives are achieved.

### **EU Rural Development Policy (LEADER) - The New Framework**

The Europe 2020 Strategy indicates that future economic growth in the EU should be smart, sustainable and inclusive. The strategy is centred on five ambitious goals in the areas of employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy and sets specific headline targets for each of these areas.

The three long term strategic objectives for EU Rural Development Policy in the 2014 -2020 period are -

- Improving the competitiveness of agriculture.
- Sustainable management.
- Balanced territorial development of rural areas.

The **LEADER** element of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 will provide €6.3m (circa €1m per year) to address poverty reduction, social inclusion and economic development of rural areas in County Wicklow. The programme is a community led approach to the delivery of rural development interventions that will be supported by a Local Development Strategy and implemented by interested groups at a local level.

Public Consultations to inform the Local Development Strategy took place throughout 2016.

### **Launch of LEADER in Wicklow**

Wicklow's Local Development Strategy was launched by Minister Heather Humphries T.D., Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs at a function in County Cavan on 8th July 2016.

### **Support County Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN)**

County Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN) is the new framework for public engagement and participation in County Wicklow.

The PPN is now the main link through which Wicklow County Council will connect with Community and Voluntary Groups and Organisations, Social Inclusion Groups and Environmental Groups across the county.

The aim of the Network is to provide structures that will enable these Groups and Organisations to have their voices heard and to facilitate their representation on decision-making committees and bodies within Local Government.

The PPN procedures enable community representation on various Local Authority committees, including the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the CC&SD Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

All Community Groups, Clubs and Voluntary Organisations across the County are encouraged to register with the new County-wide PPN.

### **The Social Inclusion Unit (SIU)**

The Social Inclusion Unit (SIU) continued in its role of supporting anti-poverty initiatives and raising awareness of social inclusion issues throughout the Local Authority during 2017. Over that period it facilitated the following:

- Representing social inclusion issues on the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Monitoring implementation of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government's Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in County Wicklow
- Prioritising social inclusion issues in the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)
- Facilitating the development of Wicklow's Local Development Strategy for the LEADER Programme
- Representing social inclusion issues on the Community, Cultural and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)
- Supporting the development of a strong and vibrant Public Participation Network (PPN) in County Wicklow
- Working with communities to develop high quality social, recreational and amenity facilities for all
- Inputting to Local Area Plans, Action Plans, County Development Plan in relation to social inclusion, community and social issues
- Provision of statistical data and research analysis to Wicklow Local Authority and outside Agencies
- Participation on regional and national committees, networks and structures

## **Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)**

SICAP is a national programme funded by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, which operates in each Local Authority Area, to support the long-term unemployed, marginalized target groups and young people who are unemployed, to improve work readiness and access employment/self employment/social entrepreneurship.

**SICAP** is the Successor programme to LCDP (Local Community Development Programme).

**SICAP** is a local social inclusion programme focussed on the most marginalised in Irish society .

Aims to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration and will operate across the Republic of Ireland in each of the Local Authority areas.

**SICAP** focuses on the most marginalised in Irish society through its three goals:

- To support and resource disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups to engage with relevant local stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion
- To engage and support individuals and marginalised target groups (including young people) experiencing educational disadvantage to participate fully and achieve progression through life-long learning opportunities
- To support the long-term unemployed, marginalised target groups and young people who are unemployed to improve work readiness and access employment/self-employment /social entrepreneurship

The programme is managed locally by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in each Local Authority area. This is an important step in increasing the role of Local Authorities in local service delivery and takes account of the new aligned Local Authority/Local Development structures.

Implementation of the programme is carried out by local Programme Implementers, which in County Wicklow are **Bray Area Partnership** and **County Wicklow Partnership**.

The LCDCs will have the responsibility for monitoring the performance of the Programme Implementers in delivering the programme.

## **Age Friendly Programme**

The Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme is part of an international effort, co-ordinated by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The results are positive ageing, better cities and counties, and more relevant and effective local government, service delivery and business opportunities.

Ireland's National Age-Friendly Cities and Counties Programmes is part of this worldwide initiative which aims to make sure that as we age, we can all:

- Have a real say in what happens in our own lives and what happens in the areas in which we live.
- Enjoy good health, good services, and live in a safe environment.
- Participate fully in everything that is going on in our communities, cities and counties.

The Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme provides a structure so that Local Authorities can take a lead on changing thinking about ageing and how services are planned and delivered. Through this model, Local Authorities bring together older people, service providers and businesses in an Alliance that really works and which:

- Enables older people to live active and healthy lives, remaining in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Enhances service delivery without increasing expenditure.
- Brings about valued improvements in the quality of life for everybody in the community.

The Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme offers a proven way of bringing diverse organisations, groups, services and businesses together to streamline their work, with the needs and interests of older people at their heart.

- The **County Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2022** was launched at the County Wicklow Council for Older People Annual General Meeting on **May 26<sup>th</sup> 2017** by Minister Simon Harris.
- **September-November 2017** a '**Community Care Roadshow**' took place in six locations (**Baltinglass, Bray, Arklow, Blessington, Tinahely and Wicklow**). The roadshow is a collaboration between WCC Age Friendly, the HSE, Gardai and Fire Service. Each event will include presentations from each stakeholder followed by a "cuppa and a chat".

- A Housing and Public Realm Age Friendly training course took place in County Buildings on September 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Presentation given at the **Arklow Town Team** meeting and there was very positive feedback toward making Arklow an Age Friendly town. Age Friendly business workshop/seminar on the 12<sup>th</sup> September was attended by Council staff.
- The Older Person's Council (**OPC**) **Seminar** is scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> November and preparations have begun for that as it will be their 10 year anniversary.
- Wicklow will be hosting the **OPC National Convention** in November of 2018 and again, preparations are underway for same.

#### **D08 – Building Control**

The Building Control Management System (BCMS) was introduced in March 2014, to manage the new laws relating to the commencement and certification of construction works. Builders must carry out works in accordance with the Building Regulations, and the nominate of a competent person, an “Assigned Certifier” to inspect works to ensure compliance with the regulations. They also provided for additional documentation with the commencement notice at commencement stage and also the introduction of a Certificate of Compliance following completion of works.

The Regulations were amended in September 2015 to ease the regulations in relation to single dwellings and for domestic extensions. There is no longer the mandatory requirement for statutory certificates of compliance for such developments. A person can “opt out” provided they demonstrate by alternative means that they have met their general obligations to build in accordance with the minimum standards.

#### **Progress in 2017**

- Continued to process commencement notices received in a timely fashion of which there are an increasing number.
- Continued to inspect new buildings, with approx 22% inspected to date.

#### **Objective for 2018**

- Continue to enforce the Building Control Acts.

#### **D09 Economic Development and Promotion**

##### **Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC**

In accordance with the guidelines for the establishment and operation of SPCs Wicklow County Council established the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC in September, 2014. The main function of the SPC is to assist the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy in this area. The SPC comprises seven elected members and 6 external members drawn from the following pillars: Environment/Conservation, Agriculture/Farming Community, Development/Construction/ Business commercial, Trade union and Business (West Wicklow). During 2017 the SPC concentrated its work on overseeing the Economic actions contained within the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2022

##### **County Wicklow Economic Think Tank**

County Wicklow Economic Think Tank (CWETT) is collaboration between Wicklow County Council, Wicklow LEO and local businesses. The purpose of the CWETT was to determine how Wicklow can attract and nurture business and promote sustainable economic development that creates jobs in the County. Following stakeholder engagement, and research, the members of CWETT, led by a Steering Committee, produced an Action Plan, which was adopted by Wicklow County Council in 2015.

Wicklow County Council is now engaged in implementing the actions under the following headings;

- Brand
- Film
- Marketing and Communication
- Recreation and Retail
- Industry and Infrastructure

The actions proposed by CWETT are now embedded in the Local Economic and Community Plan,

**Actions delivered in 2017:**

- Development of a new Web Portal in line with the Branding Strategy
- Progression of the development of a Wicklow Film Hub
- Publication of the Crowe Howarth Report on an Audio Visual Skills Strategy
- Establishment of the South Eastern Creative Corridor
- Progression of the Florentine Project in Bray
- Development of Town Teams in Bray, Arklow, Greystones and Wicklow
- Engagement with Failte Ireland and Wicklow Tourism with regard to maximising the benefit of Ireland's Ancient East and the development of tourism infrastructure
- Establishment of the County Wicklow Tourism Development Group to drive tourism goals
- Development of a Statement of Tourism Strategy
- Appointment of Consultants to develop a high level Tourism Strategy
- Engagement between the Maritime Business Development Group and experts on various aspects of maritime business.
- Securing of FLAG funding to improve maritime facilities in association with the Maritime Business Development Group
- Establishment of a sub group of the MBDG to develop Aquaculture Initiatives.
- Appointment of a Broadband Officer
- Further engagement with local businesses and development agencies in the County in a series of Business Breakfast Briefings
- Development of a suite of documents promoting business in County Wicklow

**Next Steps:**

- To launch the new Web Portal and relaunch of the Wicklow brand 'Endless Opportunities'
- To continue to progress of the development of a Wicklow Film Hub
- To seek funding to develop Wicklow County Campus as an audio / visual creative content hub
- To further progress the Florentine Project in Bray
- To carry out Town Centre Health Checks and prepare Town Centre Plans
- To establish a Blessington Town Team
- To continue to engage with Failte Ireland and Wicklow Tourism to maximise the benefit of Ireland's Ancient East and the development of tourism infrastructure
- To continue the work of the County Wicklow Tourism Development Group
- To produce a high level Tourism Strategy for the County
- To continue the work of the Maritime Business Development Group
- To produce a Maritime Strategy for the County
- To carry out a commuter survey in respect of the many individuals who travel out of the County to work on a daily basis
- To continue to engage with local businesses and development agencies
- To roll out a suite of documents promoting business in County Wicklow
- To review, prioritise and cost the actions listed in the CWETT report

**Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022**

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 has provided for an enhanced role in local community and economic development for local authorities. From an economic development perspective, measures include the integration of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) functions within the County Council, as well as the establishment of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC. The Economic element of the plan seeks to build on the strengths of the County to develop additional employment opportunities and economic activity in the County. The plan will also support linkages between businesses and business networks, education and training bodies and promote development of infrastructure and collaborations aimed at facilitating increased economic development.

The Wicklow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022 represents a major collaborative initiative between local community development and local economic development in the County and reflects the strengthened role of the local authority in both areas of activity.

As part of the process, extensive stakeholder engagement has been carried out with our partner agencies, local business, and the wider community. Engagement with the Public Participation Network has ensured that the voice of the local community and voluntary sector has been heard. Equally, interaction with the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank (CWETT) has ensured that the actions proposed in the CWETT Action Plan are embedded in the LECP.

The LECP contains 10 high level goals, 21 local objectives and more than 100 local actions. A key element of

the LECP is the Implementation Plan which is led by the LECP Advisory Steering Group which has representation from Community Cultural and Social Development the Enterprise Unit and includes the Chairs of the LCDC and the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC. The Advisory Steering Group will oversee the general implementation of the LECP and will monitor progress on the actions and against specific objectives, measurable targets, outcomes and timeframes.

### **Economic Goals**

- Develop infrastructure and measures that are positive and supportive to investment, enterprise, innovation and knowledge creation in strategic locations.
- Sustain existing enterprise and develop quality employment and income opportunities for the wide range of employment needs in the County, with possibilities for reversing commuting patterns.
- Capitalise on Wicklow's unique attributes and proximity to the Dublin market, excellent quality of life, human capital, tourism, landscape, marine, agricultural and forestry resources.
- Support a shift towards low carbon and climate change resilient economic activity, reducing energy dependence, promoting the sustainable use of resources and leading in the Smart Green Economy.

### **Networking and Collaboration with Local and National Development Agencies**

During 2016 the Enterprise Unit met with representatives of EI and the IDA, Failte Ireland and other agencies engaged in economic development. Formal and informal networking continues with the Local business, the Chambers of Commerce and the County Wicklow Chamber to promote and develop business in County Wicklow and develop job opportunities in County Wicklow.

### **Mid East Action Plan for Jobs 2016-2017**

The Mid East Region APJ covers the counties of Kildare, Meath and Wicklow. The primary objective of the Plan is to have a further 10-15% employment in the region by 2020 and to ensure that the unemployment rate is within 1% of the state average.

