



COMHAIRLE CONTAE SHLIGIGH
SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL

Sligo. LIVE
INVEST
VISIT

Sligo County Council Annual Report 2020

071 911 1111
info@sligococo.ie
www.sligococo.ie

County Hall
Riverside
Sligo

City Hall
Quay Street
Sligo

 @sligocountycouncil

 @sligococo

 @sligocountycouncil

Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	3
Introduction by Cathaoirleach & Chief Executive.....	4
Members of Sligo County Council	5
Management Team	7
Strategic Policy Committees.....	8
HOUSING, CORPORATE & EMERGENCY SERVICES DIRECTORATE	9
Introduction.....	10
Housing & Building	11
Corporate Services	35
Human Resources.....	47
Civil Defence	50
Health & Safety.....	51
PLANNING, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	52
Introduction.....	53
Development Management	54
Enforcement of Planning Control	57
Heritage and Conservation Services	59
Community & Economic Development	69
Local Enterprise Office.....	97
Sligo Library Service and Archival Service.....	100
Sligo Arts Service	112
INFRASTRUCTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND FIRE SERVICES DIRECTORATE	116
Introduction.....	117
Road Transportation & Safety	118
National Road Major and Minor Schemes.....	130
Parks and Recreation	148
Water Services.....	151
Piers, Harbours and Coastal Protection.....	153
Water Quality, Air & Noise Pollution	156
Environmental Service	161
Veterinary Service	167
Fire Services.....	168
FINANCE	175
Introduction.....	176
Finance	178
Motor Taxation.....	180
Procurement.....	181
Information Technology	182
APPENDICES	185
Appendix 1: Staff Retirements in 2020.....	186

Mission Statement

“To maximise economic, social, cultural and community development, deliver efficient and cost-effective services in a democratic, accountable and transparent manner in partnership with local communities, voluntary and statutory agencies.”



**County Hall, Riverside,
Sligo,
F91 Y763**



**City Hall, Quay Street,
Sligo,
F91 PP44**

Introduction by Cathaoirleach & Chief Executive

A challenging year for our community

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was the challenging backdrop to all our activities in 2020, as the requirement to safeguard the health of the public we serve and our staff informed our work programmes and the delivery of our services over the course of the year.

When severe restrictions were introduced in March 2020, a Community Response Forum was established to harness the expertise, energy and commitment of local agencies and voluntary groups, and it was inspirational to witness the innovative and creative manner in which people worked to support the vulnerable and isolated citizens in our community. Sligo was awarded the mantle of 'European Capital of Volunteering' in 2017, and the spirit and endeavour that earned that accolade were very much in evidence as we responded as a community to the Covid pandemic.

As Sligo positions itself to fulfil its' growth centre potential in accordance with the Governments' National Planning Framework (NPF) designation, we are working in dynamic partnership with key local agencies to deliver for our county and our region. An unprecedented level of capital investment will be a major catalyst for the development of our county and will provide a much-needed economic boost and stimulus for job creation for Sligo – for both town and county. The Public Realm Programme and exciting proposals for a cultural and learning hub will significantly improve the experience of the town for residents, tourists, visitors, and businesses.

Sligo's many attractions to combine to frame that elusive concept 'quality of life' – outstanding natural scenery, first class service and hospitality sector, progressive third level colleges. Add to that wonderful mix: iconic literary figures, a treasure of ancient monuments, rich musical tradition across all genres, enchanting trails and scenic walkways. Taken in isolation, these jewels would enhance any setting, collectively they mark out Sligo as an optimum location for people in which to live, invest or visit.



Councillor Dara Mulvey
Cathaoirleach



Tom Kilfeather
A/Chief Executive

Members of Sligo County Council

BALLYMOTE - TOBERCURRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT


Cllr. Martin Baker

Fianna Fáil
2 Ardkeerin,
Riverstown, Co Sligo
071 9127472 / 086 1608334
cllrbaker@gmail.com


Cllr. Michael Clarke

Non-Party
Knocknacullen,
Dromore West, Co Sligo
087 7708691
cllrMichaelClarke@eircom.net


Cllr. Martin Connolly

Fine Gael
Powellsboro,
Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo
087 2054930
connollymartin63@gmail.com


Cllr. Gerard Mullaney

Fine Gael
Moytura East, Kilmastranny,
Boyle, Co. Sligo
086 8221995
mullaneygerard1@gmail.com


Cllr. Dara Mulvey

Fine Gael
Rockfield, Coolaney,
Co Sligo
087 6885050
dfmulvey@gmail.com


Cllr. Joseph Queenan

Independent
Lacknaslieva,
Enniscrone, Co Sligo
096 36449 / 087 6214422
queenanjoseph@eircom.net


Cllr. Paul Taylor

Fianna Fáil
17 Cluain Dara, Gurteen,
Co. Sligo
087 6794509
paultaylor@sligo@gmail.com

SLIGO - STRANDHILL MUNICIPAL DISTRICT


Cllr. Tom MacSharry

Fianna Fáil
Teeling Street, Sligo
087 4163730
tommacsharry@hotmail.com


Cllr. Declan Bree

Independent
1 High Street, Sligo
071 9145490 / 087 2470802
dbree@eircom.net
www.declanbree.com


Cllr. Arthur Gibbons

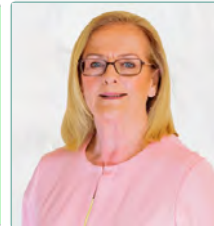
Sinn Féin
24 Cartron Bay, Sligo
087 2969876
gibbonsarthur@gmail.com


Cllr. Sinéad Maguire

Fine Gael
Seafield, Knocknahur,
Ransboro, Co. Sligo
087 4194039
sineadmaguire@yahoo.com


Cllr. Gino O'Boyle

People Before Profit
1 Stephen McDonagh Place,
Sligo
086 0757915
ginobpp@outlook.com


Cllr. Rosaleen O'Grady

Fianna Fáil
2 Kevinsfort, Strandhill Road,
Sligo
086 8060171
cllrRosaleenOGrady@gmail.com

At its June monthly meeting, Arthur Gibbons was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of former Councillor (now MEP) Chris MacManus.



SLIGO - DRUMCLIFF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Cllr. Marie Casserly
Independent
Streedagh, Grange, Co. Sligo
086 3182529
mariecasserly1@gmail.com



Cllr. Tom Fox
Fine Gael
Colgagh, Calry, Co Sligo
087 2074720
tom@tomfox.ie



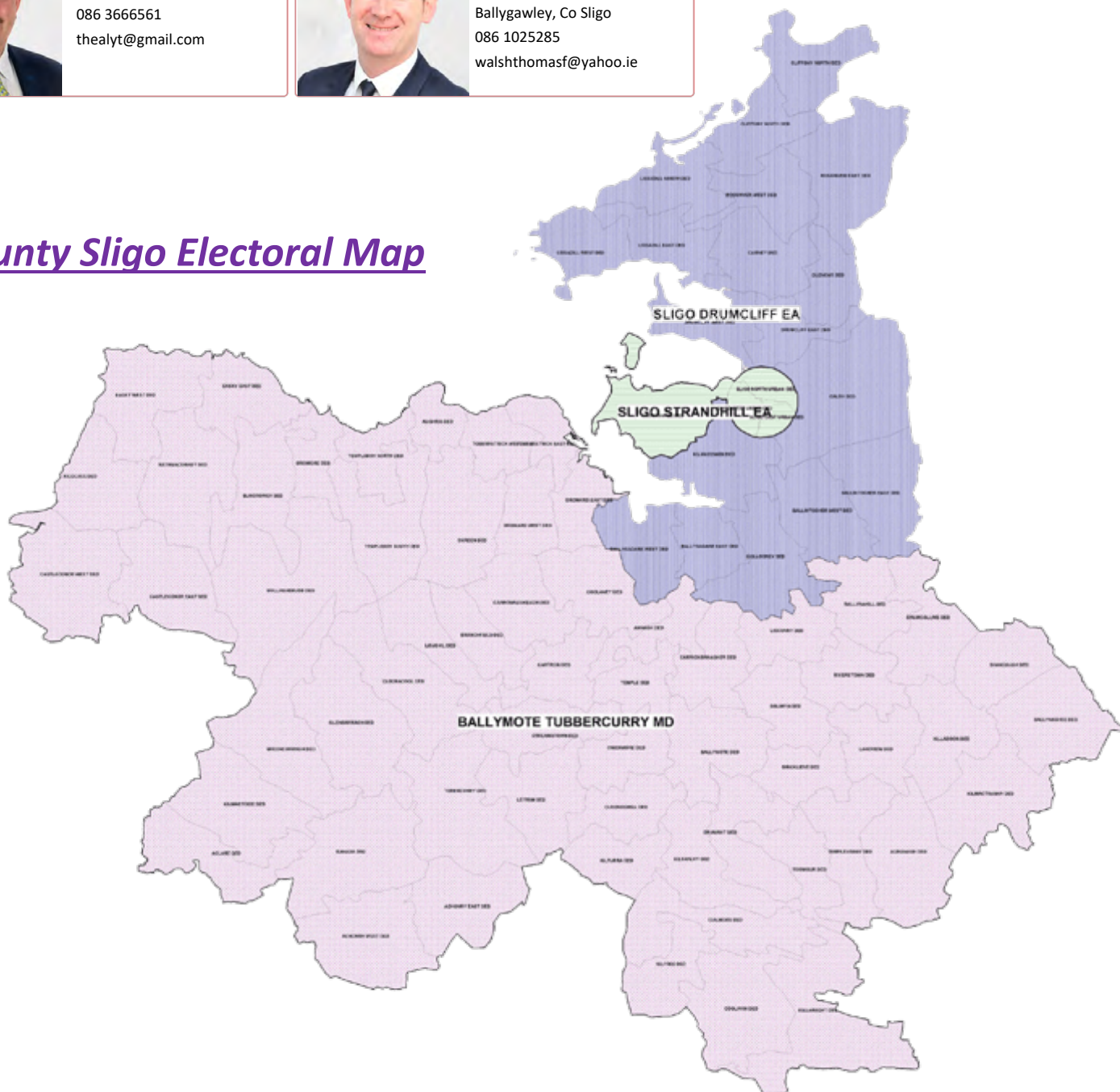
Cllr. Dónal Gilroy
Fianna Fáil
Streedagh, Grange, Co. Sligo
087 9386694
donalgilroy@outlook.com



Cllr. Thomas Healy
Sinn Féin
Largan, Collooney, Co Sligo
086 3666561
thealyt@gmail.com



Cllr. Thomas Walsh
Fine Gael
32 The Lodges, Castledargan,
Ballygawley, Co Sligo
086 1025285
walshthomasf@yahoo.ie

County Sligo Electoral Map

Management Team



Mr. Tom Kilfeather

A/Chief Executive
tkilfeather@sligococo.ie
071 911 1004



Ms. Dorothy Clarke

Director of Planning,
Community and Economic
Development
dclarke@sligococo.ie
071 911 4411



Mr. John Moran

A/ Director of Housing &
Corporate
jmoran@sligococo.ie
071 911 1020



Ms. Emer Concannon

Director of Infrastructure,
Environment & Fire Services
econcannon@sligococo.ie
071 911 1006



Mr. John Reilly

Head of Enterprise Local
Enterprise Office
john.reilly@leo.sligococo.ie
071 911 1111



Ms. Marie Whelan

Head of Finance
mwhelan@sligococo.ie
071 911 1121

Strategic Policy Committees

There are 4 Strategic Policy Committees operating in Sligo County Council, details of which are as follows:

- **SPC 1 – Housing & Corporate**
- **SPC2 – Environment & Infrastructure**
- **SPC 3 - Planning, Community & Economic Development, Arts & Culture**
- **SPC 4 – Climate Change**

SPC1 – Housing & Corporate

- Councillor Arthur Gibbons, Chairperson
- Councillor Martin Baker
- Councillor Declan Bree
- Councillor Tom Fox
- Councillor Gino O'Boyle
- Councillor Joe Queenan
- Alan McMenamin, PPN Community & Voluntary
- Pippa Black, PPN Social Inclusion
- Melinda Swann, PPN Environment
- Pat Fallon, Trade Union Pillar
- Karl Kelly, Business Pillar

SPC2 – Environment & Infrastructure

- Councillor Dónal Gilroy, Chairperson
- Councillor Michael Clarke
- Councillor Thomas Healy
- Councillor Thomas Walsh
- Councillor Paul Taylor
- Councillor Rosaleen O'Grady
- Sharon Eastwood, PPN Community & Voluntary
- Joan Swift, PPN Environment
- Conor McCarthy, Business Pillar
- Michael O'Dowd, IFA

SPC3 – Planning, Community & Economic Development, Arts & Culture

- Councillor Rosaleen O'Grady, Chairperson
- Councillor Marie Casserly
- Councillor Gerard Mullaney
- Councillor Arthur Gibbons
- Councillor Thomas Healy
- Councillor Thomas Walsh
- Councillor Tom Fox
- Councillor Tom MacSharry
- Corena Ward, PPN Community & Voluntary
- Sanja Ivandic, PPN Social Inclusion
- Suzanne Tynan, PPN Environment
- Karen O'Hara, Trade Union Pillar
- Aidan Doyle, Business Pillar
- Des Morrison, IFA

SPC4 – Climate Change

- Councillor Sinéad Maguire, Chairperson
- Councillor Dara Mulvey
- Councillor Martin Connolly
- Councillor Dónal Gilroy
- Councillor Paul Taylor
- Councillor Tom MacSharry
- Lisa Moore, PPN Community & Voluntary
- Yvonne Lang, PPN Environment
- Laura Gaffney, Business Pillar
- Bernard Finan, IFA

HOUSING & CORPORATE DIRECTORATE



DIRECTOR: MR JOHN MORAN

INTRODUCTION

A major element of the Housing & Corporate Directorate's work programme for 2020 was determined by the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. In early 2020 a Business Continuity Plan was developed which identified the critical essential services which the Council would have to maintain in the event of a full-scale pandemic, resources required, the potential risks to delivery of these services and contingency plans.

Complying with Public Health / social distancing advices represented a major challenge, and the Council succeeded in rapidly rolling out home working capability to the extent that about 80% of office based staff were working from home at the height of the restrictions. Extensive measures were required in the work-place to ensure a safe environment for staff and members of the public calling to our offices. A number of staff were also re-assigned on a temporary basis to assist the HSE in front-line activities.

In the immediate aftermath of the Government's announcement in March 2020, our Corporate Services Section worked with staff in Community & Economic Development to establish a Community Support Forum and Helpline as a resource for elderly or vulnerable people in our community. The success of this initiative was due to an excellent partnership between key agencies and a network of local volunteers.

We also worked together with the Cathaoirleach and Elected members to review arrangements for hosting meetings, and over the course of the year this evolved from holding our meetings 'off-site' to hosting hybrid meetings, with a number of councillors and staff in the Council Chamber and others attending virtually.

While we had to re-prioritise the Directorate's work programme, it was a busy and productive year for our Housing Section. The Council's target under the Five year Housing Capital programme 2017-2021 is to provide 384 dwellings, and 2020 saw the completion of the 28-unit scheme in Knappagh Road, Sligo; bringing the outturn at the end of 2020 to 273 dwellings. Other schemes have progressed in 2020 and are due for completion in 2021 which include a rural dwelling at Crowagh, a five unit development at Sea Road, Sligo, in association with Newgrove Housing Association, a ten unit scheme in Dromore West and a ten unit development in Tubbercurry.

John Moran

A/Director of Services

HOUSING AND BUILDING

The Council's Housing Section is active in the following areas:

- Approving households for social housing support
- Allocation of houses to those on the Housing List
- House maintenance and improvements
- Estate Management
- Homelessness
- Traveller Accommodation
- Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for Older People and People with a Disability and also the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme
- Private Rented Tenancy Inspections
- Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans and Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme
- Provision of new homes

The range of housing options now available to households approved for social housing support includes:

- Local Authority owned or Leased Social Housing
- Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)
- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)
- Voluntary Housing Schemes
- Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans

Maintenance / Improvement of LA Housing Units

Maintenance and Repairs of Local Authority Housing Stock

The budget provided for the maintenance and repairs of Local Authority Housing Stock in 2020 was €1,189,698. The Council prioritises repair requests that pose a health or safety risk to the tenant and also requests from older people and those with special needs. The Housing Section has dealt with over 3,759 repair requests in 2020.

Adaptations and Extensions to Local Authority Stock

Each year the Department provides funding to the Council to enable it, where necessary, to carry out adaptations and extensions to Council stock. Works in a number of cases facilitate tenants in being able to leave hospital and return home to their homes.

90% of an allocation is by way of Department contribution with the balance of 10% by way of Council contribution from its own resources.

A sum of €251,499.78 was initially allocated to the Council by the Department for 2020. The allocation received was disappointing, as a sum of €672,415.70 had initially been sought by the Council. The allocation represented a reduction of over 30% from 2019. The Council subsequently sought additional funding from the Department and a further allocation of €161,386.72 was received.

Adaptation works were carried out to 37 houses in 2020, with works also progressing on 4 no. extensions.

Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer

Housing Assessment

The Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011, as amended, sets out the procedure for assessing households who are seeking social housing support. The assessment determines if the household is eligible and in need of social housing support.

There were 1,520 households on the housing waiting / transfer waiting list at 31st December 2020

No. of Households	Details
755	No. of Households availing of HAP approved for a transfer
212	No. of Council tenants/Approved Housing Body tenants approved for a transfer
553	Nett Housing Need
1,520	Total

The Housing Section also offers advice on other housing options and supports that households may be eligible to avail of in lieu of social housing and/or while they are awaiting a housing allocation.

Allocations

The Council allocates properties in accordance with its "Allocation Scheme" which was adopted by the Members of Sligo County Council in June 2011. A total of 189 offers of tenancy issued in 2020, of which 109 (61%) were accepted.

Disability

The Council, in conjunction with the HSE, has completed a Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability. The preparation of the Strategic Plan involved the identification of current and future needs (over the next five years) for people with disabilities. The overall need was identified at 528. A significant challenge identified is dealing with the accommodation needs of people residing in the two learning disability congregated settings located at Cregg House, Rosses Point and at Cloonamahon. The Plan is time lined to run from 2016 – 2020.

The potential supply options were identified in the Plan. A minimum of 15% of all units in developments of ten units or more constructed by the Local Authority or by an Approved Housing Body are to be designed specifically for people with a disability. It is envisaged, in developments of less than ten units, that consideration will be given to providing one unit in each such development.

A new National Housing Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, 2022-2027 will be developed in 2021.

Housing Assistance Payments (HAP)

The implementation of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a key Government priority and a major pillar of the Social Housing Strategy 2020. It is a form of social housing support where local authorities can provide housing assistance for households with a long-term housing need including long term rent supplement recipients. The scheme removes a barrier to employment by allowing recipients to remain in the scheme if they gain full-time employment. HAP will also improve regulation of the rented accommodation being supported, and provide certainty for landlords as regards their rental income.

HAP went live in Sligo on the 16th November 2015 and as 31st December 2020, there are 831 active tenancies with 202 tenancies having been set up in 2020. Unlike other years no targets were set by the Department for delivery for HAP under Rebuilding Ireland in 2020.

It is the intention of the Council over a period and in line with Government policy, to transfer all rent supplement applicants and recipients in the county into HAP.

Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 1st July 2019 – 30th June 2024

Sligo County Council, in accordance with Circular 35/2018, has prepared a new Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2024. This programme was approved by the Members of Sligo County Council on 2nd September 2019. Table 1 below shows the yearly targets for delivery. Table 2 below shows the progress to date.

Targets for Delivery						
Accommodation Type	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
Group Housing Scheme / Halting sites	2		5		5	12
Specific Purchases	1	1	1	1	1	5
Upgrade of Existing facilities / Serviced sites		6			3	9
Council Tenancy	4	4	4	5	4	21
RAS/HAP	3	3	3	4	4	17
Voluntary Housing	1			1		2
Total	11	14	13	11	17	66

Table 1

Tenure of Accommodation TAP July 2019-June 2024

Accommodation Type	Target July 2019 to June 2024	Achieved July 2019 to December 2019	Achieved January 2020 to December 2020
Group Housing Scheme / Halting sites	12	6	-
Specific Purchases	5	-	1
Upgrade of Existing facilities / Serviced sites	9	6	2
Council Tenancy	21	7	-
RAS/HAP	17	4	1
Voluntary Housing	2	3	-
Total	66	26	4

Table 2

TAP Progress 1st July 2019-31st December 2020

45% of the Target has been achieved to date, some 18 months into the 5-year programme.

Refurbishment and redevelopment of Glenview Halting Site, Ash Lane, Sligo (6 no. bays):



Works started on site on 22nd July 2019 – completed on 1st April 2020. The development is now fully occupied.

Group Housing Traveller Accommodation Scheme at Glenview, Sligo- 3 Dwellings:



Designs have been prepared for a Group Housing Scheme at Glenview. This scheme will be advanced subject to the support of the current occupants of the site and the Department.

Ballyfree Halting Site

The Construction of a 3-bedroom extension to a welfare unit was completed in 2020. A consultant has been appointed to design a waste-water treatment facility for the halting site. This will guide the future upgrades for the site.

Cloonamahon Halting Site

A consultant has been appointed to design a waste-water treatment facility for the halting site. This will guide the future upgrades for the site.

COVID-19 Measures

Sligo County Council continues to monitor all sites, to provide any supports necessary in order to combat and prevent the spread of Covid 19.

Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration

Differential Rent Scheme

The Council operates a Differential Rents Scheme on the basis that tenants are charged a weekly rent in accordance with their ability to pay. A new Scheme is proposed for implementation in early 2021 which will also allow for an enhanced Planned Maintenance Programme.

Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme

A new Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016 was introduced on the 1st of January 2016 to enable tenants buy their homes. Tenants must meet the eligibility criteria set out under the Scheme in order to be eligible to purchase their house. The new scheme involves discounts for purchasers linked to household income (40%, 50% or 60%) and a discount-related charge on the property that reduces to nil over a period, unless the house is resold or the purchaser fails to comply with conditions of the sale. Where the tenant purchaser resells the property before the end of the charge period, he or she is required to pay back to the Council, a portion of any profits arising from the sale.

4 no. households have availed of the Scheme in 2020.

Housing Community Development Support

Estate Management Programme

This Council currently manages housing stock of over 2,200 dwellings and 6 halting sites. The Council, in managing its housing stock, uses the resources of its Estate Management Officers, Housing Investigation Officer and Community Wardens and it also co-operates with Residents Associations and An Garda Síochána, to ensure that, in so far as possible, all Council estates are pleasant and safe areas to reside.