The plan focuses on nine key strategic areas:

- Driving Entrepreneurship
- Supporting business to grow and scale
- Fostering innovation
- Attracting and embedding foreign direct investment
- Building sectoral opportunities
- Skills enhancement and labour market activation
- Building business networks
- Marketing the region as an attractive place to work and live
- Maximising potential strategic areas for further job creation

Each of the strategic areas is supported by a series of objectives and actions. The Economic Development Unit in Wicklow County Council has contributed to the setting of these actions and plays a role in the monitoring and implementation of certain actions and initiatives. In addition, areas of particular strategic significance which are a focus for Wicklow include the development of an internationally recognised Audio Visual Production / Creative industry cluster and the Maritime Sector including the Wicklow Port project.

### **Local Enterprise Office**

The Local Enterprise Office commenced operations within the Wicklow Local Authority structure in April 2014 under a Service Level Agreement between the Local Authority and Enterprise Ireland.

#### **Mission Statement:**

The aim of LEO Wicklow is to promote entrepreneurship, foster business start-ups and develop existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide high quality supports for business ideas in County Wicklow.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

- Maximise Business Potential.
- Deliver support services that equip entrepreneurs, owners and managers with the knowledge to plan, grow and sustain productivity, innovation and competitiveness, as well as encourage greater technology uptake.
- Collaborate with Enterprise Ireland.
- Enhance communication with Enterprise Ireland to facilitate potential progression of companies from LEO to EI, facilitating access to relevant EI financial, business and research facilities.
- Act as a First Stop Shop for Business.
- Provision of first stop shop activities in respect of Business Support, Enterprise Development and Promotion, including Signposting.

- Make it easier to do business.
- Provide supports, guidance and solutions that make it easier for entrepreneurs, owners and managers to identify opportunities and implement actions to start-up, grow and survive within a competitive business environment.
- Promote a best practice enterprise culture.
- Act as the catalyst and advocate for the establishment of a best practice enterprise culture among start-ups, micro and small businesses; also promoting enterprise and self-employment as a viable career option among the wider population.
- Supportive Environment for Start Ups.
- Implement actions and initiatives that create awareness among potential entrepreneurs of the types of supports available, thereby improving the conversion rate of business ideas to fully-formed enterprises.
- The role of the Local Enterprise Office is to support entrepreneurs to start up or to grow their business leading to sustainable job creation in County Wicklow. The individual type of support required varies considerably depending on the stage of the business (pre start up / early stage / established), the background of the promoter and the sector, however there are common themes which LEO Wicklow attempts to address through the suite of supports on offer. The services LEO Wicklow offer are designed to support people to create sustainable enterprises that create jobs.

**Services:**

- Information Provision
- Supports for business networks including Network for women business owners (NEW)
- One to one Business Advice clinics
- Assignment of mentors to companies
- Financial support to boost sales via Trading Online Vouchers
- Technical Assistance Grants
- Exhibitions & trade shows
- Access to Microfinance Ireland loans
- Student Enterprise Programme
- Business training programmes & Seminars
- Leadership and management capability programmes
- Grant funding for eligible companies

The Network of LEOs (31) design and develop a number of programmes that are implemented by all the LEOs across the country. These include:

- Student Enterprise Awards
- National Enterprise Awards
- Showcase
- Food Academy
- National Ploughing Championships
- Local Enterprise Week
- Irelands Best Young Entrepreneur programme

The LEO Wicklow also has a role to play in the formulation of local economic development plans for the County, aimed at maximising the opportunities for enterprise and capitalising on the features in the County that offer sustainable competitive advantage.

**Progress to date 2017:**

- Dealt with 500 new enquiries.
- Delivered one to one business advisory meetings to 314 entrepreneurs.
- Assigned a mentor to 60 companies.
- Provided business and business IT skills training to 235 businesses.
- Provided Start Your Own Business training to 75 individuals.
- Provided Management Development to 20 businesses.
- Approved over €90,000 development grants to 20 eligible enterprises.
- Approved €24,000 export grants to 15 eligible enterprises
- Assisted 7 businesses to apply for MFI funding.

**Priorities for 2018:**

- Focus on assisting enterprises at risk from Brexit
- Maximise the opportunities for entrepreneurs from National programmes and new initiatives at local and regional level.
- Further develop an excellent and effective First Stop Shop for businesses in County Wicklow.

- Heighten awareness of the services available to businesses locally and nationally and help develop relationships between businesses and these service providers.
- Generate awareness of the LEO brand and services.
- Target supports at client companies in the LEO Wicklow portfolio with a view to stimulating further growth and job creation.
- Provide progression pathways for client companies to access Enterprise Ireland services and supports.
- Provide a suite of capability building supports and services that add value and bring benefits to business and increase productivity.
- Support employment creation in the county through investment in eligible businesses.
- Support economic development aimed at job creation in the County.
- Engage with partners at local and national level to design and deliver enterprise creation and support initiatives.

#### **D10 Property Management**

Property Asset Register - the main focus of this project team is to secure Council-owned property, and to implement consistent business processes for acquisition, disposal, management and leasing.

Work continued throughout 2016 to compile a mapped inventory of the Council's property ownership and current usage. Cross-checking of compatible registers such as the financial asset register and mapped social housing continues with GIS support.

A register of leases has been completed and audited for compliance, with required actions identified. A register of known encroachments has also been created; investigations are ongoing to prioritise actions for relevant sections (e.g. regularisation of leases, disposal of land where appropriate).

#### **D11 – Heritage and Conservation Services**

The Heritage Officer has responsibility for;

- Input to Strategic Environmental 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.
- Co-ordinates the Wicklow Heritage Forum.
- Production and implementation of actions in the Heritage and Biodiversity Plans.
- Secure funding from the Heritage Council to carry out these actions.
- Co-ordinates activities for National Heritage Week.
- Makes applications to Built Heritage Conservation Grant Schemes as available, and co-ordinates schemes within Wicklow (as relevant).
- Deals with heritage related queries from the public, statutory bodies and other organisations and community groups.

#### **Progress in 2017**

- Heritage input to the Review of the County Development Plan process and review of RPS.
- Heritage reports on planning applications, unauthorised development cases, felling licences and forestry consents.
- Co-ordination of Wicklow Heritage Forum meetings to oversee the implementation of actions of the Heritage Plan.
- Development of the Glendalough Community Archaeology Project and implementation of a programme of events including a community excavation, an archaeological fieldschool, a simulated 'Big Dig' for children, a volunteer graveyard survey, historic exhibition and the development of a graveyard trail.
- Co-ordination with neighbouring local authorities of the Liffey River Recording Project to create a digital, GIS based heritage archive of the River Liffey from 'Source to Sea' as baseline information for tourism and promotional initiatives.
- Hosting of a one day "Irish Heritage Gardens Study Day" "at Russborough House on 6th Sept in association with the Irish Georgian Society and the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland.
- Development and piloting of the Wicklow Local Biodiversity Project to facilitate awareness raising training and the production of local biodiversity plans for four Tidy Towns Groups in Wicklow.
- Co-hosting of a one day Wicklow 1916 Public Collections Day in County Buildings on 17th May to create a digital repository of archival information as a contribution to the Wicklow 1916 commemoration programme.
  - Co-ordination and promotion of 100 plus activities for National Heritage Week. Continued participation in the development of the National Heritage (GIS) Viewer to present natural and built heritage information.

- Contribution to a Local Pollinator Award in the National Tidy Towns Competition and judging of entries.
- Expansion and development of Wicklow's Online Community Heritage Archive and participation on the Irish Community of Archival Networks (ICAN).
- Participated as a member of Irish Ramsar Wetlands Committee.
- Participated as a judge for entries under the PURE Mile competition.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

- Continue to provide a heritage advisory service within the Local Authority for staff, the wider public and outside agencies and stakeholders.
- Draw up and implement an annual programme of actions of the Heritage Plan and co-ordinate the Heritage Forum.
- Carry out a review of the county Heritage Plan.
- Seek heritage funding as appropriate from outside bodies such as the Heritage Council and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.



## 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**

\*\*All Based on 2016 Indicators

Total Division Budget	€12,339,928
SEAI - S1 426 of 2014 and SI 542 of 2009	10.5% of 33% target @ 31/12/15
Energy efficiency and renewable energy resources and guidelines -	
Completion of M&R reporting system P/A	Submitted January 2017
Total Annual Energy Spend	€1.7m
KWH/POPULATION	243 (2015)
Number of projects funded under LA21	23 Funded

### **E01 Operation, Maintenance, and Aftercare of Landfill**

Both landfills at Rampere & 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 for each landfill.

Wicklow County Council continues to monitor closed landfill sites within the county.

### **E02 Operation and Maintenance of Recovery and Recycling Facilities**

#### **Progress in 2017**

- Resurfacing works carried out at Bray Recycling Centre
- Drainage works carried out in Arklow Recycling Centre
- Avoca now accepts and bales polystyrene
- 5 Hazardous Waste Collections held.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

- The continued operation of five Recycling Centres across the County, increase tonnages of recyclates collected.
- Proposed to remove Mobile Recycling Collection in west of 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 Funding for Waste Prevention Measure to 15c per inhabitant as committed to in the Regional Waste Management Plan.
- 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 2017**

- 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.
- Support to Regional Waste Management Office & Regional Waste Enforcement Office- based in

Dublin City Council.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

- Facilitate the Provision of an Effective Waste Collection and Disposal Service through the Waste Collection Permitting System.
- Support the PURE project in continuing its successful reduction of visible waste in public areas. Application has been made for continuation of this project for a further 5 years. Provision is made in the 2018 budget, as a contribution towards Project Manager Costs, which is not recoupable from the Department. Support of Project partners of Dunlaoghaire Rathdown, South Dublin, Coillte, and Wicklow Uplands Council is in place should a further project be agreed by the Department.
- Work with and support Dublin City Council as Lead Authority for Waste Enforcement and Regional Waste Management Plan.
- Implement measures of Regional Waste Management Plan as directed.

#### **E05 Litter Management**

##### **Objectives for 2018**

- Prepare and adopt a County wide Litter Management Plan.
- Litter pollution and quantification surveys carried out as part of National Litter Monitoring System.
- ATM Surveys to be carried out as part of the Negotiated Agreement between the Department and the Banking Sector.
- Role focus of Litter Wardens and incorporation of litter requirements into overall waste management operation.

#### **E06 Street Cleaning**

Street Cleaning and Litter Bin Service is provided in association with Municipal District 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 2018**

- Enforcement team operations in County continues to be funded in part by Department.
- Enforce Environmental Legislation and the Polluter Pays Policy.
- Continued work with National Transfrontier Shipment (TFS) office, appointed as competent authority for all hazardous waste movements in Ireland.
- Continue high level of enforcement and resulting cleanups.
- Work with and support Dublin City Council as Lead Authority for Waste Enforcement.

#### **E08 Waste Management Planning**

##### **Waste Management Plan**

##### **Objectives for 2018**

- Work with and support Dublin City Council as Lead Authority for Waste Management in Eastern Midlands Region and implement measures of Regional Waste Management Plan as directed.
- Implement measures of Regional Waste Management Plan as directed.

#### **E09 Maintenance of Burial Grounds**

There are approximately 48 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 2018**

- To finalise policy review of Burial Ground Operation and this will be carried out in conjunction with Transportation, Water & Environmental Services SPC, Municipal Districts and Full council
- A full review of Burial Ground Registrars pay, based on activity, will be implemented in 2018.
- It is proposed to build a Columbarian Burial Wall, within each district,. This will facilitate urn burials.

## **E10 Safety of Structures and Places**

### **Civil Defence**

- There are currently 130 registered Civil Defence Volunteers, 90 of whom are active.
- Training will continue for Civil Defence Members in 2018.

### **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 2018 under the direction of the newly appointed Water Safety Officer.

## **E11 Operation of Fire Service**

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

### **Progress in 2017**

- Co-ordinated meetings took place with Local Authorities within the region and with all Principal Response Agencies
- Major Emergency Plan was reviewed and updated.
- Regular meetings of Major Emergency Management Committee took place.
- Crisis Management Team was convened on 3 occasions in relation to Storm Ophelia
- Staff from Wicklow County Council attended regional training courses.
- An extensive programme of training was delivered including safety and health, for all Fire Service personnel.