The Council has a duty to manage and control its tenancy dwellings and accommodation let under the Housing Acts and to secure and protect the interests of its tenants, tenant purchasers and licensees, as far as is reasonably possible, in the peaceful occupation of those units.

An Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy was adopted by Sligo County Council on 1st October 2018. All complaints in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour and Estate Management issues are documented and followed up on in terms of Estate Management policies and strategies.

The Estate Management Unit has developed policies designed to be consistent and fair in its approach to dealing with all complaints and aims to resolve issues in accordance with housing legislation and functions. It should be emphasized that due to current estate management initiatives, the incidence of anti-social behaviour in Council estates and sites is very low and most Council tenants are able to enjoy living in their dwellings free from any difficulties associated with anti-social behaviour.

Resettlement Tenancy Support and Sustainment

The Council, to minimize the instances of homelessness occurring and to assist in cases where homelessness does occur, has put in place a commissioned Resettlement Tenancy Support and Sustainment Service with Focus Ireland CLG.

The aim of this service is to support individuals and particularly families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Service is provided for General Needs clients and also for clients experiencing diagnosed mental health issues and/or addiction issues.

Private Rented Accommodation Standards

All landlords have a legal duty to ensure that their rented properties comply with certain minimum physical standards. These minimum standards are set out in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 (S.I. No. 137/2019). Responsibility for the enforcement of the Regulations rests with the Council.

The Council is active in this area and has carried out over 761 inspections in 2020. The Council has also issued 500 Improvement Notices and 4 Prohibition Notices to Landlords in the same period.

Administration of Homeless Service-Homelessness

Every effort is made by the Council to respond effectively and appropriately to those who present as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Sligo County Council has a Homeless Action Team (HAT) which regularly meets to assess individual cases and to adopt approaches to best support and assist homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless and to put in place support services for them.

This case management approach is key to achieving the principle contained in national policy of a housing led approach whereby homeless persons should be accommodated, in the first instance, in suitable accommodation with or without supports, rather than in so called expensive emergency accommodation. This has proven very effective for the Council. Households are also assisted with moving on to independent living. Assistance can also be provided in certain instances by way of hostel or B&B accommodation.

Services are available at the following locations:

- **Maryville, Finisklin, Sligo** (Sligo Social Services Council CLG) –
The capacity here has been reduced to 11 beds from 15 beds in line with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Homeless and other Vulnerable Group Settings
- **Ballytivnan, Sligo** (Sligo Social Services Council CLG) –
capacity 5 beds.
- **Shalomar, Finisklin, Sligo** (Finisklin Housing Association Ltd) –
capacity to provide total no of 16 beds.
- Provision of 23 units of transitional supported housing at Citygate, Mail Coach Road, Sligo.
- 2 units in Sligo Town for families requiring intensive supports under SLA with Focus Ireland CLG.

Sligo County Council has a dedicated worker in the Place Finder Homeless HAP role who is working to source HAP accommodation for those in homeless accommodation for prolonged periods. This person is working to explore new opportunities with landlords, agencies and the general public and is matching places with clients. However, there are still issues with the limited supply of private rented housing in the key areas of demand, and the disparity between HAP caps and rent levels for properties in these demand areas.

Housing First

The Housing First National Implementation Plan (2018-2021) was launched at the end of September 2018 by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government Eoghan Murphy T.D and Minister for Health Simon Harris T.D. The Implementation of the Plan is critical to the State's response to supporting rough sleepers and long-term users of emergency accommodation into sustainable and independent tenancies.

An integrated delivery Programme across housing and health will be essential for the success of Housing First. This Programme of work seeks to provide wraparound tenancy and health supports aimed at securing stable housing whilst also addressing individuals' underlying physical health, mental health and addiction challenges.

Accommodation and tenancy supports will be funded by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government through the delegated funding arrangements for homeless services in place with regional lead authorities. Physical health, mental health and addiction supports will be funded by the HSE through the relevant CHOs.

This model will provide accommodation for 24 long term homeless single people in Sligo, during the three-year period, which commenced on 13th February 2020.

Six Housing First tenancies are currently in place in Sligo, with plans for two more tenancies in early 2021 and eight more to follow in the second year of the Programme

Sligo County Council continues to be the lead authority for Homeless Services for the North West Region (Sligo, Donegal and Leitrim) and is responsible for budget management and the co-ordination of funding for the region.

Support to Housing Capital & Affordable Programme

Social Housing Strategy

The Social Housing Strategy was launched by Government in late 2014. It sets out to support the vision that every household should have access to secure good quality housing suited to their needs at an affordable price and in a sustainable community.

Rebuilding Ireland-Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness

'Rebuilding Ireland-Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness' was published on 19th July 2016. Its aim was to ramp up the delivery of housing across all tenures, to help households meet their housing needs and also address homelessness.

It set ambitious targets to double the annual level of residential construction to 25,000 homes, to deliver 47,000 social housing units in the period to 2021 and to make the best use of existing stock (a lot of vacant units in the country). In the latter part of 2017, the figure for delivery of social housing units was revised to 50,000 by 2021, through build (33,500), acquisition (6,500) and leasing (10,000) with a Government commitment to funding of €6 billion to support the delivery.

Housing Capital Programme

The target of units set for delivery for the Council for this Programme under Rebuilding Ireland for the period 2017-2021 is 384 units. The target could be met by,

- a) LA Housing (Construction and Acquisition, including Part V acquisitions)
- b) Capital Assistance Scheme (C.A.S.)
- c) Returning Vacant Social Housing Properties to Productive Use Programme (Voids programme) and Long Term Vacant/Derelict Social Housing Units (Derelict Voids) and
- d) Leasing and Capital Advanced Leasing Facility with Approved Housing Bodies.

Housing Programme Summary Delivered to date-237 (target 384)

2017	88 no.
2018	71 no.
2019	68 no.
2020	46 no.
Total	273 no

a) LA Housing (Construction including Part V and Acquisition)

Housing Projects

Sligo County Council is actively advancing a number of projects to provide housing to those most in need. The schemes are being advanced through a four stage Social Housing Approval Process for the delivery of Social Housing Construction Projects. Each stage requires approval from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. These are as follows:

Stage 1:	Project Feasibility & Capital Appraisal
Stage 2:	Project Design, Costs Planning approval, followed by a Part 8 Planning submission to the Members of the Council
Stage 3:	Project Detail Design Development and Cost Plan for Pre-Tender
Stage 4:	Project and Tender Review of Costs and Tender Submission. The Stage 4 approval allows the project to proceed to construction and for the Council to appoint a contractor

Construction including Part V (delivered)

2017	10 no.
2018	19 no.
2019	42 no.
2020	28 no.
Total	99 no

The following Housing Schemes continue to be progressed:

Knappagh Road, Sligo: 28 units



Works commenced on site on 15th October 2018 – practically completed at end of 2020.

St Farnan's Drive Dromore West, Co. Sligo - Phase 2 - 10 Dwellings:



This project will provide 8 two-bed dwellings and 2 three bed semi-detached dwellings at St Farnan's Drive Dromore West, Co. Sligo. The Contractor started on site on the 3rd December 2019 with the development to be completed in 2021.



The site has been closed since December 2020 due to Government COVID-19 restrictions.

Connolly Park, Tubbercurry: Phase 1 - 10 new dwellings:



This development will see the demolition of a number of existing derelict dwellings and the delivery of 10 units- 4 no. apartments, one of which is especially designed for a person with special needs, together with 6 no. 3 bed semi-detached houses.

A contract was signed on the 9th September 2020, and works have commenced on site, with the development to be completed in 2021.



The site has been closed since December 2020 due to Government COVID-19 restrictions.

Rural house at Crowagh, Dromore West, Co Sligo



A 3-bed single rural dwelling will be delivered at Crowagh, Dromore West. A contractor has been appointed and works commenced on site on 16th October 2020 with the development to be completed in 2021.

The site has been closed since December 2020 due to Government COVID restrictions.

Maugheraboy, Sligo- 62 new dwellings:



A scheme is being prepared for Council property at Maugheraboy. A Stage 1 Capital Appraisal approval was received from the Department dated 23rd November 2018. A Stage 2 Capital Appraisal submission is to be lodged with the Department in 2021.

Gormley Villas, Bunnanaddan, Co Sligo - 6 Dwellings:



A Stage 1 Capital Appraisal for 6 units at this location was approved by the Department on 31st July 2020. The members of Sligo County Council approved the Scheme at their meeting on Monday 5th October 2020. A Stage 2 Capital Appraisal Submission was sent to the Department on 23rd October 2020 and the Stage 2 approval was received on the 19th November 2020. A Stage 3 Capital Appraisal is currently being prepared and will be submitted to the Department in early 2021.

These six units will replace the existing 6 units, which are to be demolished due to pyrite, on this site.

Connolly Park, Tubbercurry: Phase 2 - 15 new dwellings:

A Stage 1 Capital Appraisal at this location was approved by the Department on 24th September 2020.



A Stage 2 Capital Appraisal is currently being prepared and will be submitted to the Department in January 2021 and a Part 8 Planning procedure will be advertised in April 2021 following approval by the Department of the Stage 2 Submission.



Geldof Drive Sligo & Centre Block Cranmore, Sligo Site - 30 Units:



A Stage 1 Capital Appraisal Submission was sent to the Department on 20th November 2020 for construction of 14 No. units at Geldof Drive Cranmore (8 no. 1 bed and 6 no. 2 bed apartments), and 16 No. units at Centre Block Cranmore Site (8 no. 1 bed and 8 no. 2 bed apartments). Stage 1 was approved by the Department in December 2020. A Stage 2 Capital Appraisal is currently being prepared and will be submitted to the Department in 2021.

Rathellen, Finisklin, Sligo:

As part of the Rebuilding Ireland Housing Delivery strategy, the government set aside a budget of €300m to deliver 1,500 homes through a Public Private Partnership process that would be delivered in three bundles of approximately 500 dwellings per bundle. Two phases of this process are now in place or under construction.

In 2018 the Department sought proposals with regard to council owned land where houses could be designed and procured in a national contract. The Council owned land at Rathellen was submitted in response to the Department request. The Department issued approval for a 60-unit development on 23rd February 2020 for use in Social Housing PPP Bundle 3. The design brief was submitted by the Council to Dublin City Council, which is the Lead Authority for the national contract, on 11th June 2020.

Procurement of the design team for the project has concluded and preliminary design work on the scheme is to commence shortly. It is anticipated that a Part 8 planning procedure will be initiated in Q2, 2021 and will be brought before the members of Sligo County Council for their consideration in Q3, 2021.

Future Capital Projects:

It is also the intention to develop a programme for further projects at a number of other locations including Carney, Grange and Carrowbunnaun, Strandhill. These projects will be demand lead and will be assessed on the basis of Stage 1 Capital Appraisal submissions to the Department. A call for expressions of interest from Housing developers has been advertised with a view to engagement with the housing market in relation to the possibility of delivery of Turnkey dwellings in accordance with the Department guidelines.

Extensions Programme.

Four extensions to Council houses have been completed in 2019/2020.

Acquisitions, including Part V acquisitions

58 no. houses were acquired by the Council in 2017, 2018 and 2019. A further 3 units were also purchased by the Housing Agency on behalf of the Council. A total of 4 units were purchased in 2020 - 3 no. under the Department's SHIP programme and 1 no. under the Department's Traveller Accommodation Programme.

b) Capital Assistance Scheme (C.A.S.)