### **Objectives for 2018**

- To provide an efficient and effective Fire Service in order to protect and save lives.
- Maintain current mobilisation times for fire crews attending emergency incidents.
- Regularly review and update the Major Emergency Sub-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.
- Continued development of National Standard Operating Guidelines

## **E12 Fire Prevention**

### **Progress in 2017**

- Inspections were carried out under the Fire Services Act, 1981 and 2003.
- The national primary school fire safety programmes was delivered in all schools in the County.
- A series of 6 community outreach events took place with the Gardai and the HSE
- The chip pan demonstration unit was on display at a number of large crowd events.
- Pre-incident plans were developed for a number of high risk locations.

### **Objectives in 2018**

- Continue to assess and grant Fire Safety Certificates and Disability Access Certificates submitted.
- To continue to carry out inspections under the Fire Services Act, 1981 and 2003.
- To deliver the national primary school fire safety programmes in all schools in the County.
- To continue to engage at community outreach events
- To deploy the chip pan demonstration unit to large crowd events.
- To develop pre-incident plans for high risk locations.

## **E13 Air, Noise & River Basin– Pollution Control & Enforcement**

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

### **Objectives for 2017**

- 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 quality requirements.

- In partnership with other stakeholders implement the measures of the National River Basin Plan for the improvement and protection of waters.
- To continue sampling and monitoring of rivers and lakes under the Water Framework Directive National Monitoring Programme.
- To engage specialist advice, where necessary, to undertake investigative assessments to determine the cause of the deterioration of river water quality to support the implementation of measures in the National River Basin Plan/Water Framework Directive.
- To support the National Air Pollution Strategy and Initiatives – increased monitoring, specialist advice and reporting required.
- To investigative and report on remediation of legacy Pollution Incidents.
- To provide a reliable and adaptive laboratory testing services supportive of the Council’s water quality investigative work.
- To protect and improve the quality of bathing waters and private drinking water supplies

## **E15 Climate Change & Flooding**

### **Energy**

In 2016 an Energy Awareness Team was set up with a representative from all Directorates. The aim of this group is to engage staff and promote energy usage awareness.

Areas covered in 2017 include

- Continuation of ‘Did You Know’ campaign
- Energy saving noticeboards.
- Train staff in reading energy bills.
- Energy Treasure Hunt with staff - Walkabout surveys with staff to identify energy problems and discuss with staff. Staff Energy Survey - Survey to identify attitudes, behaviour and knowledge of staff regarding energy usage
- Energy Awareness will continue in 2018 with items such as recommendations for improvement, Energy Week, etc.
- The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan sets out several obligations on public bodies to lead the way in relation to energy efficiency stating “The public sector will improve its energy efficiency by 33% and will be seen to lead by example — showing all sectors what is possible through strong, committed action”.

### **SI 542 of 2009 & SI 426 of 2014**

All Public Bodies are required to report annually on their energy consumption and performance. Reduce public sector energy consumption by 33% by 2020 or 3% P/A.

All directorates are to include a financial element in 2018 budget proposals for Energy Saving Measures specific to their area.

### **Climate Change**

Our climate is changing and in addition to our efforts to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases to mitigate against adverse impacts, planning for adaptation to climate change is now an urgent priority.

Local adaptation strategies need to be developed that will express a vision for a well-adapted local community that is resilient to the impacts of climate change, through:

- determining an area’s vulnerability to climate risks.
- identifying, prioritising and costing adaptation actions.
- developing and implementing a comprehensive action plan, and
- ensuring that climate change impacts and risks are embedded into all decision-making.
- Wicklow Co Co commenced formulation of a **Climate Change Adaption Strategy** in 2017.
- Resources are limited to 1 FTE in relation to this area of Energy Savings and Climate Change for 2018.

## **Division F – Recreation and Amenity**

<b>Objective</b>			
To maintain designated parks and open spaces and to promote Blue Flag Beaches within the County.			
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Total Division Expenditure	€7,908,776	Total Library Opening Hours*	366 per wk
Number of Libraries*		Number of Library Visits*	
Full Time	5	Full Time Libraries	413,926
Part time	8	Part Time Libraries	82,715
Mobile Library	1	Mobile Libraries	26,512
Library Membership*		Number of items loaned (includes downloaded Audio Books, etc.)* in 2016	521,643
Active 5 years	52,723	Public Internet Access Sessions (including WIFI)*	64,327
Active 1 year	32,107		
Number of Blue Flag Beaches 2017	4	Caravan Park Licences issued 2017	14

\*Indicators refer to 2016 year

### **F01 Leisure Facilities Operations**

Wicklow County Council pays an annual contribution to Shoreline Leisure to operate and maintain the Skatepark, Athletics Running Track, and Playground facilities at Charlesland in Greystones.

**Charlesland Sport and Recreation Park and Skatepark**, Charlesland, Greystones, County Wicklow. Operated by Shoreline Leisure Tel. 01 - 2016145.

### **Greystones Swimming Pool, Gymnasium and Community Sports Centre**

This state-of the-art, six-lane 25m swimming pool, gymnasium and double community/sports hall (with retractable seating for c.500) is located at Mill Road, Greystones, County Wicklow.

This complex is operated by Shoreline Leisure Tel. 01 – 2878180.

### **Bray Swimming Pool and Gymnasium,**

Southern Cross Road, Bray, County Wicklow.

This complex is operated by Shoreline Leisure Tel. 01 – 2765660.

### **Wicklow Historic Gaol,**

Kilmantin Hill, Wicklow Town.

Tel. 0404 – 61599.

E-mail [wicklowgaol@gmail.com](mailto:wicklowgaol@gmail.com)

Web: [www.wicklowhistoricgaol.com](http://www.wicklowhistoricgaol.com)

Wicklow Historic Gaol is operated under licence by Wicklow Enterprise Park (Gaol).

### **F02 Operation of Library and Archival and Genealogy Service**

#### **Library Service**

Wicklow County Council continues to provide a quality library service to the public. The Council's policy of providing 'free library membership' ensures that the public library service remains accessible to everyone and membership remained constant at over 32,000 in 2017.

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 Shelton Abbey Open Prison. In addition, a monthly service is provided to some nineteen nursing homes in the County,

including Carnew Community Care, Cheshire Home, Shillelagh and St. Colman's Hospital, Rathdrum.

### **Wicklow County Council wins Public Sector Magazine Award**

Wicklow County Council has won an award for the County's library service. The 2017 Irish Library Services Award was presented by Public Sector Magazine in its annual Excellence in Business Awards. The prestigious award was in recognition of the extensive range of services offered by the County's 13 branch libraries which have become vital components of the educational, cultural and socio-economic development of communities and individuals in every part of the county. The library service is at the forefront of organising commemorative events, providing space and materials for reflection. The ideals of 1916 - equal rights and opportunities, cherishing everyone equally - continue to inform the public library service in Wicklow.

Wicklow's library service is built on values which are shared with library users, values which are fundamental to an equitable society: Social and Cultural inclusion and access in all its aspects; support for healthy and vibrant local communities, which are sustainable socially, culturally and economically. The library service in the County is much more than the sum of its parts. Wicklow's libraries are at the heart of communities, urban and rural, providing free public spaces for all. They foster reading and literacy and an appreciation of books from cradle to grave. The libraries also support learning, formal and informal, and deliver information in many and varied formats, to meet the many and varied needs of users.

Public Sector Magazine will feature Wicklow County Council in a special publication with editorials on each of this year's award winners.

### **Library Services**

#### **Current Initiatives**

"Work Matters" – Arklow

"Musical Instruments for Libraries" – Blessington & Arklow

"Right to Read" programme County wide

#### **Wicklow County Council Library Services Development Plan 2016-2020**

Wicklow County Council launched its Library Services Development Plan 2016 - 2020 in early 2016.

Developments and improvements targeted in the Plan include:

- **Wicklow Town** – Wicklow County Council has purchased a suitable building and it is hoped to commence refurbishment in 2018.
- **Rathdrum** – The current priority is to develop a modern library facility, as part of other community services in a town centre location
- **Aughrim** – The present library is not of a suitable standard for a modern facility, so developing a modern library building on the existing site is the most practical solution.
- **Mobile Library** – The present Mobile Library Van is now twelve years old and will need to be replaced soon. This very successful venture has an annual membership of 2,000, and over 35,000 items borrowed annually. The service is greatly appreciated by the public it serves.
- **Bray Library, Eglinton Road** – The need to provide a quality library building and library service for Bray is included in the Council's Library Service Development Plan 2016-2020.

In the short term, the Eglinton Road Library was renovated in November 2016, with the former full time opening hours being restored.

The option of further development of the library, on the existing site, will be kept under review.

### **Book Fund**

An amount of €150,000 for books and €50,000 for audiovisual items and online subscriptions has been included in Budget 2018. The Council's Library Services Development Plan 2016 - 2020 notes the national book fund target figure of €3.77 per head of population, so it is important that Wicklow County Council should continue to aspire to attain this target.

### **Library Management System (LMS) – known as 'SIERRA'**

Wicklow County Council and sixteen other Local Authorities are now 'live' on the new Library Management System (LMS) – SIERRA.

A major advantage of the new system is the streamlining of services, enabling an equitable service for all:

All users have access to the same 'online' catalogue of resources, including e-books, downloadable audio books, e-languages, e-magazines and e-newspapers.

Books and Items can now be requested 'online' from Libraries throughout Ireland and books and items are being collected from and delivered to Wicklow Libraries, twice weekly.

## **ARCHIVES & GENEALOGY SERVICE**

### **Wicklow County Archives**

Wicklow County Archives Service holds a unique collection of Wicklow records relating to the administration of the County and the people's interaction with this administration. They offer a rich research resource for the family and local historian, as well as academics and researchers of wide and varying interests.

Among the jewels of the collection are the 17th and 18th century Wicklow Borough records - offering a snapshot of Wicklow life in the mid-1600's. The County archives also holds the records of the Grand Jury, the precursor of the County Council, as well as the Boards of Guardians of the Poor Law Unions, Boards of Health, rural and district, Town and County Councils as well as private collections.

### **Wicklow Genealogy Service**

The County Archives offers a genealogy research service, researching and advising those with Wicklow roots, and promoting the County as a key destination to those on the "roots trail". Our parish records database establishes family lines and their connection with the Wicklow landscape.

Wicklow is a member of [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie) – this research site contains over 20 million Irish records from 30 Counties. Wicklow's income from this site was €16,000 in 2017.

### **Archives & Genealogy Programme 2017/2018**

#### **Digitisation projects**

- County Wicklow Workhouse Registers for Rathdrum and Shillelagh Unions.
- Wicklow UDC Minute books.
- (Digitised to date: Grand Jury Records; Wicklow County Council Minute Books; Arklow UDC Minutes, Wicklow County Burial Registers)

#### **Fitzwilliam Estate Records Project**

- In partnership with Trinity College, the National Library and the Courthouse Arts Centre Tinahely to digitise the records of the Fitzwilliam Estate – hundreds of thousands of Canadians and Americans descend from the tenants who left this estate during the Famine. Merging records from the Wicklow County Archives with the new Fitzwilliam database to enrich the resource and increase research success.

#### **Wicklow to Cumberland Miners Project**

- In partnership with the Cumberland Miners Group, compiling a database of Wicklow miners who migrated to the Cumberland mines in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

#### **County Wicklow Heritage Website**

- Online community archive is part of a network of websites created by the National Museum of Ireland. The Wicklow site *Our Wicklow Heritage* is a partnership of the Heritage, Library and Archives services.

#### **Member County Wicklow Heritage Forum:**

- Forum members are finalising the County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2017-2022 following public consultation.

#### **Records Management Programme**

- Member of the *Wicklow County Council Records Management Group*, developing a records management programme for Wicklow County Council, with reference to the *National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records* published by the LGMSB – soon to be updated by the LGMA.

#### **Creative Ireland**

Creative Ireland is the Government's five-year programme to encourage everyone in our society to realise their full creative potential. Its underlying propositions are that creativity supports wellbeing and that Arts and Culture are crucially important avenues to creativity.