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) in August 2017 announced a 'Call for Proposals, 2017' under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) to Approved Housing Bodies (A.H.B.s) to submit proposals to Local Authorities for the delivery, through either construction or acquisition, of housing accommodation, to cater for priority groups including:

- elderly;
- homeless persons (including 'care leavers' exiting state care on reaching the age of 18); and
- people with a disability, with a particular emphasis on moving people with disability from congregated settings into community-based living.

There is no deadline for submission of applications in what is effectively an open 'rolling' call for applications.

C.A.S. Construction Projects completed

Cuan Íosa, Ballymote, Co Sligo - 8 units: St Vincent de Paul Housing Association.

Works started on site in December 2018 – completed 15th July 2020 and is fully occupied.

C.A.S. Acquisitions

17 no units were delivered in Sligo in 2017, 2018 and 2019. 1 no unit has been delivered in 2020.

Acquisition (Capital Advanced Leasing Facility with Approved Housing Bodies):

One unit was delivered in 2018.

Returning Vacant Social Housing Properties to Productive Use Programme (Voids Programme)

This Programme is directed at housing units where the cost of remediation greatly exceeds the cost of the normal end-of-lease maintenance. A total of 227 units were remediated in the period 2017- 2020, 44 of which were included in the overall Rebuilding Ireland delivery targets, as directed by the Department.

Long Term Vacant/Derelict Social Housing Units

The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government announced In July 2016 that funding would be made available to Councils to fund the remediation/ return of a number of long term vacant/derelict social housing units to productive use. The cost of Unit repair had to exceed €30,000. 24 units were remediated since 2017, with 15 only being counted in the overall Rebuilding Ireland delivery target, as directed by the Department. The Council had no long-term vacant units in 2020.

Leasing

Units under this Programme can be delivered in a variety of ways to include,

- Multi-unit developments directly leased by Councils,
- Individual units either leased or through rental arrangements that can be acquired using Council delegated sanction, and
- Units leased, purchased or constructed by A.H.B, s.

The Council is currently in discussions with developers and Approved Housing Bodies for a number of units.

18 no. houses were delivered in 2018 and 2019. 2 no units were delivered in 2020 under MTR Lease with a private company and 3 No. Mortgage to Rent (MTR) CALF were also delivered.

Repair and Leasing Scheme

A key component of the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness is a new scheme, the Vacant Housing Repair and Leasing Scheme, which targets the delivery of social housing and also ensures that existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible. The Scheme is open to owners of houses or apartments that have been vacant for at least one year (proof required) and which require an amount of repairs to bring the property to the required standard for rented properties.

Repair and improvement works necessary to suitable vacant properties are to be funded by Local Authorities or Approved Housing Bodies (A.H.B.) in return for the property being made available for social housing through a lease for a period of between 10 and 19 years. The cost of the works is deducted from lease (rent) payments over an agreed lease period.

The maximum cost of repairs allowed under the Scheme will be €40,000. The Council will consider properties in all areas but will in particular be interested in properties in its high demand areas. There will have to be a social housing demand for a property and also the property has to be assessed as being viable to provide social housing. Details of the Scheme are on the Council Website. The Council is currently examining a number of applications under this Scheme.

Buy and Renew Scheme

Under this Scheme the Council can buy and renew housing units in need of remediation and make these available for social housing use. The focus will be on older stock, particularly as part of the response being made in tackling dereliction and improving streetscapes/supporting renewal. It is expected that Buy and Renew properties would have been vacant for a period before being acquired for social housing purposes.

The Council is currently carrying out works to one house which it has purchased under this Scheme.

RAS Programme

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

The Rental Accommodation Programme assists households who are in receipt of Rent Supplement for more than 18 months and who have been assessed by the Housing Authority as having a long-term housing need (excluding asylum seekers or other non-nationals who do not have leave to remain in the State permanently).

23 units have been delivered by the Council in 2020. There is declining numbers of RAS units available. Property owners in a large number of situations are tending not to offer units for contract renewals.

Housing Loans

The Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan is a new Government backed mortgage for first time buyers. It became available nationwide from all local authorities from 1st February 2018.

A first-time buyer can apply for a Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan to purchase a new or second-hand property, or to build their own home. The loan is a normal Capital and Interest-bearing mortgage which is repaid by direct debit on a monthly basis. A person can borrow up to 90% of the market value of the property.

Maximum market values of the property that can be purchased or self-built are:

- **€320,000** in the counties of Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Louth, Meath and Wicklow, and
- **€250,000** in the rest of the country.

5 loans were drawn down in 2020.

Housing Grant

Housing Adaptation Grants for older People and People with a Disability Schemes

The Allocation under this heading for the Council for 2020 is €1,415,423 of which €283,085 (20%) is provided from the Councils own revenue resources.

The applicable schemes are,

- Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme for People with a Disability.
- Mobility Aids Housing Grant Scheme.
- Housing Aid for Older People

The Council during the year was also successful in securing a small additional allocation of €2,124.

The allocation facilitated adaptation works being carried out to 162 houses.



SLIGO EAST CITY, CRANMORE AND ENVIRONS REGENERATION PROJECT

Sligo County Council and the Cranmore Regeneration Project Office are continuing to press forward with the implementation phase of the Sligo East City, Cranmore and Environs Regeneration Masterplan 2016.

The Regeneration Visions is:

To make the area a more attractive place to live with better, convenient connections to existing and new facilities, locally and in the rest of Sligo.

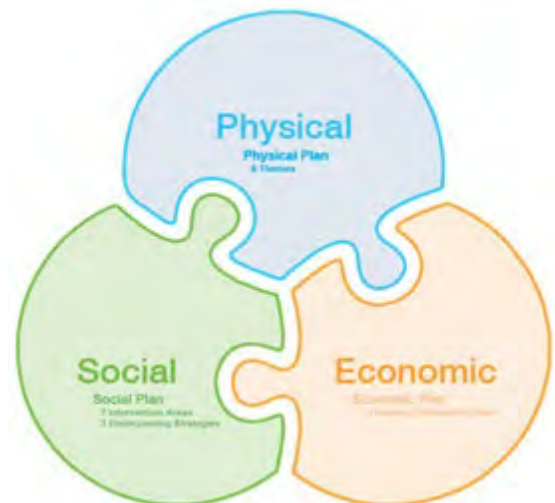
To enable individuals and communities in the area to avail of emerging opportunities and access to employment, education, health and family support services.

To secure the area as a location of choice for future generations in which to live, work and visit.

The Masterplan describes a number of physical projects and social and economic initiatives to address needs. These projects will provide much needed investment to improve housing in the area, open spaces and roads, as well as investment in community facilities.

Funding has been secured for some elements of the Plan from the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), the European Regional Development Fund and other sources.

The following are details of projects currently progressing from the **PHYSICAL PLAN**.



Provide Quality Spaces for Community Facilities

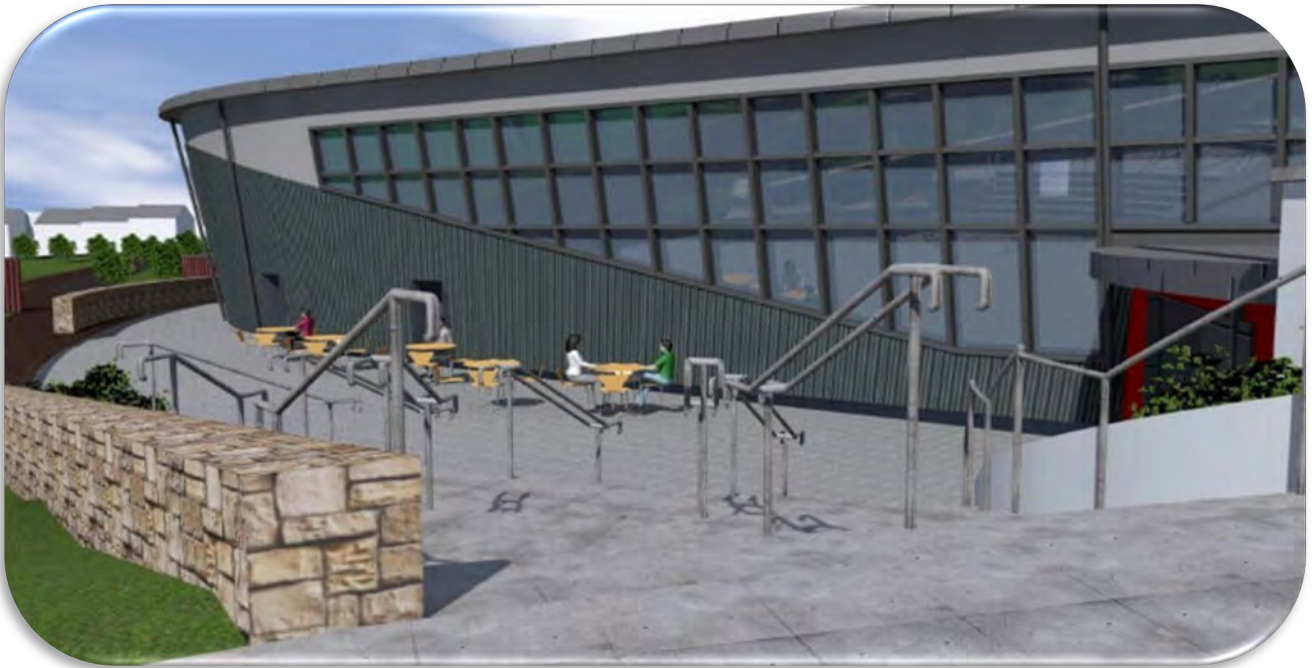
Enterprise and Community Centre and Urban Park

Since the beginning of the Cranmore Regeneration process, the concept of a new Enterprise and Community Centre for Cranmore, as the focal point of a revived community, has been the single biggest item that the local community knew was necessary.



A new Centre has been planned which will provide accommodation for agencies working in the area, together with multi-purpose hall, multi-purpose rooms, reception area/communal area, coffee dock etc. The building is designed to be flexible and with room for expansion as needs change and social programmes evolve.

Part VIII Planning Permission was granted at the March 2020 Council meeting. Stage 3 Capital Appraisal Approval was received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (HLG&H) in October 2020. This allowed the Council to commence the formal tender procedure and the CRP Design Team prepared tender documentation for the Centre, during Q4 2020.



New Community in Cranmore

Devins Drive/Cranmore Road Junction, Pedestrian Safety Upgrade Work

The works to the Junction at Devins Drive and Cranmore Road were completed during Q1 2020. The design of the new junction has taken on board concerns raised by residents at many community consultation events held over the years. The idea behind the layout is to reduce the speed of traffic on Devins Drive, to provide safe pedestrian crossing points and a bus shelter.

There are three controlled pedestrian crossings which provide access for residents with disabilities to cross both Devins Drive and Cranmore Road safely. Pedestrians are being prioritised over cars, with cars having to give way. This is one of a number of similar traffic calming measures which will be constructed on the entire stretch of Devins Drive where, when taken together will have a major impact in slowing traffic and giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists.

This project received funding from the Department of HLG&H and Sligo County Council's Roads Department.

Building and Energy Efficiency Works – Phase One, Pilot Project

Refurbishment works to the houses in Cranmore Drive, Cranmore Place and Cranmore Villas progressed well, during 2020. Kilcawley Construction commenced work on site on 13th January 2020.

The programme of works entailed building and environmental works with all houses receiving external painting, cavity wall insulation, new gutters and downpipes and roof cleaning. Environmental works included repair of footpaths and the elimination of disused backland areas.