It aims to put culture and creativity at the heart of all Government policies and to have a lasting positive impact on generations of Irish people to come. Creative Ireland follows the success of the 1916 commemorations in 2016.

To date, Creative Ireland has had a number of successes with events like Cruinníú na Cásca at Easter 2017, the launch of Ireland.ie a new portal website for Ireland and also the launch of 31 Local Authority Culture & Creativity plans launched.

Wicklow County Council plans for Creative Ireland 2018 included:

- **Cruinníú na Cásca** – a programme of free cultural events held on Easter Monday.
- **Activation Plan** – an action plan for joined-up cultural measures in line with our strategic proposals and a website.
- **Strategy** – a strategy exclusively for Creative Ireland Wicklow reflecting the National 5 Pillars with special emphasis on Pillar 2.
- **Literature Curator** – will be appointed to work with Wicklow Library Services Outreach Officer.
- **The Heritage & Arts Office** - will collaborate to initiate a pilot approach to creating participatory artist-led heritage workshops and residencies.
- **A Community Choral Activation Plan** – development supports for the Choral sector were developed.
- **The Bray Jazz Festival** – held over the May Bank Holiday weekend, extended its access to performances and the presentation of distinctive ensembles and individuals.
- **Wicklow L.E.O.** – will lead and deliver the ‘South-Eastern Corridor Creative Industries programme’ which aims to resource and develop film industry practitioners in Wicklow and adjoining counties.
- **Music Generation Wicklow** – extended early year’s music presentations and new youth engagement.
- **Shekina Sculpture Garden** – based in Glenmalure, this garden is presenting the work of Sculptor Fred Conlon with works on loan from the artists’ estate.
- **Calary Music Festival** – extended its range of performance opportunities to emerging musicians under 18.
- **The Arts Office** – developed a new programme of contemporary art commissions.

### **F03 Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations**

This includes the operation, maintenance and improvement of the following outdoor leisure facilities.

**Playgrounds provided** by Wicklow County Council throughout County Wicklow.

- Arklow : Seaview Avenue, Arklow.
- Arklow : St. Peter's Place, Arklow.
- Arklow : South Green, Arklow.
- Bray : Ballywaltrim, Bray.
- Bray : Fassaroe, Bray
- Bray : Giltspur Heights, Southern Cross Road, Bray.
- Bray : Peoples Park, Dargle Road, Bray.
- Bray : Sidmonton Park, Bray.
- Bray : Seafront, Promenade, Bray.
- Wicklow Town : Ballynerrin.
- Wicklow Town : Hill View.
- Wicklow Town : The Murrough.
- Rathnew Childrens Playground and Teen Area with a Skate and BMX Park (Opened in 2016).
- Baltinglass Recreation Park and Playground.
- Blessington Playground, Business Park, Blessington.
- Enniskerry Playground, Monastery Grove, Enniskerry.
- Greystones Playground, Mill Road, Greystones.
- Kilcoole : Little Tern Park (opened 2017).
- Kilmacanogue Playground, Rockfield Park.
- Newcastle Playground, Wicklow Coast Road, Newcastle.
- Newtownmountkennedy Children's Playground.

#### **Proposed:**

- Greystones (Upgrade/Replacement—construction to begin early 2018)
- Carnew (Expected completion by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017)
- Rathdangan (Expected completion by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017)
- Newtownmountkennedy (Plans underway for 2018)
- Roundwood/Laragh (Plans underway for both projects—2018)

#### **Skateparks: -**

- Arklow Skatepark and MUGA at Seaview Avenue.
- Wicklow Town Skatepark and BMX Circuit and MUGA at Seafront, The Murrough.
- Blessington Skatepark, at Business Park, Blessington.
- Charlesland Sport, Recreation and Skatepark, and Athletics Track at Charlesland Greystones.

**Proposed:**

- Baltinglass Skatepark 2017. (Completion November 2017)

**Playgrounds facilitated by Wicklow County Council in partnership:-**

- Aughrim Playground
- Arklow Skatepark and MUGA at Seaview Avenue
- Ashford Community Park Playground
- Charlesland Sport, Recreation and Skatepark, Charlesland, Greystones
- Dunlavin Playground
- Eden Gate Playground, Charlesland, Greystones
- Grangecon, Playground
- Knockananna Playground
- Rathdrum Playground
- Shillelagh Playground
- Tinahely Playground and MUGA

**Baltinglass Community Park**

Baltinglass Community Park is an impressive recreational facility, developed jointly by Wicklow County Council and the Baltinglass Park Committee.

The Park has many fine features including a playground, accessible boardwalk along the river Slaney, picnic areas, pitches and a series of walkways throughout the park. This Park is a very good example of partnership in action between the Local Authority and the Local Community.

**Community Development and Sport and Recreational Development In Partnership at:-**

- Ashford Community Park; Inbhear Mor Scouts and Youth Facility, Arklow; Ashford Development Association; Rathnew Community Centre; Rathnew Active Forum, Walking/Jogging Track; Aughrim Community Sports and Leisure; Glenealy Village Hall; Blessington and District Forum Trails; Wicklow Skatepark and Outdoor Gym; Kilcoole Community Centre; Wicklow Community Resource Centre (Former Parochial Hall)
- Tourism/Wicklow Outdoor Recreational Strategy/Recreational Trails.
- Wicklow Way Partnership.
- Blessington Greenway Walk Partnership.
- Kildare/Wicklow Failte Ireland.
- Wicklow Local Sports Partnership Strategy.
- Wicklow County Council's own Bray to Greystones Scenic Sea Cliff Walk and Tourist Trail

**F04 Community, Sport and Recreational Development****County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy**

The County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Committee was established in July 2009 to implement the strategies as outlined in the County Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy.

This strategy is the outcome of an extensive consultation process managed by County Wicklow Partnership in partnership with Coillte, Fáilte Ireland, Irish Sports Council (now Sport Ireland), the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Wicklow County Council, Wicklow IFA and Wicklow Uplands Council. Out of this consultation process, an overall vision was agreed for Outdoor Recreation in County Wicklow.

Five strategic objectives were identified, that collectively, will help to achieve the agreed vision. These objectives 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.

**Community Awards 2017**

The Community Award Grants for 2017 benefitted hundreds of local groups across the entire County. The number of applications in 2017 greatly exceeded the amount of funding available and as a result, not every group was supported.

## **Community Facilities Scheme 2017**

This was a new grant scheme for 2017 included in the “ A Programme for a Partnership Government” and is aimed at Disadvantaged Urban & Rural Areas with €2m available in 2017 nationally. The Scheme is for capital projects only and to be approved by the LCDC and Municipal Districts. Projects must relate to the LECP (Local Economic and Community Plan - each Local Authority received €64,500 with the maximum amount per project being €1,000. No matching funding is required.

## **Co-operation Ireland All-Island Pride of Place Awards 2017**

This is the fifteenth year of this competition, the purpose of which is to acknowledge the fantastic work being done every day by communities all over the Island of Ireland. Wicklow County Council is proud to be involved again in the 2017 Annual IPB Co-operation Ireland All-Island Pride of Place Competition.

In 2017, Wicklow County Council entered 4 groups in the competition under four different categories:

- **Community Based Youth Initiative** - East Wicklow Youth Service (THE VAULT), Arklow
- **Creative Place Initiative** - Signal Arts Centre, Bray
- **Urban Neighbourhoods** - Bray Family Resource and Development Project CLG, Bray
- **Community Reaching Out Initiative** – Streetfeast, Newtownmount Kennedy

Judging took place in the County in July and the winners will be announced at a Gala Awards night to be held in Donegal in December 2017.

## **Community activity engaged in by Wicklow County Council throughout 2017:**

### **Comhairle na nÓg 2017**

Wicklow's Comhairle na nÓg is a group of young people, who meet monthly in a Council style set up, who are passionate about enhancing the voice of young people in Wicklow. In a new initiative, Wicklow Comhairle na nÓg handed out over 1000 surveys to young people across the County to find out their views on topical issues such as, health, housing and youth facilities.

The results of the survey were launched in County Buildings on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and will inform the Comhairle's work Plan and will also be brought to senior decision makers in Wicklow to show them what young people feel about Wicklow.

Wicklow County Council, in partnership with Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) continued to develop Wicklow's Comhairle na nÓg structures. There are some twenty one local schools and youth groups involved in the Local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme.

There is one regional youth council in each of the five Local Electoral Areas of County Wicklow.

- Wicklow
- Bray
- Greystones
- Arklow
- Baltinglass

The five Regional Youth Councils/Fora meet regularly and link to their Local Authority and other decision-making Bodies. They have elected representatives to the County based Comhairle na nÓg, which will link with Wicklow County Council, Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board, Wicklow Local Sports Partnership, Health Service Executive and other decision making Bodies in the County. This structure will also elect delegates to the national Dail.

## **WICKLOW LOCAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP (LSP)**

### **Overview**

Wicklow Local Sports Partnership was established in 2008, supported by the then Irish Sports Council (now Sport Ireland), Local Sports Partnership initiative. Representatives from a variety of Agencies, Organisations and Community Groups involved in sport, physical activity, outdoor recreation and community development make up the Board of the Wicklow Local Sports Partnership.

The objectives of Wicklow Local Sports Partnership are identified in its Strategic Plan which is currently under review.

The main functions of Wicklow Local Sports Partnership include: -

## **Information provision**

Wicklow Local Sports Partnership is involved in the co-ordination of local sports information, initiating research, compiling a sports directory and database, identifying needs and resources to form the basis of local planning and establishing a consultative sports forum.

## **Education & Training**

Wicklow Local Sports Partnership provides opportunities for education and training at a local level, including generic training courses in areas such as Code of Ethics, First Aid and Active Leadership, while also supporting the delivery of sports specific courses in conjunction with National Governing Bodies of Sport.

## **Implementation**

Wicklow Local Sports Partnership implements a range of national programmes to encourage participation e.g. Buntús, Women in Sport, Go for Life. Programmes are delivered in areas such as Sports Development, Community Sport and Physical Activity, Schools Sport, Youth Sport and Sport Inclusion. Wicklow Local Sports Partnership will also implement sports programmes in the context of the local strategic plan for sport and physical activity and in line with Sport Ireland priorities.

## **Actions undertaken in 2017**

Wicklow Local Sports Partnership assisted in the delivery of a wide range of initiatives aimed at promoting participation in sports and physical activity;

- Nineteen Code of Ethics courses have been completed to date in 2017.
- First Aid and disability inclusion training have also been provided.
- Establishment of a sports and physical activity club for children with disabilities in conjunction with other partners.
- Roll out of an outdoor recreation campaign.
- Distribution of sports grants.
- Promotion and co-ordination of Active School Week, Bike Week and other National initiatives.
- Develop partnerships with other bodies for the strategic and targeted provision of physical activity throughout County Wicklow.
- Support target groups to become more physically active.
- Continue to educate the population on the importance of physical activity in daily life.
- Increase awareness of Wicklow Local Sports Partnership and the opportunities it provides to stakeholders and target groups.

The Wicklow Local Sports Partnership is on Facebook and Twitter.

Web: [www.wicklowlsp.ie](http://www.wicklowlsp.ie)

## **F05 Operation of Arts Programme**

### **Wicklow County Arts Office**

County Wicklow has a rich artistic and cultural tradition with a range of vibrant activities taking place in the visual arts, music, theatre, literature, sculpture, youth arts, community arts and festivals.

Wicklow County Council's Arts Programme nurtures and develops this rich tradition and to ensure that the Arts are made accessible to all in the County.

### **Arts Council Application 2018**

A Consultant was contracted to deliver the application (based on information supplied by the Arts Office). The request was for €82,000 (a 55% increase on the award for 2017).