In addition to the above works, Council owned stock also received an internal fit-out, including sanitary and kitchen replacement, along with the replacement of all electrics and plumbing. A key driver for the works was the installation of air to water heat pumps in a total of 28 housing units. This technology will reduce home energy cost and assist Government policy in moving away from the use of fossil fuels. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the project was closed for 8 weeks and this has resulted in an expected completion date in Q1 2021.

Consultation

Consultation in the lead up to and during the works was extensive and this was achieved in facilitated sessions and through daily contact with householders on the ground with the Estate Management Team and the Resident Liaison Officer.

Decants

To facilitate the works to the Council houses, 27 families were required to vacate their houses and were moved to Council stock reserved for this purpose. This process commenced on 6th January 2020 with all households moved on a rolling basis over two stages.

During the decanting stage of the work, the Cranmore Regeneration Team worked with 3 residents to document their stories, as they prepared to be decanted. The residents, who have lived in the area for more than 46 years were moved to temporary accommodation during the works to their homes.

A short video was prepared to capture how they coped with being out of their homes and how they feel moving back to their newly refurbished homes. The video also addresses plans for further refurbishments across the Cranmore Estate and the development of the new Enterprise and Community Centre, in the heart of the community. The video is available on the Sligo County Council Facebook page and YouTube Account and on the News Page of the Sligo County Council website.



Newly refurbished home in Cranmore Drive

Phase 2 – Building & Environmental Upgrades - 126 Houses (Geldof Drive, Joe McDonnell Drive, John Fallon Drive and Devins Drive – West and Carroll Drive)

A programme of works, similar to those in Phase 1, is envisaged for Phase 2. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions all necessary site surveys had been completed and all residents had been visited by the Estate Management Team.

A Stage 3 Approval Request was submitted to the Department of HLG&H in August 2020, seeking approval to go to tender. Sligo County Council is anticipating approval to go to Tender in Q1 2021.

Housing at Joe McDonnell Drive and Link to Chapel Hill Road

This project was on hold for a period of time due to unforeseen circumstances. Engagement with residents recommenced during Q4 2020 and it is hoped that this project will go to tender in Q2 2021.

Improve Access to Quality Amenities and Open Spaces

The Regeneration Masterplan contains an objective to support the development of water based recreational opportunities and associated facilities at Doorly Park. Two projects that have advanced during 2020 include the following:

Restoration of Riverside Gate Lodge, Doorly Park



Riverside Gate Lodge, Doorly Park

The Gate Lodge is being leased, for a 10-year period, by Sligo Tourist Development Association (STDA) who are working in partnership with Sligo County Council on this project. This building is a piece of local heritage by virtue of its association as a former Gate Lodge to the old Cleveragh Demesne and a protected landmark structure, at a key location within the Doorly Park/ Cleveragh Park / Sligo Town Centre area. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions work on this project was suspended.

In May 2020, STDA was successful in obtaining funding under the Rural Development LEADER Programme to carry out additional works both externally and internally to the building. This final phase of funded works will commence on completion of the current refurbishment contract. The refurbished building when complete has the potential to provide tourist information booking facilities and a small community / enterprise space, as well as housing a small historical display of the local area.

A facility such as this will support the ongoing development of city centre-linked visitor experiences, improve the interpretation and telling of Sligo's story and serve as an attractor in enticing visitors to explore other areas of the city.

Angling Stands

The development of angling facilities is a key resource in improving the attractiveness of the area and maximising use and potential of a key local amenity. Two new Angling Stands were installed along the Garavogue River at Doorly Park, in October 2020.

This work was undertaken by Sligo County Council through the Cranmore Regeneration Office in conjunction with STDA. Funding for the Angling Stands was obtained from Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Department of HLG&H. The stands will provide opportunities for people of all abilities to engage in angling across the life cycle, while also providing healthy activities and community benefits associated with access to the river.

NEW ANGLING STANDS ON THE GARAVOGUE RIVER

The development of angling facilities is a key resource in improving the attractiveness of the area and maximising use and potential of a key local amenity. Two new Angling Stands were installed along the Garavogue River at Doorly Park, in October 2020.

This work was undertaken by Sligo County Council through the Cranmore Regeneration Office in conjunction with Sligo Tourist Development Association. Funding for this project was secured from Inland Fisheries Ireland's National Strategy for Angling Development Capital Grants Scheme 2020 and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The stands will provide opportunities for people of all abilities to engage in angling across the life cycle, while also providing healthy activities and community benefits associated with access to the river.



The provision of these two stands is phase one of a project that will see the provision of four new fishing stands along the Garavogue River, to help improve access to quality amenities and open spaces in the East City area.

On Tuesday 10th November 2020 the Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council, Councillor Dara Mulvey accompanied by keen fishermen Tom Clarke and Anthony Mahon from the nearby Cranmore area, together with Frank Quinn and Jim Sheridan from the Cranmore Regeneration Team cast a few lines from two newly installed Stands.

The installation of the Angling Stands has also been welcomed by Cranmore Community Co-op and Inland Fisheries Ireland and endorsed by Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership, Sligo Centre for Independent Living, local fishing tackle businesses and local anglers.



The following are details of projects being progressed from the **SOCIAL PLAN**:

Education and Learning Strategy

The delivery of the Cranmore Regeneration Project's Education and Learning Strategy continues to provide the community with a wide range of educational supports, activities and initiatives across the lifecycle. These are all being delivered in partnership with local childcare services, schools, colleges, support agencies and community organisations.

However, during 2020 the arrival of COVID 19 disrupted school and college activity, particularly with the approach of end of year college and state exams. It impacted especially on students and adult learners across the lifecycle who are being supported under the above strategy.

Work continued in supporting individuals and schools as follows:

- The Cranmore Education Booklet was developed and distributed over the months of August and September to all residents within the regeneration area – promoting the Cranmore Mentor service, circulating messages from schools, updates on courses, training, grants and supports available
- The Cranmore Connects website was launched in June 2020. This website provides information on local, regional and national courses and educational supports for students, parents and adult learners
- Work was undertaken with the Mercy Primary school on the supply and distribution of home school packs to 30 children living in the Regeneration area in partnership with Cranmore Co-op and the Estate Management Team
- Information on family supports available through Sligo County Childcare Committee, CYPSC and Tusla was ongoing during 2020.

Cranmore Education Mentor Programme

The Cranmore Education Mentor Programme is a joint initiative between Cranmore Regeneration and the Institute of Technology, Sligo. It is a key element in the implementation of the Sligo East City, Cranmore and Environs Regeneration Masterplan. It is part of the Higher Education Authority Attract - Transition - Succeed (ATS) project set up to increase the diversity and social mix of the student population within the higher education institutions (HEIs) in the West and North West of Ireland.

The Mentor Programme was shortlisted in the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020 in the Best Practice in Community Engagement Category.

The Cranmore Connects website was launch during 2020 to support the work of the mentor who is available to the Cranmore Community three days per week, to mentor second and third level students and adults who are looking to retrain, go back to education or just trying to figure out what direction to take.

The mentor has been providing one to one mentoring support to students, young people and adults as well as engaging with the wider community by providing accessible one to one support sessions, community-based study support workshops and online learning support. During COVID-19 support from the mentor continued on a one-to-one basis with mentees via phone and Zoom. The Cranmore Connects website and Facebook page are also a source of information and support.



Time to Read Programme

The Time to Read Programme is a national 20-week literacy programme which is delivered by Business in the Community Ireland in partnership with primary schools and local businesses. The programme aims to increase the enjoyment of, and confidence in reading for the participating 2nd class children. The Time to Read Programme was successfully delivered in St John's N.S. Sligo in partnership with Sligo County Council in the academic year 2019/2020 until the programme was suspended due to school closures. Each weekly session consisted of Sligo County Council's volunteer staff members reading one to one for 30 minutes each with two children in their school environment. The children, volunteers and parents also visited Sligo Central Library.

A final evaluation was conducted online with school, volunteer readers and regeneration staff. Funding has been secured from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for a follow-on Time to Read Programme for the academic year 2020/2021 with St John's N.S., subject to COVID-19 restrictions.

The following are details of projects progressed from the [ECONOMIC PLAN](#)

Economic Development

The overall vision for the Economic Plan is to enhance employment and economic development in the area. The Economic Plan complements and is complemented by the actions and strategies of the Social and Physical Regeneration Plans. Proposals in the Social Plan, particularly in the areas of Education and Learning and Unemployment and Training seek to create the conditions for successful economic regeneration by ensuring that people of all ages receive the supports they need to avail of opportunities.



As part of National Jobs Week from Monday 2nd March 2020 to Friday 6th March 2020, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), in collaboration with Sligo LEADER Partnership, Cranmore Community Co-Op and Cranmore Regeneration Project, held an Employment Information event in the Abbeyquarter Centre, on Friday 6th March 2020, for people parenting alone. The aim of the event was to showcase jobs/careers and relevant training opportunities available in Sligo, from both the public and private sector. Of the 144 clients invited to the event by DEASP, 20 attended on the day and there were 5 agencies and 7 employers present. Funding for this event was secured by Cranmore Community Co-op under SICAP.

Conclusion

The social, economic and physical strategies of the Masterplan can achieve a transformative impact for the East City area, providing an action plan for change with benefits for both the local and wider community, which includes the development of Sligo as Designated Regional Growth Hub. This will be achieved through continued consultation and collaboration with the Community, in particular building on the strong links that the Regeneration Project has with the Cranmore Community Co-op, the Abbeyquarter Community Centre and the Sligo Springboard Family Support Service.

CORPORATE SERVICES

The range of services provide by Corporate Services include:

- Administration of Council and Municipal District meetings
- Providing administrative services for the Cathaoirleach
- Support for elected members
- Preparation of the register of electors
- Freedom of Information
- Provision of media and Information Services, administration and the delivery of Customer Services
- Implementation of Irish Language Plan and the Official Languages Act.

In addition to the plenary and Municipal District meetings, Corporate Services coordinate meetings of the Council's Corporate Policy Group, Joint Policing Committee, Strategic Policy Committees, Disability Consultative Committee, Procedures Committee, Twinning Committee and Audit Committee.

COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN KNOCKNAREA ARENA

Sligo County Council recorded a 'first' when it held its May monthly meeting in the Knocknarea Arena in IT Sligo. While Local Authorities around the country held 'virtual' meetings or convened a quorum only in recent weeks, it is believed Sligo is the first Local Authority to meet in full session since the introduction of Covid-19 emergency measures.



May monthly meeting in the Knocknarea Arena in IT Sligo

Local Representation and Civic Leadership

Administrative support for Cathaoirleach

Corporate Services provides administrative support for the Cathaoirleach and the chairs of the Municipal Districts. In 2015, the 'Cathaoirleach's Awards Scheme' was revived, an initiative which was devised to reward the special volunteers who have given exemplary service to their community.

At a ceremony in County Hall in December 2019, awards were presented in the categories of Arts & Culture, Community, Environment & Heritage, Schools, Young Enterprise, Sports, and 'Spirit of Sligo.'

The Council also hosts Civic receptions and receptions hosted by the Cathaoirleach to honour people who have given distinguished service or have excelled in a particular endeavour.



A very special event was hosted by Mayor Gino O'Boyle at City Hall on February 10th with the Sligo St Patrick's Day Festival Committee, celebrating its 50th year of Sligo's parade. Members of the committee over the years were presented with a commemorative gold medallion – marking their commitment to the annual event that brings the whole community together.