### **Strategic Projects – Awards**

The Arts Office recently completed the application process for *Strategic Project Awards*, which will support the collaborative development and delivery of new high quality projects during 2018. Three awards were made:

- Anna Newell – *Sing me to the Sea* – R&D for a music/ Immersive theatre experience for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties, set in a hydro pool (sessions to be held in pools in East Wicklow and West Wicklow) – €14,900
- Neil Regan & Alchemy Music – *Londubh Festival* in Ashford (formerly Heaney Festival) – a development initiative that will extend the scope and ambition of the festival, making it a poetry and music event of national significance - €4,500
- Oonagh Murphy – *The Mouth of a Shark* – A collaborative community project leading to a theatrical song cycle juxtaposing the experience of refugee immigrants to Ireland with the experience of Irish emigrants of the last 50 years - €13,400

## Creative Ireland

Work is taking place on all aspects of the Creative Ireland partnership. Alongside the successful delivery of a family programme throughout the county for Cruinníú na Cásca on Easter Monday, and the establishment of a Children and Young People Expert Group (due to meet in early October), another notable development is:

- The selection of curator Linda Shevlin for a multi disciplinary art project on the theme of Pollinators as part of a *Heritage Pilot* programme
- The development of a brief for a *Literature Curator*, who will be appointed shortly.

## Public Art

Two curators have been appointed to deliver the four public art commissions for: Fran O'Toole Bridge; Albert Avenue Underpass; St. Philomena's National School, Ravenswell; and Coláiste Ráithín, Ravenswell. Five shortlisted artists have already visited the Coláiste Ráithín site and the selection panel will meet on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Visits and panels are currently being organised for the other three sites.

## F06 Arts Agency Services and Recoupable Services

The 'Youth Project' and annual 'Culture Night' are run as Agency Services through the Wicklow Arts Office.

## CLÁR

CLÁR is a targeted investment programme for specific rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in areas that experience disadvantage. It only applies to a small number of designated town lands in Wicklow that have experienced significant levels of depopulation.

The following town lands are eligible in Wicklow:

Baltinglass Municipal District - Ballinguile, Imaal North, Lugglass, Ballybeg, Coolballintaggert  
Arklow Municipal District - Ballinacor, Kilpipe

Projects are restricted to flashing amber lights, safety signs, road markings, pedestrian crossings, footpaths to schools or community facilities, car parking, public lighting and bus shelters.

## 2016 Grants Approved:

**Knockananna** - Multi-Use Gaming Area (MUGA) - €48,000

**Knockananna** - Pedestrian Crossing etc. at Primary School - €20,000

**Askanagap** - Safety Signs & Markings - €2,000

## 2017 Grants Approved:

**Knockananna** - Public Lighting for the footpath from Knockananna Village to GAA grounds - €27,000

**Rathcoyle** - Purchase and replacement of a flashing amber safety light - €6,300

## Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ)

The REDZ Project in County Wicklow is focused on Arklow REDZ. The decision to focus on Arklow is result of analysis of the socio-economic profile of County Wicklow.

Two main elements to the REDZ project in Arklow:

(i) To carry out a Health Check on the town to ascertain strengths and weaknesses and to provide a blueprint for the development of the area.

(ii) To develop a heritage and visitor activity centre based on the world renowned Arklow Pottery.

This building will serve as a museum for the pottery heritage of Arklow (renowned worldwide like Waterford Crystal), will stimulate a significant amount of tourist interest and also become as a centre for pottery/arts/craft activity, with the aim of stimulating entrepreneurship in this sector.

It is hoped that this activity could revitalise the lanes connecting Arklow's main street with the river bank. These lanes are currently made up of vacant premises. Arklow has the highest rate of vacant retail space in the County. The revitalisation of the lanes as a hub for arts, crafts and speciality shops will serve as an added tourist attraction, stimulating café activity.

## Community CCTV Scheme

- New grant scheme for 2017 included in the Programme for Partnership Government
- Scheme to run for 3 years 2017-2018-2019 with €1m available nationally each year.
- Maximum grant available is €40,000 to cover a maximum of 60% of total Capital costs of the system.
- Any proposal to be approved by J.P.C. (Joint Policing Committee) and have authorisation of the Garda Commissioner.
- Funding must be available locally to support the CCTV System for a 5 year period.
- One application from County Wicklow each year for the next 3 years – (Arklow – 2017) (Wicklow – 2018) (Greystones – 2019)

- Arklow application led by Arklow Town Team – approved by J.P.C. at their July 2017 meeting.

#### **Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGS)**

- Flags are a community-led local development initiative for fisheries and aquaculture dependent communities, under Ireland's Seafood Operational Programme 2014-2020, and funded through the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund.
- Focused on promoting innovative approaches to create growth and jobs in these coastal areas, to create growth and jobs in these coastal areas, with a particular emphasis on adding value to fishery and aquaculture products and diversifying the local economy towards new economic activities.
- The FLAG programme seeks to encourage communities involved in the fishery and aquaculture sectors to become drivers of the sustainable development of their areas through development and implementation of a Local Development Strategy.
- The South East FLAG area comprises the coastal zones of counties Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford and stretches from Bray to Wicklow to Ardmore in Waterford.
- The allocation for South East FLAG is €1.68m over the 6 years that the programme will be operational (2017-2022).
- Already in 2017, the South East FLAG has been allocated €423,000 for 29 projects, costing €645,000.

#### **The Wicklow FLAG Projects approved to date are:**

- Storage Facilities for Fishermen - €200,000
- Arklow Lightship Restoration Scheme - €28,000
- Arklow Hoist Improvement Works & Training - €25,750
- Celtic Longboat for Vartry Rowing Club - €6,396
- Wicklow Seafood Festival - €12,035

Of this €253,750, Wicklow County Council will contribute €76,125 with grant aid of €77,625.

#### **Avondale Forest Park Project**

- Avondale Forest Park Project will be a significant new visitor hub for County Wicklow. The plan is to develop Avondale Forest Park into a significant visitor destination in Ireland's Ancient East to provide.
- A major new offering for visitors and tourists to Wicklow
- The Glendalough Experience – Interpretive Centre and visitor facilities for Glendalough located at Avondale.
- A major site for outdoor activities – walking & cycling trails, aerial adventures, natural and wild play.
- Indoor Activities – Boda Borg – Kids Adventure Kingdom
- Accommodation – Camping, Pods & Tree houses
- Visitor hub in Old Courtyard site restaurant
- Retail – gift shop, souvenirs, outdoor gear.
- Forestry Museum – brought to life with working and interactive craft workshops and displays
- Avondale House Experience – the life and legacy of Charles Stewart Parnell

#### **Progress to Date**

- “Memorandum of Understanding” signed between Coillte and Wicklow County Council.
- Feasibility study developed in 2014 - Workshops held in 2014
- Consultants appointed in 2017 - Planning application for ‘Phase 1’ to be lodged by end of 2017.
- Project is fully supported by Fáilte Ireland. It fits in with Ireland’s Ancient East Programme and has financial support from Fáilte Ireland.

#### **Key Stakeholders:**

- Coillte, Wicklow County Council, Fáilte Ireland, County Wicklow Partnership, The Parnell Society, O.P.W, The Local Community

#### **Tourism Fund**

In the budget for 2017 €50,000.00 was allocated for tourism projects in the County (€10,000.00 per Municipal District) A decision was taken that in 2017 this initiative would be co-ordinated via the CCSD department with initial input regarding the projects being submitted by the Municipal Districts for approval of the Community Cultural And Social Development SPC. It was recommended that each MD would submit tourism related projects with a value of €10,000.00 and include costing and supporting documentation for each project submitted.

### **Tourism Ambassador Programme**

The issue of break-ins to parked vehicles at tourist sites across the County, was raised at Joint Policing Committee meeting.

The solution identified through co-operation with: Gardaí, NPWS, Wicklow Tourism, Community Organisations, Wicklow County Council, Wicklow Uplands Council, Mountaineering Ireland, Rural Recreation Scheme was that County Wicklow Partnership was ideally placed to roll out a ‘Tourism Ambassador’ initiative through its Tús programme.

The Tús programme recruits participants from the Department of Social Protection. Tourism Ambassadors work 19.5 hours per week as part of the Tús programme and are located at various car parks at Tourist hot spots throughout the County.

Tourism Ambassadors’ roles include:

- Offering support & guidance to tourists and locals
- Acting as security or deterrent in the guise of a tourist information officer
- Advising tourists on the closest facilities and suggesting places of interest to be viewed and enjoyed
- Advising visitors of the risk of leaving valuable items in full view in vehicles
- Notifying the relevant authorities of suspicious activities in the area

The Tourism Ambassadors are in full uniform which is clearly identifiable. They also have security training, manual handling training, First Aid training and have completed an Introduction to Tourism and Business course by KWETB. Wicklow County Council financially supports the Tourism Ambassador Programme.

### **Blessington Greenway**

- WCC has applied to Fáilte Ireland for the Large Tourism Projects 2016-2020 Grant Scheme for funding to construct a greenway.
- The Greenway will cover more than 40km of walking and cycling trails through the forest and woodlands.
- The Greenway will pass through spectacular scenery adjacent to the shoreline of Poulaphouca Reservoir – more commonly referred to as the Blessington Lakes.
- It will link the historic town of Blessington to the Palladian mansion of Russborough House and continue through other tourism facilities and local villages in a ‘loop’ for walkers and cyclists around the lakes and back to Blessington.
- No decision has been made on the grant application as yet and it is felt that no decision will be made in the near future as there is a strategy being developed for Greenways at present.
- Part V111 was approved for the project at the Wicklow County Council meeting held on 3rd July 2017.
- Discussions are ongoing to resolve some local concerns that emerged during the Planning process.

### **Comhairle na nÓg**

- Comhairle na nÓg Wicklow’s AGM was held in the Parkview, Newtownmountkennedy on 26th October 2017.
- The Comhairle representatives presented their chosen topics to the full Council meeting on Monday 2nd October 2017 – their two topics are homelessness and cyber-bullying.
- The Dáil na nÓg is taking place on the 6th December 2017 in Croke Park and Wicklow will be represented at same.
- Comhairle Training day took place on the 14th September and a regional day on Thursday 28th September 2017.

### **Local Sports Partnership/Katie Taylor Sports Bursary**

Established in 2013 by Wicklow County Council to honour the remarkable success of Olympic Champion boxer and Bray native, Katie Taylor. There have been 4 winners of the bursary to date with €9,500 awarded in total. The 2017 Grant advertised in line with CAO offers, on the LSP social media platforms, CountyWise, via email to Sports Clubs, schools & colleges and East Coast FM. The closing date was 15th September and 10 applications received.

### **Healthy Cities & Counties Network**

Aims to improve health and wellbeing by creating and continually improving its physical and social environments, and develop community resources that help people to support each other and achieve their potential. Health Cities and Counties implement the **Healthy Ireland Strategy** at a local level **A Healthy Wicklow Strategic Plan** for the County will be prepared as part of the funding application for Healthy Ireland funding which was made by the LCDC, Wicklow and Bray area Partnerships and the LSP.

### **Outdoor Urban Adventure Initiative- Dormant Account Funding**

- An application has been submitted for this funding opportunity. The application was made in conjunction with Crosscare and the KWETB Sports Promotion Unit to roll out an urban outdoor initiative in the Bray Harbour and Dargle River areas.
- This application, if successful, will complement the proposed Blueway project for Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford.

### **Healthy Ireland Funding**

Healthy Ireland funding has been announced by the HSE for LCDCs and Children and Young People's Committees (CYPSC) to apply for funding to implement the Healthy Ireland Plan. There is a fund of €100,000 available for LCDCs and €8,400 for CYPSC. It is a stipulation of the application that LSP and HSE must be involved in the application process. The deadline for this application was 15<sup>th</sup> of September and two applications have been submitted, for the full application.

### **Code of Ethics**

19 courses have so far been held in 2017 (13 Safeguarding 1 courses; 5 Safeguarding 2 courses and 1 Safeguarding 3 course)

### **CSDO (Community Sports Development Officers)**

Two Community Sports Development Officers have taken up their positions. Both development officers will be taking part in a number of training programmes including Sport Leader, Code of Ethics Safeguarding 1 and Coaching Children Tutor Training and will then be able to roll out these programmes in Wicklow as part of their role.

### **HSE - Chronic Disease & Lower Back Pain Interventions, Arklow**

- Collaboration with Physiotherapists in Arklow will start in October with referrals coming from Arklow HSE and LSP development officer and Physiotherapist leading the sessions.
- The aim of this programme is to stop 'bounce backs' and people with specific problems and will include a session on using gym equipment and a suitable programme. Participants who complete the 8 week session will be offered discounted membership to the local gym.

### **Siel Bleu – Older Adults Activity Programme, Greystones**

- 12 week programme aimed at older adults and free of charge. Currently fully booked with 25 people registered.
- Funding secured through the HSE in conjunction with Siel Bleu and Wicklow LSP. If successful, this programme will be rolled out in other towns across the County.