The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Dara Mulvey and Mayor Councillor Rosaleen O'Grady hosted a visit from the Indian Ambassador His Excellency Sandeep Kumar in July 2020.



Sligo Rowing Club were honoured in January 2020 at a reception in County Hall jointly hosted by Cathaoirleach Councillor Tom MacSharry and Mayor Councillor Gino O'Boyle.

ARTHUR GIBBONS CO-OPTED TO SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL

At its June monthly meeting held on Monday in the Knocknarea Arena, IT Sligo, Arthur Gibbons was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former Councillor (now MEP) Chris MacManus.

Councillor Gibbons previously served on the former Sligo Borough Council from 1999 to 2014. He was welcomed to the Authority by Councillors, and Councillors who served with him recalled the commitment and experience he brought to that role. Chief Executive Ciarán Hayes assured Councillor Gibbons of the support of the Executive.

Councillor Gibbons thanked his proposer, Councillor Healy, and seconder, Councillor Bree, and wished his predecessor Chris MacManus well in his new challenge on the European stage.



COUNCILLOR MULVEY ELECTED CATHAOIRLEACH



Councillor Dara Mulvey was elected Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council at its AGM held in June 2020 in the Knocknarea Arena, IT Sligo. Councillor Dónal Gilroy was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

Councillor Mulvey has served as a Councillor since 2009, and he said it was a special privilege to be the first Coolaney native to hold the office of Cathaoirleach. He acknowledged that it was a day tinged with sadness following the recent passing of his brother John.

The Cathaoirleach said he looked forward to working with Councillors and staff to meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities presented to the people of County Sligo. He believes businesses, schools and the agriculture sector need particular supports in the current climate.

Councillor Mulvey expressed his belief in the power of community and looked forward to working with Sligo Leader Partnership and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) to progress and deliver various projects over the course of his term.

Among the many major projects underway in County Sligo were the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin scheme, and the Coolaney Mountain Bike Centre, which has attracted strong national and international interest.

The new Cathaoirleach commended the local media for their fair and balanced coverage of local events and concluded his address by committing to work with elected members and staff to grow and develop Sligo.

COUNCILLOR ROSALEEN O'GRADY ELECTED MAYOR



Front Row: Councillor Gino O'Boyle, Mayor Councillor Rosaleen O'Grady, Councillor Arthur Gibbons
Back Row: Councillor Sinéad Maguire, Councillor Declan Bree, Councillor Tom MacSharry

Councillor Rosaleen O'Grady was elected Mayor of Sligo Borough District at its Annual General meeting held on Friday 19th June. Councillor O'Grady was proposed by Councillor Bree, seconded by Councillor MacSharry, and unanimously elected. Councillor Arthur Gibbons was elected Deputy Mayor.

Outgoing Mayor, Councillor Gino O'Boyle convened a minute's silence at the start of the meeting as a mark of respect to the late Garda Detective Colm Horkan.

Councillor O'Grady said she welcomed the challenge of working with her colleagues the Elected Members and Council Executive to see Sligo grow and develop. 'The experience of recent months has shown that the power of friendship is our greatest gift. Over the period of the Covid emergency, we have seen extraordinary community spirit and resolve, and we have all witnessed the courage and professionalism of our front-line workers.'

Noting that 2020 is designated 'Year of nurses and midwives', Mayor O'Grady said 'As a former nurse, I believe our nursing staff and other health professionals excel throughout their careers, and recent experience has proven that our appreciation for their efforts should not be confined to the current year.'

The newly elected Mayor expressed her optimism for the future of Sligo. 'No one can doubt the difficulties facing our economy and our society in light of the Covid pandemic. But there are many reasons to be positive, and there is a vibrancy and optimism by the many projects being delivered locally – the Cultural Plaza, Eastern Bridge, Western Distributor Road and other major capital projects.

Sligo is blessed with a wealth of walkways, trails and amenities, and these have enhanced and transformed communities all over our county. When we work in active partnership with other key local agencies, there is no limit to what we can achieve.'

COUNCILLOR THOMAS WALSH ELECTED CHAIR OF SLIGO-DRUMCLIFF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Front Row: Councillor Marie Casserly, Chairperson Councillor Thomas Walsh, Councillor Tom Fox
Back Row: Councillor Thomas Healy, Ciarán Hayes, CE Sligo County Council, Councillor Dónal Gilroy

Councillor Thomas Walsh was elected Chair of Sligo-Drumcliff Municipal District at its AGM on Friday 19th June. Councillor Walsh was proposed by Councillor Casserly seconded by Councillor Fox, and unanimously elected. Councillor Tom Fox was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

Outgoing Chair, Councillor Tom Fox convened a minute's silence at the start of the meeting as a mark of respect to the late Garda Detective Colm Horkan.

In his address, Councillor Walsh thanked 'the essential workers who kept us safe and well during the past three months and also to all those in our communities across our municipal area who have helped fight the recent virus and comply with the recent regulations. We all played our part in ensuring Sligo is the best performing county in the country in eliminating new infection cases.

I sincerely do hope that there is a new focus towards rural Ireland and that we are positively prioritised towards and see a real strategy for balanced regional development in the new Government. One regional item I want to specifically mention is the development and modernisation of our University Hospital which I think we all agree needs investment.

It's an exciting time for our county. We have so many capital projects ongoing and many soon to begin including the N4, Western Distributor, O'Connell Street revamp, N4/N15 Sligo Urban Improvement Scheme, Stephen Street Cultural Plaza, the Eastern Garavogue Bridge and the development and upgrade of the L and K block at Institute of Technology, Sligo.

I want to give a special mention to one sector which I believe we owe so much to in our county. We have about 400 community groups made up of volunteers from tidy towns, to defibrillator groups, to development groups to sports clubs. The unsung heroes; those volunteers in each village, in each community who give hours of their time on a voluntary basis to do so much positive work in their communities. To them I say 'thank you.'

COUNCILLOR CLARKE ELECTED CHAIR OF BALLYMOTE-TUBBERCUNRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Front Row: Councillor Joe Queenan, Chairperson Councillor Michael Clarke, Councillor Martin Connolly
Back Row: Ciarán Hayes, CE Sligo County Council, Councillor Paul Taylor, Councillor Gerard Mullaney,
Councillor Dara Mulvey

Councillor Michael Clarke was elected Chair of Ballymote-Tubbercurry Municipal District at its AGM on Friday 19th June. Councillor Clarke was proposed by Councillor Joe Queenan, seconded by Councillor Dara Mulvey and unanimously elected. Councillor Martin Connolly was elected Leas Cathaoirleach

Outgoing Chair Councillor Paul Taylor convened a minute's silence at the start of the meeting as a mark of respect to the late Garda Detective Colm Horkan.

In his address, Councillor Clarke said he looked forward to working with the Elected Members to address the many challenges facing the District and the county.

Councillor Clarke commended Chief Executive Ciarán Hayes and the executive for their work in progressing Sligo in recent years, which had seen many projects delivered and in the pipeline.

One of his priorities will be dealing with issues facing our rural communities, and he proposed to focus on planning policies and the disenfranchisement of rural voters over the course of his term.

Register of Electors

There are 56,892 electors registered on the current 2020/2021 Register of Electors in County Sligo.

An information campaign is undertaken every year to remind people of their responsibility to check the Register. The campaign includes advertisements in local papers, notices circulated on social media and on the Council's website. Posters are displayed in Post Offices, Garda Stations, Libraries and Area Offices to encourage the public to check if they are registered. The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government carried out a review of the electoral registration process, including a simplification of the forms and process, a rolling Register and continuous registration, optional on-line registration and enabling a single national register database.

Details of the review available on www.registerreform.gov.ie

Information Services

Corporate Services provide information services to the Elected Members, staff and media, monitors and updates our website in conjunction with the IT Section. The section is also responsible for issuing media releases and coordinating responses to media queries. Among the publications produced are the Annual Report and the Corporate Plan.

Freedom of Information

Since Freedom of Information legislation was introduced in 1997, there is a right of access to official records held by the Council, and the right to have personal information held corrected or updated where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading.

In 2020, 83 FOI applications were received.

Social Media Channels

The Council continued to proactively use social media channels to communicate with our customers and promote local authority events and initiatives. The number of followers on the Council's social media channels continued to grow in 2020.

Emergency Alerts

The Corporate Services Department works with the Information Technology Section to coordinate and issue 'out of office' emergency alerts, particularly in relation to roads and water services.

Customer Services

The staff at the Customer Services desk in County Hall continue to provide front-line services to the public whether it be in person, by email or by phone.

Performance Indicators

The council's performance is measured by a series of Performance Indicators, set nationally by the National Oversight and Audit Commission. While the indicators for 2020 are still being compiled, the indicators for 2019 are available on www.noac.ie

International contacts

While Sligo has signed three formal Twinning Agreements – with Crozon, Kempton and Tallahassee – it has developed a range of international contacts and regularly welcomes Ambassadors, dignitaries and other guests to County Hall and City Hall.

Covid-19 restrictions have resulted in the cancellation of planned exchange visits in 2020, but contacts have been maintained and it is hoped that we can welcome our international friends to Sligo again in 2021.

In recent years, Sligo County Council has hosted students from Kempton for work experience under an Erasmus programme.

Disability Consultative Committee

Sligo County Council's Disability Consultative Committee was re-established as a sub-committee of the Authority's Housing and Corporate Strategic Policy Committee. Its main function is to advise the Local Authority on policies and improve services, to make recommendations on disability proofing of policies, projects and actions. The Committee is made up of elected members, representatives of the disability sector and community organisations, and members of Council staff.

In May 2019, Sligo County Council's Disability Inclusion and Access Strategy 2019-2022 was launched. The Plan is available on Sligo County Council's website www.sligococo.ie

Joint Policing Committee

The Garda Síochána Act 2005 provides for the establishment of a Joint Policing Committee in each Local Authority. The purpose of the Joint Committee is to develop greater consultation, co-operation and accountability between An Garda Síochána, Local Authorities and elected members, with the participation of the Community and voluntary sector, on the management of policing issues. Revised guidelines governing the operation of Joint Policing Committees were issued in 2014. In accordance with the Guidelines, the Joint Policing Committee consists of 24 members, consisting of 13 elected members of the Council, 1 Oireachtas member, 2 Local Authority Officials, 2 nominees of the Garda Commissioner, and 6 Community nominees.

The JPC's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 sets out the strategic priorities to be addressed during the life of the Plan. An Annual Action Plan was adopted which outlines actions for delivery on the strategic priorities.

The first JPC meeting of the current term was held on 25th September 2020.

REMEMBERING FOUR OUTSTANDING PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

The year 2020 saw the sad passing of four public representatives who had served with Sligo Corporation/Sligo Borough Council or Sligo County Council.

John Harrison



John Harrison was universally liked and respected across the political spectrum. From the time he was first elected to Sligo Corporation in 1974, he served with great distinction and integrity. His background in education, as the first Principal of Ballinode College, was an invaluable resource for the Corporation and the wider community.

His passion for Sligo knew no bounds and he instigated numerous projects and initiatives during his time on the Council. Being elected Mayor and subsequently Freeman of Sligo were deserved recognition for his exemplary public service.

As a member of the Board of Management of Ballinode College, the late John Harrison's Principalship was characterised by respect – respect for students, teachers and parents. He had been determined that all students would be encouraged in their education and advised around the opportunities that their time in school could afford them.