### **Healthy Ireland Initiative**

The aim of the Healthy Ireland Fund is to support innovative, cross-sectoral, evidence-based projects, programmes and initiatives that implement key national policies.

With the recognition of LCDCs and CYPSCs as key local structures, funding from the new Healthy Ireland Fund is being offered to the LCDCs and CYPSCs in 2017. including: the National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland, A Healthy Weight for Ireland Obesity Policy and Action Plan, National Sexual Health Strategy and Tobacco Free Ireland. The Healthy Ireland Fund will look to support projects and programmes aimed at children and young people and their families, and communities and vulnerable groups who are at most risk of experiencing health inequalities.

In addition, the development of local strategic plans for health and wellbeing is being supported to strengthen the existing approaches outlined in LECPs as well as enabling greater collaboration and planning across LCDCs and CYPSCs. Collaboration between LCDCs and CYPSCs, and integration of these plans, is encouraged to foster relationships and maximise opportunities at the local level. For many Local Authority areas, this strategic planning process will support membership of the Healthy Cities and Counties Network.

### **Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2017**

Development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure or the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in Ireland.

### **3 Measures**

#### **Measure 1: Small Scale Maintenance/ Promotional Marketing**

Grant aid of up to €10,000 (€2 million available) - Aimed at up-keeping of already established trails/ walkways/ cycle-ways/Blueways. Max. **15 projects** per County - all projects to be completed by 31/12/2017.

## **Measure 2: Medium Scale Repair/ Upgrade and New Trail Development**

Grant aid up to €100,000 (€3 Million available), aimed at developing new trails/ walkways/ cycleways/ Blueways or extensions to existing. Max. of 4 projects per County, All projects to be completed by 31/12/17.

## **Measure 3: Large Scale Repair/ Upgrade and New Strategic trail development**

Grant aid up to €1 million (€6 million available), aimed at new larger-scale recreational infrastructure. 1 application per County. All projects to be underway by September 2017 and completed by mid-2018.

### **Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA)**

#### **Capital Grant Funding Scheme for Play & Recreation 2017**

Applications to be submitted by Local Authorities by 21/04/2017 - Only one application per Local Authority  
Maximum grant available is €20,000

Eligible Projects - New and innovative play and recreation spaces, refurbished or upgrading existing play and recreation spaces and facilities.

Wicklow County Council was allocated a €13,000 grant to replace the surface of the playground at Seaview Avenue Playground, Arklow - Work to be carried out by Arklow Municipal District, any funding shortfall to be provided by Wicklow County Council.

#### **PlayDay and National Recreation Week**

Funding was received from DCYA to run PlayDay and National Recreation Week again in 2017. For PlayDay we teamed up with Streetfeast to combine neighbourhood get-togethers with Playday. The LSP gave free games equipment to those running Playday to add to the fun.

Recreation Week had a particular social inclusion focus this year as it was run by the Youth Services in Arklow.

“Vaultfest” at the Skate Park in Arklow, - Skateboard, Scooter and BMX competitions, music and a BBQ  
A group of 22 young people from the Travelling community and the Marshlands Centre had a great day out in Clara Lara

Jabba Jabba Drummers did 5 workshops over the week, both in Arklow Youth Centre and in Wicklow BBH centre

Paddle Boarding in Wicklow Harbour - 2 groups took part, one from Arklow and one from Ballyguile, Broadlough View and Hillview Estates (BBH), Wicklow

#### **Wicklow and Arklow Swimming Pools**

Wicklow and Arklow Swimming Pools are owned by Wicklow County Council and run on foot of a lease by Coral Leisure. In 2016 Wicklow County Council appointed a Consultant to undertake a feasibility study of both Arklow and Wicklow Leisure Centres and Swimming Pool facilities, to carry out a cost/benefit analysis for the refurbishment of both complexes, together with proposals to develop /improve the existing facilities to improve income and services. On foot of this it has now been decided to go to tender for the management of the two pools for a period of 8 years with an option of a 2 year extension.

#### **Walking Trails**

The C.C.S.D. directorate has set itself an ambitious target to develop a number of walking routes spread across the county, all linking eventually to the flagship ‘Wicklow Way’ route and the ‘Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk’.

#### **Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk**

The cliff walk from Bray to Greystones is one of the most popular walks for both visitors and locals alike. It is approximately 6.3 km in length and takes about 2 hours to complete, and is suitable for a range of abilities. In 2016, Wicklow County Council commissioned a condition survey from consultants, and this was completed in July 2016. The survey recommended a number of improvements to the walk and following a tender process, a contractor was appointed to carry out these works. Unfortunately, the contractor withdrew from the project as he was reluctant to carry out the work, while the walk remained open to the public. The Council now intends to carry out the work by direct-labour, using Council employees, from autumn 2017 to spring 2018, in advance of the busy summer 2018 season.

#### **Wicklow Cliff Walk (Glen Turn)**

As far back as 2013, the Irish Sports Council and the National Trails Office commissioned a site assessment study on this proposed walk. This walk is being progressed in conjunction with a local committee ‘Friends of the Murrough’. The 2013 study has been updated by the National Trails Office in 2017.

The Wicklow Cliff Walk is located approximately 1.5 km South-East of Wicklow Town and runs from a car park adjacent to Wicklow Golf Course for approximately 2km along the coast towards Wicklow Lighthouse. The ‘Friends of the Murrough’ community group have been involved in improving the existing route in order for it to be recognised and accredited by the National Trails Office.

The Council have appointed RPS Consulting Engineers to develop a detailed design of a comprehensive system for the protection of the coastline and the creation of a coastal walk. This builds on a report commissioned by the local group in late 2016 (Ove Arup & Partners).

### **The Sugarloaf Way Walking Trail**

The trail, developed in 2015 and funded under the special ‘Tourism Promotion’ fund provided in the 2015 Budget (€100,000 for Tourism projects spread over the five M.D.’s). This walking trail connects the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk to the Wicklow Way, via the Little and Great Sugarloaf Mountains.

Creating this walk allows walkers to access a third town of Kilmacanogue which in turn is served by public transport for commencing or finishing the walk.

### **Vartry Lakes Walk**

The full extent of a possible walk around the Vartry Lakes is 30kms. The ultimate plan is to open up the full 30kms, following the contents of a 2015 report commissioned by Roundwood & District Community Council. Over 10kms have been provided so far, with more to follow as funds allow. The works included are surface restoration, way-marking, provision of interpretative map board and other works.

### **Cliff Walk to Kilmacanogue (Sugarloaf Walk)**

This walk was completed in summer 2017 and is also called the ‘Bray Head Loop Trail’ and it joins up with the existing Sugarloaf Way Trail and in turn, joins the Wicklow Way. The completion of this walk means that it is now possible to walk from Bray to the end of the Wicklow Way at Clonegal, Co. Wicklow.

### **Woodenbridge to Ballycoog ( Woodenbridge Loop Walk)**

This Walk was completed in summer 2017 and is part of the more ambitious Arklow to Shillelagh Walk. This particular section runs parallel to the old railway line and is approximately 2km long. It is on the route of the proposed Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway.

### **South East Coastal Blueway**

3 County Councils – Wicklow, Waterford and Wexford are working together to develop a **South East Coastal Blueway** extending from Bray in County Wicklow to Youghal Bridge in County Waterford and a 10km zone inland.

A Blueway is a recreational water activity trail that is developed for use by non-motorised water activity enthusiasts. They can be developed on canals, rivers, lakes or along the coast, and can incorporate other associated land based trails adjacent to the water trail.

The coastline of Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford has a combined length of 415km. It is accessible to the public with numerous beaches and water-based activities currently operating along the route. The land corridor has a strong heritage culture, craft and food offering with potential for further development.

Under the current LEADER programme, a separate fund of €10m has been ring-fenced under the LEADER Co-Operation heading and the 3 Counties intend to apply for funding under the heading to develop the Blueway. The 3 Local Action Groups (LAG’s) have approved the project and a request for tenders with a closing date of 11<sup>th</sup> August 2017 was advertised for the provision of a feasibility study into the development requirements and economic potential of a South-East Coastal Blueway.

The project builds on the Audit of Coastal facilities in the South East (Wicklow, Wexford & Waterford counties) carried out by Waterford LEADER partnership, Wexford Local Development and County Wicklow Partnership, Wexford Local Development and County Wicklow Partnership in August 2015.

Tenders were assessed/reviewed in September and Irish Leisure Consultants (ILC), Carrowcashel, Ramelton, Co. Donegal have been awarded the tender for the provision of a feasibility study into the development requirements and economic potential of a South East Coastal Blueway.

### **Disability Federation Ireland**

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions. Laura English from Disability Federation Ireland is now working with Wicklow Local Authorities two days per week. Laura currently works as a Community Development Worker for Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) in the South Dublin and Wicklow region. Laura’s role with DFI focuses on engaging key people across all sectors of the

community to tackle issues affecting people with disabilities, develop strategies and identify key local structures through which outcomes can be achieved.

To date Laura has attended a Municipal District Meeting in every district in order to make contact with the members, to introduce herself and to define her role, facilitated disability awareness training for but not limited to front line staff (38 staff in total received this training), built relations with key people who could support her work including the PPN, local SICAP implementers Wicklow Local Authority Access Group (WLAAG), Bray Area Partnerships Disability Network, KWETB and local disability services prepared an article for County Wise magazine and held Wicklow4all workshops in Bray in July, and Arklow in September with a third due to be held in the west of the County in November.

## **Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare**

<b>Objective</b>		
To protect public health, animal health and animal welfare		
<b>Key Indicators</b>		
Total Division Budget	€1,731,897	

### **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**

#### **Arklow Harbour**

The day to day operation of the Harbour continues to be managed by the Council. A number of improvement works will occur in the Harbour area during the year.

#### **Wicklow Port**

Wicklow County Council controls and manages this busy commercial port on a daily basis. The upgrading works that commenced in Wicklow Port in 2017 will continue into 2018. The Port will be enhanced for all users of this maritime facility.

#### **G 03**

Arklow (Avoca River) Flood Defence Scheme will progress with the procurement of consultants to carry out an Environmental Impact Study.

The Office of Public Works continues to fund minor flood mitigation works on an annual basis and there is a revised criteria for funding these schemes effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017.

### **G04 Veterinary Services**

#### **Objectives for 2018**

- Carry out hygiene audits of all abattoirs and meat manufacturing plants based on risk assessment.
- Promote best practice in relation to animal welfare.
- 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 as required.
- Continue Dog Control Service & requirements under Dog Breeding Establishment Act.

### **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 2017**

The centralised authority, Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) now deals with Higher Education Grants for first time college students. This has reduced the number of applications being made to Wicklow County Council, as only renewal students are now being processed locally. To date in 2017/2018 academic year no applications have been received.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

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

<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Total Division Expenditure	€12,770,216	Total Motor Tax Receipts 2016	€2,206,212
No. of designated casual trading spaces (reviewed 2012/13)		Net receipts due to the Exchequer	€1,150,549
Number of voters included in the Register of Electors 2016/17	96,603 (including supplements)	No. of Motor Taxes issued	52,461
No. of Casual Trading licences renewed (6 month & 12 month)			14
<b>Key Indicators</b>			

### **H01 Profit/Loss Machinery Account**

Wicklow County Council owns 106 items of Plant consisting of small and large vans, jeeps, pick-up trucks, large truck frost gritters etc. These are discharged on a weekly basis to the five Municipal Districts or directly against job codes. Some items of plant, for example frost gritters and surfacing machinery, are seasonal and only discharged at certain times of the year. Any surplus made from the discharge of the machinery yard is used to continually maintain and update the plant stock.

### **H02 Profit/Loss Stores Account (Same)**

Wicklow County Council operates the 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 in Wicklow, Raheen in Roundwood and Tinahely. The stores also have also undertaken the purchasing and distribution of paper and office supplies.

### **H03 Administration of Rates**

Wicklow County Council's Rates Office bills and collects rates from over 4,100 properties 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. Wicklow County Council will continue to work towards the harmonisation of the ARV's in 2018 as required under The Local Government Reform Act 2014 (S.29).

### **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 (incl. Supplements) on the 2017/2018 register is 96,192.

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 36 fieldworkers are 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 2017**

2017 was busy due to the compilation and addition of EirCodes to the eReg system. Wicklow County Council have over 95% coverage of Eircodes for properties on the system. As per the new Department of Environment Circular issued in October 2017, all local authorities are obliged to have 100% Eircode compliance by the end of this year. The standard of accuracy of Wicklow County Council's register is a major achievement.

### **Objectives in 2018**

The objectives for the 2018/2019 Register are to continue with the high level of accuracy which has been achieved to date and to build on the competency of the 36 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 Weighbridge**

The weighbridge in Newtownmountkennedy has been commissioned and is in operation since February 2017. It was advertised as an appointed weighbridge in accordance with Sections 3 and 4 Finance (Excise Duties) (Vehicles) (Amendment) Act 1960 and under Section 15 of the Road Traffic Act 1961.

## **H07 Operation of Market and Casual Trading**

### **Objectives for 2018**

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

## **H08 Malicious Damage**

The budget provision is to deal with malicious damages claims.

## **H09 Local Representation and Civic Leadership**

### **Wicklow County Council Joint Policing Committee (JPC) six year strategic plan**

The Wicklow County Council Joint Policing Committee (JPC) Six Year Strategic Plan was adopted by Wicklow County Council in November, 2016 and launched at a public meeting in Roundwood Parish. Four key areas identified form the basis of the sub committees which have been established to implement the objectives contained within the Strategic Plan. The key areas identified are: Policing Communities, Tackling Crime in Rural Areas, Drug Prevention and Communications. Two public meeting were held by the Committee in 2017 in Dunlavin and Ballywaltrim, Bray.

## **H10 Motor Tax**

Wicklow County Council provides Motor Taxation services from three offices. Motor Taxation Services are also available online at [www.motortax.ie](http://www.motortax.ie).

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.

## **Division J - 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:

<b>Order of Allocation</b>	<b>Cost Pool</b>	<b>Cost Driver - Division</b>	<b>Cost Drive - Service</b>
1	Pensions & Lump sums	Salary and Wages costs	Salary and Wages costs
2	Corporate Buildings	m <sup>2</sup> 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	Post Room Services	% usage	% usage
6	Human Resources	Staff nos.	Staff nos.
7	Finance	No. of transactions	No. of transactions
8	Municipal District Offices	% Usage	% Usage

### **J01 Corporate Buildings**

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

### **J02 Corporate Service**

#### **Freedom of Information**

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 came into effect for local authorities on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The main changes to the Act are as follows:

- No application fee applies.
- There is a minimum threshold of €100 below which no search, retrieval and copying fees can be charged. Once the charge exceeds €100, full fees apply.
- There is a cap on the amount of search, retrieval and copying fees that can be charged of €500.
- There is a further upper limit on estimated search, retrieval and copying fees at €700 above which an FOI body can refuse to process a request, unless the requester is prepared to refine the request to bring the search, retrieval and copying fees below the limit.
- The fee for internal review under Section 21 is now €30 (€10 for medical card holders and their dependants).
- The fee for appeals to the Information Commissioner under Section 22 is now €50 (€15 for medical card holders and their dependants).

#### **Progress in 2017**

- The total number of requests received during 2017 was 111 at end of October 2017.

#### **Objectives in 2018**

To continue to process all Freedom of Information requests in accordance with the statutory deadlines as set out in the Act. To implement the provisions of the new Freedom of Information Act 2014.

#### **Accessibility**

Throughout 2017 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 2017**

- The Access Officer strives to ensure that all the legal obligations in relation to accessibility are met.
- Awareness training was provided for staff.

#### **Objectives for 2018**

- 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.
- To increase awareness amongst staff of accessibility issues experienced by the public when availing of Local Authority services through the NDA e-learning module.

- To continue to meet with the Wicklow Local Authority Access Group and to expand the membership of the group. WLAAG also aims to increase its influence on all access matters within the Local Authorities in County Wicklow.

### **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. 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**

The existence of an independent Audit Committee is recognised as a key element of good corporate governance. Good corporate governance encapsulates better informed decision-making and accountability for the stewardship, control and the efficient use of resources.

Statutory Instrument No. 244 of 2014, “Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014”, introduced new regulations for the constitution and operation of Audit Committees in Local Authorities. These new regulations stem from the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and the new provisions reflect the ever increasing requirement for the application of good governance principles.

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 a number of statutory functions

- to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its Chief Executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

Wicklow County Council's 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.

### **J03 Information & Communication Technology**

The Council's I.T. Department's Operational Plan for 2017 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. Continued adherence to the constraints of the I.S. budget was a feature of operations in 2017 as in other years.

The strategic objectives for 2018 are:

- Increased Focus on General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Updating our data connectivity and resilience,
- Extending the Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) for the Council's telephony solution
- Improving unified communications systems
- Extension of Shared Services initiatives where appropriate,
- Continued focus on Workflow & Customer Relationships Management
- 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.

The highlights of 2017 include:

- Consolidation of Fixed Voice and Voice over IP ( VOIP ) framework telephony agreements,
- Provision of continued support for elected members,
- Smooth implementation and Rollout of Milestone4,
- Completion of a new Managed Print Service (MPS) contract. This contract leverages high levels of cost effectiveness, energy efficiency and rapid response to maintenance calls,
- Property Interest Register (PIR),
- 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 the current Draft County Development Plan, Local Area Plans and Strategic Environmental Assessments during 2016,
- We continue to add value to the Council's website [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie). The site incorporates much improved search facilities and up to date social media feeds,
- The Council has been proactive in the use of social media, currently having 4,500 followers on Twitter and a number of Facebook pages. Items of current relevance to the County such as road works and closures, recruitment, etc are routinely tweeted. Water supply updates are re-tweeted from Irish Water,
- Provision of support for the local implementation of the Housing Assistance Payment ( HAP) scheme and the Library Management System ( LMS) scheme, which has now moved to cloud based solution.

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 Management System (Agresso), Revenue Collections, Housing, Planning, Fire Service, Environment, Payroll, Roads, Library, Voter Registration, Major Emergency Planning etc.

Plans for 2018 include:

- Awareness and Training for GDPR,
- Installation of new core & edge switches,
- Upgrading of Backup and Recovery solution,
- Support the national Transforming Public Services strategy,
- Continue to support national and local shared services initiatives,
- Reduction of monetary and carbon costs where possible,
- Leveraging the savings inherent in some recently completed projects, i.e. telephony charges, power usage,
- Implement any infrastructural changes required with the aim of improving network performance and its protection from external and internal threats,
- Test the backup and recovery of systems and data in the event of a disaster,
- Completion of a new agreement for the supply, installation, commissioning and maintenance of LAN speed WAN connectivity between Wicklow County Buildings, the Municipal Offices and Government Networks. This will allow for improved external connectivity to government VPN and facilitate national shared services objectives,
- Further development of ESRI Arcserver – a GIS facility to deploy our important datasets on a user friendly platform, that will allow users to view, analyse and digitize their relevant departmental data,
- Continue to provide support to utilise digitally mapped data from various sources in decision-making processes,
- Enhancement of the Council's website [www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie) will continue in 2018 with the introduction of the online payment facility and the introduction and integration of further interactive services and applications.
- Assist in the Council's review of their Communication Strategy.

#### **J04 Post Room Services**

All costs associated with managed print, general plotters and post room services are charged here and reallocated back across Wicklow County Council Services based on usage.

#### **J05 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. Core International was selected as the supplier of Human Resources, Payroll and Superannuation integrated system for the local authority sector. The system has now been substantially implemented in Wicklow Local Authorities with the implementation and roll out of CORE Version 19 and My Pay, the shared payroll service, successfully completed. The Health & Safety module was delivered in 2017.

## **Objective 2018**

- It is envisaged that the Performance Management module along with Superannuation Shared Service and a number of mini modules including one relating to the shorter working year and another on social welfare entitlements will be rolled out in 2018.

## **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 Safety in Construction Projects,
- First Aid,
- Chemical Awareness,
- Signing, Lighting & Guarding,
- 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 a bi-annual basis. In addition Ancillary Safety Statements/Local Safety Statements for each Department are also reviewed bi-annually.

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

## **Progress in 2017**

- Working closer with the Regional Training Centre to ensure value for money on all training courses provided.
- Ongoing audits of workplaces.
- Monitoring of all accidents and incidents.
- Ongoing review of Health and Safety Statements etc.
- Continuing roll out and review of Health and Safety Policies & Procedures.
- Roll out of CORE Health and Safety module.

## **Objectives for 2018**

- Continuing roll out and review of the National Local Authority Policies and Procedures.
- Monitoring allocation of safety resources.
- Continue implementation of a Safety Health and Welfare Management System.
- Implementation of Core H&S Module for the organisation.
- Review of accident statistics.
- Review of the Corporate Safety Statement.
- 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 2017**

- Number of training seminars, conferences and courses held to the end September 2017 -56
- Number of staff who participated in training to the end of September 2017 -447
- Number of staff who participated in assisted study courses in 2017- 34

## **Objectives in 2018**

- To continue to offer training and development, in line with the requirements identified in staff training and development plans to all staff and elected members to ensure greater organisational performance and personal job satisfaction.

## **J06 Finance Function**

This includes the salaries and administrative costs for Finance staff and financial costs associated with the financial management of the Council.

## **J07 Pension & Lump Sum Costs**

Wicklow County Council currently pays 458 pensioners at a cost of €4,535,094 (outturn 2017). A sum of €4,782,788 for pension costs in 2018 is provided for. A further amount of €829,653 for one-off lump sum costs which will arise in 2018 is also provided for.

## **J08 Municipal District Costs**

There are five Municipal Districts in County Wicklow in Arklow, Baltinglass, Bray, Greystones and Wicklow, which operate in conjunction with the Directorates to provide services to their areas. Outlined below are some significant highlights for each Municipal District.

### **BRAY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

#### **Florentine Centre Development**

The Florentine Centre Development is about to go to second (and final) stage as part of the tender process. This €30M project will comprise of two anchor tenants (approx 4,000sq metres), four smaller retail units and four restaurant units. A five screen cinema complex and associated car parking will also be built as part of the development. Estimated build time from appointment of developer is estimated to be 24 months (they need to get the design and their funding /legals sorted out before they can commence construction which will take 18 months).

#### **River Dargle Flood Defence Scheme**

The River Dargle Flood Defence Scheme is officially being launched this week. This €46M project consists of flood defence works in the river and includes additional amenities for the surrounding area which includes the Boardwalk, a new entrance at People's Park and the development of a hard landscaped linear park on Ravenswell Road. The scheme involves widening and deepening of the river channel, construction of walls and embankments along the riverbanks will contain the flow within the river channel from a 1 in a 100 year fluvial flood event of the River Dargle and 1 in 200 year tidal flood event.

#### **Housing Schemes**

The following Housing Schemes are underway or planned for the coming year:

- The tender for the construction of 42 units at Kilbride Lane was published on 02 November 2017, with a closing date of 05 December 2017. The anticipated start date for the build is March 2018.
- 20 units are to be built in Sugar Loaf View, Kilmacanogue
- Four one bed units are currently under construction in Kilmantain Place, Bray

#### **Town Team**

A Town Team was formed in 2016 which comprises a number of businesses who are representative of the geographical and sectoral spread of the District. They met on several occasions to discuss terms of reference and to formulate an Action Plan. The Action Plan consists of four objectives, namely:

1. Business Development
2. Marketing and Promotion
3. Infrastructure and Public Realm, and
4. Festivals and Events.

Some of the projects include the installation of foot fall counters and monitoring of those statistics; ongoing promotion of the 'Bray.ie' brand and social media; continued provision of support for town events and festivals including Christmas in Bray, the St. Patrick's festival and the Bray Airshow.

Production of a 'Business in Bray' guide will help inform existing and new business set ups of how to do business in Bray.

A Public Realm project at the Albert Avenue railway underpass is progressing. The objective is to install feature lighting to enhance this gateway entrance to Bray's seafront. Installation of feature LED lighting on the Town Hall was completed in 2017.