At the January 2020 Council meeting, the Chief Executive, on his own behalf and on behalf of the Executive and Staff added his sympathies to the Harrison family. He said there was a great appreciation for those who gave up their time to advance issues in Sligo, and he wished to be associated with the remarks extended on his sad passing.

In keeping with long established tradition, the funeral cortege of former Mayor John Harrison followed a route through Sligo town following his funeral service. The cortege was accompanied by a guard of honour of elected members and former members of Sligo Borough Council,

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

Kathleen McGoldrick

In January 2020, the Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council paid tribute to former Mayor and Member of Sligo Corporation, Kathleen (Kay) McGoldrick, who passed away.

Kathleen made a major contribution to Sligo during her time as a Councillor, she took a keen interest in seeing the town grow and develop since she was elected from the North Ward in 1979. The fact that she was elected Mayor on two occasions, 1983 and 1992, illustrates the esteem in which she was held by her colleagues on Sligo Corporation. She carried out her duties as our First Citizen with great energy and professionalism and took a special pride in supporting the various community and voluntary groups throughout the town.



She will be recalled with great fondness and affection by the many people she touched with her kindness.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam.

John Sherlock



John gave exemplary service throughout his career in public life, and over his term as Cathaoirleach he was universally respected for his professionalism and fairness. He was first elected to Sligo County Council in 1991 representing the Ballymote electoral area and had the honour of being elected Cathaoirleach in 1995.

He served on many committees during his service with the Council and was always supportive of voluntary groups or local associations trying to enhance their communities. John's friendly and outgoing nature made him popular with fellow Councillors and staff. He was always 'talking up' Sligo and believed in the county and its people.

People who served with John have recalled his warm and generous nature, and the valued contribution he made to the major issues discussed in the Council Chamber.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

Martin F Keaveney

Martin was at the heart of the political and business community in Sligo for many years. He had the distinction of serving as Mayor in 1973, and he carried out his duties with great pride and professionalism.

He was one of Sligo's most successful and enterprising local businessmen, devoting almost sixty years to the toolmaking and plastics business.



Martin had many outstanding highlights in his business career – his was the first Irish toolmaking company to export to the U.S and Africa, and was the first person from the West of Ireland to win the national Jacob's Award for 'Outstanding Young Man of the Year'

Martin would go on to fulfil this early potential throughout his life and was elected to Sligo Corporation on his first attempt. He was highly regarded across the political spectrum as an honourable and decent gentleman, a man of his word who adhered to the highest standards in his public life.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Department looks after all staffing related matters in Sligo County Council e.g. recruitment, training, maintenance of personnel records, industrial relations, payroll, superannuation, time and attendance, etc. It is also responsible for implementing statutory and non-statutory staff welfare policies and procedures and maintains stable industrial relations within the Organisation. The Human Resources Department works to create an equitable, consultative and supportive working environment within Sligo County Council.

Due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, many activities within the HR Department were significantly impacted on. Much of the focus of the HR Department was subsequently aimed at addressing issues arising from the Covid-19 crisis.

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, the potential implications for society in general and the organisation in terms of staff and services was becoming increasingly more apparent. At this time a Business Continuity Plan was developed which looked at the critical essential services which the Council would have to maintain in the event of a full-scale pandemic, the staff required to ensure these services could be delivered and what backup would be required in the event of staff absences due to illness etc, the potential risks to delivery of these services and how to address them. This plan provided the Council with a checklist of actions to prepare for the impact of the crisis and to ensure critical services were maintained.

As restrictions were elevated, the Council had to make very significant adjustments to the way we work to comply with HSE and Government advices and guidelines on how to conduct business in a way that protected the health and safety of our employees to the greatest extent possible. An in-house Covid-19 Co-ordinating Group was established in March 2020 to identify and oversee actions to maintain safe working environments and to ensure the HSE / Government advices were implemented. This group continues to meet regularly. Covid-19 Compliance Officers were appointed, and a Lead Worker Representative and Worker Representative nominated by the Trade Unions were appointed to work collaboratively with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures and monitor adherence.

Complying with social distancing advice represented a major challenge, and the Council succeeded in rapidly rolling out home working capability to the extent that about 80% of office-based staff were working from home at the height of the restrictions. As restrictions began to ease, the Government published Return to Work Safely Protocols in May 2020 to support employers and workers to put measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Government's Roadmap for re-opening Society and Business set out a five-phase framework for re-opening commencing on 18th May 2020.

Very significant costs were incurred in adapting workplaces, work practices, public access arrangements, etc, to comply fully with COVID-19 related public health protection measures.

As restrictions were again escalated to the highest level from midnight on 21st October 2020, working arrangements and practices were altered in line with Public Health and Government advices with the focus on maintaining essential services and supporting Communities and businesses. Imposition of restrictions of various levels and social distancing continued to be the norm throughout 2020, which impacted on how Council staff work and deliver services.

Staff Recruitment

Due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, many activities and in particular recruitment were impacted upon. 2020 saw a reduction in the number of posts filled as competitions were unable to be progressed due to social distancing and travel restrictions. However, a number of posts were filled in the area of Community and Economic Development, the Arts Department, Fire Services, and a number of temporary administrative posts.

Vacancies for open posts are advertised in the local and/or national press and also on Sligo County Council's websites and on Social Media sites. In total, 16 recruitment competitions were held in 2020, from which 18 posts were filled.

Due to the restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic, Sligo County Council had to review its procedures in carrying out interviews and moved to a system of online interviewing, through Microsoft Teams, during the last quarter of 2020.

Retirements

During 2020, a total of 12 staff retired from the service of Sligo County Council.

(See Appendix 1)

Training and Development

As with recruitment, training delivery was particularly impacted on by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sligo County Council is dedicated to providing relevant training, within its resources to all staff. Training activity in 2020 particularly focused on Health and Safety. Funding for training was made available to the Council under the headings of Non-National Roads Grant, Water Services Grant and Environmental Grant and these were expended on the provision of relevant courses for staff working in those areas.

Industrial Relations

It is the policy of the Human Resources Department to foster a good industrial relations climate and, in this regard, regular meetings take place between the HR Department and Union representatives/officials. The Council is committed to resolving IR issues, in an open and co-operative manner as soon as possible once an issue arises.

Staff Welfare

The Human Resources Department is responsible for formulating and implementing a range of policies and support mechanisms to help staff manage their work-life balance. The HR Department manages the Sick Leave Scheme and provides employee assistance when required. This service is provided through a full-time Staff Welfare Officer available to all staff and through Health Assured, an organisation which the Council has entered into an agreement with to deliver employee assistance as required.

Details of all family friendly policies are available on the Council's intranet, which include Shorter Working Year Scheme, Parental Leave Scheme, Work Sharing Scheme, Career Breaks, Force Majeure Scheme, Bereavement Leave and Maternity and Paternity Leave.

Payroll

The Human Resources Department is responsible for the administration of Payroll in conjunction with MyPay. Three No. Paygroups are paid on a fortnightly basis, Wages and Wages Pensions, Salary and Salary Pension and Monthly Fire Fighters.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Civil Defence under the leadership of the Civil Defence officer has 70+ active volunteer members who attend the 6 training centres throughout the county. All volunteers train on an ongoing basis in skills specific to being in a position to provide assistance to the local 3 Principal Response Agencies (PRAs) in an emergency situation.

Sligo Civil Defence is under the operational management of a new Civil Defence Officer. Darren McGough took up the role in April of 2020, replacing Marion Davis who had retired from the position.



2020 has been a challenging year for the Civil Defence, both locally and nationally. With the onset of Covid-19, many of our traditional roles and duties were changed, cancelled or postponed. However, they were replaced with a much greater challenge of providing care and assistance to our community, fellow organisations and the vulnerable. Here in Sligo, we have undertaken such activities as food collection from the Food Cloud in Galway; transfer of patients to hospital and clinic appointments to facilities in the County and also to Galway, Mayo and Roscommon; the distribution of PPE and other welfare supplies.

The ways in which we operate have changed dramatically too, with the importance of PPE, correct policy and procedure and the highlighting of volunteer welfare our priorities. All these need to be in place to ensure we can continue to serve our Local Authority, fellow PRA's and those in the community who need us.



Increased expenditure is foreseen for 2021 in acquiring extra PPE long term, sanitization processes for building and vehicles, extra training for new first aid processes and new updated ambulance equipment required to deliver safe first aid practices in a Covid-19 environment.

Sligo Civil Defence is one of the chosen counties to receive a new Ford Ranger vehicle from a grant received from the dormant accounts. This was also in addition to a similar vehicle which was acquired through the same means in 2019.

Sligo Civil Defence was also in a position to receive a 2015 registered Ambulance, which had been decommissioned by the National Ambulance Service. This vehicle is currently in the process of being fitted out and ready for operations. It is envisaged that this more modern vehicle will replace an older Ambulance we currently have in rotation.

As a result of Covid-19, a lot of our classes have had to be put on hold due to restriction guidelines but recertification of instructors and volunteers, vehicle maintenance and other essential activities are still going ahead but only when restrictions and safety procedures allow us to do so.

Because of our visibility in the community throughout the year, we have a large number of applications from people wishing to join the Sligo Civil Defence branch which is very encouraging for the future.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Sligo County Council will continue to implement the provisions of the local authorities Safety Management Systems. This will be carried out by ongoing review of the current systems and implementation of the rigorous annual H&S Inspection programme. Communication and consultation with employees will be carried out and H&S training of employees will be facilitated as required. Employees will be supported to implement safe systems of work. Liaison with the HSA, Irish Water and other stakeholders will continue as appropriate.

PLANNING, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ARTS AND CULTURE DIRECTORATE



DIRECTOR: MS DOROTHY CLARKE

INTRODUCTION

2020 will forever be remembered for the year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid-19 and the Community Response effort:

Sligo County Council as one of the essential service providers was very much involved in supporting the National effort to maintain resilience amongst population and to co-ordinate community support during the pandemic. On the weekend of the 27th March 2020, following the announcement by the then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, Local Authorities were asked to lead and co-ordinate the Community Response effort to provide support for those most vulnerable in our communities. The Community Response Forum was established over the weekend and had its first meeting on Sunday 29th March 2020 at 4pm. A dedicated helpline/helpdesk was also established manned with Local Authority staff to respond to queries and requests for help and support. Made up of representatives from different community support agencies it continued in existence for the duration of 2020 and into 2021. The voluntary effort undertaken by a host of volunteers in support of those most in need in our communities was mobilised by a collaborative effort between SCC, SVC, PPN, SLPCo and a myriad of community groups and voluntary organisation throughout the length and breadth of the county was exemplary and demonstrated the strength and resilience of the community sector in Sligo

While dealing with Covid did require a lot of attention during the first half of 2020 the latter half of 2020 did see a return to full functioning of all services being operated at maximum capacity levels, aided in no small way than with the increased utilisation of technology, remote working, virtual meetings etc.

Economic development:

From an economic development perspective, the designation of Sligo as a centre for economic growth in the National Planning Framework has been the catalyst for a series of significant projects being developed in both the urban and rural areas.

Schemes progressed under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), Fáilte Ireland's Platforms for Growth etc have been hugely instrumental in enhancing community, tourism and recreational facilities throughout the county. The procurement of Contractors for the construction of the Sligo Cultural Plaza at Stephen Street car park which will be a flagship attraction for Sligo, was concluded towards the end of 2020. It is just one of the many exciting projects that will transform the urban landscape in the town centre.