### **Seafront enhancement**

Seafront enhancement initiatives include:

- Continued investment in the Victorian iron seat backs along the length of the promenade
- Painting and refurbishment of the Victorian railings along the seafront
- Installation of outdoor exercise / gym equipment
- Initial assessment of refurbishment of the two Victorian shelters which are on the seafront
- Completion of the seafront cycle track at the mid promenade location at the aquarium which is funded by the NTA
- Completion of the Schools cycle track in the Harbour – works are commencing this week with a completion date of 04 December 2017

### **Bray Head Special Area Amenity Order**

The Bray Head SAAO Management Plan was adopted in March 2017. This is a 5 year plan to include a plan for ongoing maintenance for trails, planting and signage etc.

### **Cliff Walk refurbishment**

The Bray - Greystones Cliff Walk refurbishment works are ongoing.

### **Big Belly Smart Bins Rollout**

Continued rollout of Big Belly Solar Compactor Bins throughout the District. Currently there are 70 bins, with the two most recent having been installed in Enniskerry village.

### **Bray Wayfinding project**

This project is underway. Its objective is to address and improve wayfinding around Bray by increasing signage, installing more information pedestals and information / location signs for pedestrians – both residents and tourists.

### **Parking**

A number of activities related to Parking are underway in the District which include:

- Adoption of new Parking Bye Laws for the town
- Recruitment of two, directly employed, traffic wardens with a start date of 20 November 2017
- Investigation of expansion of Herbert Road Car Park for additional parking

### **Harbour Development**

Recently a Bray Harbour Committee was formed with Wicklow County Council. Collectively they identify and explore opportunities for improving the amenities around the Harbour (i.e. possible dredging, seeking enhancements of the existing Harbour area. It is intended to carry out a Masterplan for the harbour in the coming months (carried out by Christine Flood as part of her Maritime stream of the CWETT process)

### **Old Court Energy Efficiency Programme**

69 additional dwellings included in this phase with a projected completion date within 18 months. Works include installation of insulation, redecorating and new kitchens to existing dwellings in the Old Court estate.

### **Blue Flag Award**

A Blue Flag was awarded to Bray for its beach in 2017. Work will continue to maximise the potential of Bray being successful again in attaining this internationally recognised accolade.

### **R755 Calary Upper Realignment**

Resurfacing of Calary Lane following the installation of a new bridge was carried out on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017. The roadway is now reopened to traffic. As the budget is overspent no further works on the project are planned for 2017. Since works commenced in 2016, approximately €350,000 LCSI grant has been spent on the scheme. A similar amount of funding is required to complete the project..

## **GREYSTONES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

The following works and projects will be completed and progressed in 2018:

### **Road Works:**

- Road reconstruction at Templecarrig Road & Bellevue Hill
- Road resurfacing and footpath works at Hillside Road

- Patching at Main Street & R761 in Kilcoole, Kindlestown Lower Road & Mill Road, Greystones

**Footpaths:**

- Victoria Road
- Applewood Heights
- Seamount Drive
- Church Lane
- Bow Lane to Eden Road
- Dromont to Kindlestown Heights
- R761 at Killincarrig
- Creown Road & Hazelwood Crescent, Kilcoole
- Racefield, Newcastle (new)

**Other Projects:**

- Provision of public lighting at Burnaby Heights right of way
- Upgrade and improvement of pedestrian route at Mill Lane
- Pedestrian islands at Colaiste Chraobh Abhann, Kilcoole
- Renovation and provision of footway at St. Crispin's
- Church Lane/Church Road junction improvements
- Installation of bollards at Blacklion bypass
- Installation of solar powered compacting bins at Applewood Heights and Bellevue Road bus stops and at Kilcoole and South Beach playgrounds
- Clearing of Three Trout Stream in partnership with local residents
- Fencing at Kilcoole Mass path
- Expressions of interest sought for provision of toilet facilities at Greystones harbour
- Signage to mark route linking Greystones to the Wicklow Way at the Sugarloaf
- Contribution towards Wicklow Hospice

The following works and projects are proposed for 2018:

**Road Works:**

- Complete the multi-annual roads programme
- Progress the Delgany / Chapel Road / Blacklion road improvements

**Footpaths:**

- Seamount Drive renewal scheme phase 2 (footpaths, landscaping and road resurfacing)
- Continue footpath improvements throughout the district

**Parking:**

- Increase capacity of Greystones Park and Ride car park
- Additional bike parking in Greystones

**Other Projects:**

- Progress provision of public toilets at Greystones harbour
- Removal ,replacement and extension of South Beach playground
- Introduction of bike sharing scheme in conjunction with Bray Municipal District
- Upgrading and improvements to the Cliff Walk – joint project with Bray Municipal District

## ARKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

**Activities in the Arklow Municipal District in 2017 included the following:**

- The upgraded playground at South Green Arklow was officially opened and blessed on the 12<sup>th</sup> April.
- The 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of artist and writer George Campbell RHA was commemorated on May 10<sup>th</sup> by Arklow Municipal District by the unveiling of a plaque at St Patrick's Terrace, Arklow.
- At the Annual meeting of Arklow Municipal District held on the 14<sup>th</sup> June Cllr. Tommy Annesley was elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Miriam Murphy was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.
- The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins signed the Arklow Municipal District visitors book at the opening of the Shekina Exhibition in Glenmalure on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June.
- The official Opening of the Rathdrum to Avondale footpath on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017
- A Civic Reception was held by the members of Arklow Municipal District on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July to honour Niamh Walsh, the successful actress who is originally from Arklow Town.

- Arklow Municipal District was shortlisted in the fourteenth annual Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards for Commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and birthplace of artist George Campbell RHA (1917 – 1979) under the Heritage and Built Environment category.
- Arklow has also been nominated for the Bank of Ireland's National Enterprising Town Awards competition in the population category greater than 7,001. The Judges were welcomed to Arklow on 26<sup>th</sup> September by members of the Town Team. They received a presentation and then went on an Enterprise tour of Arklow.
- **Spook-Tacular Halloween in Arklow** - Arklow's biggest and best family Halloween Festival took place from Friday 27<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October. Witches, zombies, ghosts and fairies alike are attended the spooktacular events.
- During 2017 the Members of Arklow Municipal District (AMD) visited Avoca River Park, to meet the businesses located there and to hear about future plans.
- Presentations were made recently to a number of local groups by Arklow Municipal District (AMD) to acknowledge their achievements and contributions to Arklow life. Cllr Tommy Annesley, Cathaoirleach, along with the other Members of Arklow Municipal District, presented cheques totalling €5,000 to eight local residents associations and €5,000 to a number of festival committees from the district.
- Arklow Twinning Association also received a cheque for €3,000. Arklow Town has an active Twinning Committee who aim to develop and maintain permanent ties between the towns and to encourage exchanges in all domains between the inhabitants of the towns. Arklow Town is twinned with Chateaudun in France and Aberystwyth in Wales.
- A presentation was also made to East Wicklow Youth Services who offer services and support to young people in the Arklow area.
- The Members of Arklow Municipal District were presented with a cheque for €3,400 from a former Arklow traders association which will go towards the sponsorship needed to commission a Ronnie Delany Sculpture in the town during 2018.
- The Avondale All Stars were presented with the first ever “Cathaoirleach’s Special Recognition Award” in Arklow Municipal District on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

**The following were some of the infrastructural works which were completed in Arklow during the year:**

**Traffic calming measures completed within the Arklow Municipal District include:-**

- Speed Cushions at Woodlands Park, Arklow.
- Installation of two ramps at Blackberry Glade, Arklow.
- Installation of two ramps in Ballinaclash.
- Installation of ramps in Main Street, Avoca.

**Replacement of Footpaths at the following locations included:-**

- Glenview Thomastown,
- Wexford Road, Arklow
- Redcross,
- Kirkee,
- Pound Hill Arklow
- Rathdrum Main Street
- Parnell Park, Rathdrum
- Woodenbridge
- Wicklow Terrace, Arklow
- Footpaths at Ashleigh Close, Arklow
- Completion of the footpath from Rathdrum to Avondale.

**Resurfacing of the following roads took place:-**

- Arklow Main Street
- Dublin Road Arklow
- Castlemacadam
- Glenmalure
- Ballycoogue
- Entrance to Woodview Park, Avoca

**Other Infrastructure works taking place in the District are:-**

- Pedestrian Crossing on Dunne's Lane, Arklow
- Pedestrian Crossing at Aughrim National School

- Civic space in Rathdrum
- Build out at the Post Office on Arklow Main Street

## **BALTINGLASS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

Aside from the normal maintenance functions carried out by Baltinglass Municipal District, some of the many and varied projects carried out during 2017 include:

- Production of three tourism brochures covering Blessington Lakes, West Wicklow and South West Wicklow. These brochures cover points of interest, main transportation links, walking trails and the villages and towns in the area.
- Provision of financial support to the South Wicklow Drama Festival Committee for the refurbishment of hall in preparation for the hosting of the All Ireland Amateur Drama Festival in April 2018.
- Working with the business community in Blessington to complete the Roundabout Landscaping Scheme covering all roundabouts in the town.
- Liaising with community groups throughout the District in relation to Tidy Town activities, Estate Development grants and Christmas lights funding.
- Collaborating with communities on applications for Town and Village Renewal Scheme, CLÁR and Community CCTV.
- Encouragement of community twinning arrangements between Blessington and O'Neill town, Nebraska, and Carnew with Smiths Falls, Canada.

Baltinglass Municipal District was delighted when Blessington was selected by the Chief Executive as County Wicklow's nominee in the 3,000 to 5,000 population category for the Bank of Ireland National Enterprising Town Awards. The staff worked closely with Blessington and District Forum, and other community leaders, to showcase the town of Blessington to the judges. A video of Blessington was commissioned as part of the submission to the judges and will be used as a promotional video for the area. The work carried out as part of this national competition highlighted the many positive attributes that Blessington has to offer, to both residents and visitors to the area.

## **WICKLOW MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

The elected members of the Wicklow Municipal District allocated their discretionary income as follows:

### **DISCRETIONARY FUNDING ALLOCATION**

#### **Footpath Works:**

- Laragh village to Green Road Pathway
- Roundwood village to Roundwood Soccer Pitch
- Resurfacing of car park Rathnew.
- Refurbishment of footpath Greehill Court housing estate Wicklow Town.

#### **Public Lighting Projects:**

- Belard Manor Glenealy
- Bosuns Rest Wicklow
- Skate Park The Murrough
- Merrymeeting Hill

Christmas Lights Wicklow Town

Provision of Two Park Benches on The Murrough

The Members also allocated funding to Tidy Towns groups in Wicklow, Roundwood, Ashford, Newtownmountkennedy, Laragh, Glendalough, and Rathnew. The members also supported other groups throughout the District such as, Wicklow Hospice, Local Residents Associations, Wicklow Volunteer Group, Twinning Associations and festivals and community events e.g. the Regatta, and the St. Patricks Day Parade.

## **CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

Additional works undertaken in 2017 using central government funding in Wicklow Municipal District included the following:

**Road Recycling and Overlay Projects:**

- A section of the Laragh to Sally Gap road
- Knockaphrumpa Lane
- Two sections of the Laragh to Ballard road
- Ballymaghroe to Devils Glen road
- Tomriland to Annamoe
- Season Park Estate Road
- Ballinalea Estate Road
- Ballinteskin

**Surface Dressing Projects:**

- Ballinastoe
- Powers Avenue
- Brittas Bay

**Local Improvement Schemes:**

- Ballard Lane
- Kilmullen Lane
- Knockraheen Lane
- Drummin Lane

**Line Marking Works:**

- Wicklow Gap Road
- Rathnew
- Ashford
- Annamoe
- Newtownmountkennedy
- Wicklow Town

**Development Contributions:**

- Construction of footpath from Moneycarroll to Newtownmountkennedy GAA club

These additional supports are provided alongside the regular functions that the District provides e.g. local authority house maintenance, road maintenance and improvement, street cleaning, outdoor maintenance & grass cutting, operation & maintenance of Brittas Bay North & South Beaches, drain clearing, maintenance of burial grounds etc.

The Wicklow Municipal District has engaged RPS Consultants to carry out the Coastal Erosion Protection Design Proposal for Glen Beach, Wicklow Town (starting point for Cliff Walk).

The Members have prioritized the promotion of the District as a key objective and fully support the newly formed Town Team. They will continue to support and work closely with the entire community.