The many attractions Sligo has to offer was also the backdrop to the launch of Sligo's new brand and website. Under the three pillars of Live/Invest/Visit, this initiative presents an opportunity to promote a positive image and enable key stakeholders to showcase Sligo under one collective brand.

Dorothy Clarke

Director of Planning, Community & Economic Development, Arts & Culture

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The Planning section continues to manage development in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and associated Regulations.

A total of 457 planning applications were processed in 2020 which represents a fall of 13% compared to the corresponding number for 2019. This is largely attributable to the restrictions and concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Pre-planning consultation interest has remained strong however and 2021 may see a return to more normal levels of activity.

As part of government housing policy, and in compliance with requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, the process of establishing a vacant sites register commenced in 2017. Demands for the collection of 2019 vacant sites levies were issued in December 2020 and the register will be monitored and reviewed in 2021.

Development Planning Unit (DPU)

The Development Planning Unit is responsible for drafting planning and development policy for Sligo County and City, in consultation with the public, members, officials, prescribed bodies and other stakeholders. The Development Planning team also carries out research, advises on development proposals, facilitates plan implementation and participates in a range of initiatives, at both local and regional level.

Achievements in 2020

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund

Based on the Public Realm Plan for Sligo Town (completed in 2018), the Planning Section submitted two applications to the Department for funding under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund announced in January 2020. One of the applications related to the implementation of the Public Realm Plan and the other one was for the 'City Campus' project. Following an announcement in March 2021, it was confirmed that both applications were successful with a total allocation of €48 million being awarded to Sligo County Council.

Public Realm Enhancement Project

As part of the implementation of the Public Realm Plan, a contract was awarded in June 2020 to consultants Building Design Partnership to design the public realm enhancement of a network of streets in Sligo including Stephen Street and Rockwood Parade. A Part 8 process for this project has been completed with further detailed design to be completed early in 2021.

Wayfinding Strategy

The Public Realm Plan recommended the preparation of a Wayfinding Strategy for the town of Sligo. A brief was prepared and published on e-tenders in the second quarter of 2020. The contract was awarded to consultants Whybrow Pedrola in September 2020. Work on the Strategy commenced in October 2020 and will be finalized in 2021.



URDF Projects – Public Realm Street Enhancements(left) and Centre Block Masterplan (right)

Centre Block Masterplan

Substantial progress was made in 2020 in the preparation of a new masterplan for the Centre Block area of Sligo (Wine Street Car Park and adjoining areas).

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

The Planning Section secured a total of €202,000 from the Rural Regeneration Development Fund 2020. These resources will be utilised in 2021 to prepare public realm schemes for the tourist villages of Strandhill and Rosses Point. The procurement process for this project commenced in late 2020.

Development Plan Variation aligning Sligo CDP with the NPF and RSES

Throughout 2019, the DPU has worked in collaboration with the North and Western Regional Assembly on the preparation of the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). The Strategy, which designates Sligo as a Regional Growth Centre, was adopted and became operational in January 2020.

In accordance with planning legislation, it was necessary to vary the Development Plan to bring it in line with the 2018 National Planning Framework and the 2020 RSES.

The Draft Variation no. 1 of Sligo CDP incorporates the main demographic and economic policy provisions of the NPF and RSES into the County Development Plan 2017-2023. Following public consultation between 27 July and 24 August 2020, the Variation was adopted by the elected members of Sligo County Council on 12 October 2020.

IRISH PLANNING INSTITUTE AWARDS 2019-2020

Sligo County Council has been awarded a 'highly commended' prize in the Design Category of the Irish Planning Institute awards 2019-2020 for its 2018 Public Realm Plan.

The 'Design' category rewards the best in design from urban design or public realm plans to individual projects which respond to their context in an urban or rural setting.



Sketch of Market Street

Minister Eoghan Murphy and IPI President Conor Norton presented the award at the ceremony in the Westin Hotel on the 27th February.

The theme of this year's awards was 'Celebrating Excellence and Innovation in Irish Planning'. Speaking at the awards, IPI President Dr Conor Norton said "the IPI Planning Awards celebrate success in planning and the 2020 awards saw an increase in both the quantity and quality of projects considered."

Sligo County Council's vision for Sligo city is that of a 'compact liveable city for people', with a self-contained vibrant core and safe, attractive streets. Essential to the achievement of a 'vibrant core' and a 'city experience' is a pleasant and engaging public realm where people want to spend time.

To realise this vision, in February 2018, Building Design Partnership (BDP) was commissioned to prepare a public realm plan for Sligo.

One aim of the Public Realm Plan was to promote a coordinated approach to any works within the town centre. The Plan also proposed improvements to Sligo's public spaces, including streets and car parks in order to enhance the town as an attractive place in which to live, work and visit, encouraging people to explore, businesses to flourish and creating a vibrant street scene.

Preparing the Plan is the first step in the rejuvenation of Sligo and marks a new era of heightened awareness of the importance of good quality design in our public spaces and streets.

Implementation of the Plan is a priority for Sligo County Council and will take place incrementally (as resources permit) over the next few years.

ENFORCEMENT OF PLANNING CONTROL

The Enforcement Section's role in this area involves investigating all complaints from the public with regard to unauthorised development, random inspections of developments in progress, and dealing with prior to commencement conditions or conditions which have not been complied with. The Section conducts site visits and issues Warning Letters, serves Enforcement Notices and institutes legal proceeding, as appropriate.

Hereunder are some relevant details of activity for 2020:

- 69 New Complaints lodged
- 48 Warning Letters
- 6 Enforcement Notices
- 62 complaints resolved through negotiation. (These include complaints received prior to January, 2020)
- 25 complaints dismissed

Collection of Development Contributions

The Enforcement Section is responsible for the collection of development contributions. Staff resources continue to be allocated to ensure that contributions are paid in a timely manner and to follow up defaulters. The amount of outstanding arrears stands at just above €1 million at the end of 2020. Most of the outstanding money is in respect of unsold new build property, mainly dwelling houses and will be paid in due course on the sale of the properties.

Taking Estates in Charge

The Council commenced the process of taking in charge 6 No estates in 2020. Some of these estates would have been previously categorised as unfinished housing estates. The taking in charge fees received by the Council go towards the costs incurred by the Council during the taking in charge process and are also used where there is a shortfall in monies to complete outstanding works in the estate to bring it to a satisfactory standard to take in charge.

The Fairways Estate in Tubbercurry was previously categorised as an unfinished housing estate. The Planning enforcement section successfully drew down the Bond in 2019 and have commenced works on the estate including works to the 3 No. pumping stations, fencing, upgrading of public lights, completion of surface water sewer, repairs of foul sewers, water mains, footpaths and the provision of a wearing course to all the roads within the estate.



Provision of Wearing Course to Fairways Estate in Tubbercurry

Vacant Homes

The Government has committed in Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness to develop an overall national vacant housing re-use strategy. In February 2018, the planning section prepared a Vacant Homes Action Plan whose aim is to significantly reduce the number of long-term empty dwellings and reduce the effect of empty dwellings on the community and facilitate their return to productive use. The first key action to be achieved was the identification of the real level of vacancy in the Sligo and its Environs area. Of the 6,284 residential properties inspected up to the end of August 2020, only 4.6% were determined to be vacant. The enforcement section will continue to carry out inspections and identify owners of identified vacant properties in 2021 with a view to bringing these properties back into use.

Derelict Sites

The Planning Enforcement Section continually monitor properties throughout the county. Where a property has fallen into dereliction or is in danger of falling into dereliction, we engage with the owners where they are known to encourage them to carry out the necessary works that are required. It is only where this dialogue fails that we place the property on the Derelict Site Register.

Building Control

The Council is designated as Building Control Authority with strong powers to promote and enforce compliance with Building Regulations and Construction Product Regulations. The aim of the building regulations is to provide for the safety and welfare of people in and about buildings, to provide for the special needs of disabled persons and for the conservation of fuel and energy.

HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION SERVICES

The protection of the natural and built heritage is an important function of Sligo County Council, a countywide asset that is valuable in its own right but also to the tourism and visitor experience in the County.

Heritage

During 2020, the Heritage Office continued to work with Sligo Heritage Forum to oversee the implementation of the County Sligo Heritage Plan (2016-2020). The Forum meets quarterly. The Heritage Plan seeks to protect, conserve, manage and promote the value of Sligo's heritage in recognition of its significant contribution to the quality of life of communities and the socio-economic development of the county. The Heritage Office has one full time officer, and the heritage programme is supported by Sligo County Council in partnership with The Heritage Council. The Heritage Council provided an allocation of €38,000 towards the delivery of the Heritage Plan in 2020. As the current Heritage Plan will conclude at the end of 2020, preparatory work will be undertaken in Q1 2021 to develop the next Sligo Heritage Plan for the period 2021-2025. During 2020, the work programme focused on increasing heritage awareness and engagement with communities, the conservation of medieval churches, the continued roll out of the Sligo Community Archaeology Programme and progressing conservation plans for Sligo Gaol, the Green Fort, Sligo and the Drumcliffe Monastic Site.

Biodiversity

The implementation of the County Sligo Biodiversity Action Plan has been reactivated through funding provided through the National Biodiversity Action Plan. Funding of €36,910 was provided by the Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht in 2020. This supported the preparation of a management plan for designated lands in council ownership at Strandhill and the management of invasive alien species.

Architectural Conservation

In 2020, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht allocated a total of €131,350 to Sligo County Council under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (11 projects) and the Historic Structures Fund (2 projects – Temple House and the Metal Man Navigation Beacon). Projects vary from roof repairs, window repairs and general stabilization works. The Heritage Office oversees the delivery of the conservation grant schemes with advice from the Planning and Architectural Sections of Sligo County Council.

Historic Structures Fund 2020

Projects	Funding Allocated
Temple House	€30,000
Metal Man Navigation Beacon	€25,000

METAL MAN SLIGO - CONSERVATION WORKS COMPLETE



After spending almost four weeks cleaning, conserving and painting Sligo's Metal Man, it's fair to say that Gavin Cogan and James Cawley of Maintenance Painting Systems (MPS) Ltd. got to know one of Sligo's famous landmarks better than most of us ever will.

Perched atop a limestone plinth, access to the navigation beacon was weather and tide dependent. On some days only 2-3 hours were available for works to be undertaken. Carefully and painstakingly the crew undertook the works which have brought the Metal Man wonderfully back to life.

Sligo's Metal Man, is a 19th century navigation beacon which is located mid channel between Rosses Point and Oyster Island in Co. Sligo. The Metal Man has marked the safe approach for shipping and marine craft to Sligo Harbour since 1821 and continues to do so.

Minister of State, Malcolm Noonan, T.D. at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage allocated a grant of €25,000 under the Historic Structures Fund to Sligo County Council for works to conserve the Metal Man. Match funding was also provided by Sligo County Council.

The project was undertaken as a joint effort between the Infrastructure Directorate and the Heritage Office of Sligo County Council. The project was complex and extremely challenging due to its location mid channel, the extent of the conservation works required, as well as the health and safety and environmental requirements that had to be met.

The conservation, cleaning and painting of the Metal man was undertaken by Maintenance Painting Systems

(MPS) Ltd. on behalf of Sligo County Council. Calum Phillips, Commercial Manager with MPS Ltd. managed the overall delivery of the project from their UK base. Conservation oversight was provided by Duncan McLaren of Dedalus Architecture, while the role of Project Supervisor Design Process was undertaken by Padraic Culkin of RPS on behalf of Sligo County Council.

Attendance to and from the Metal Man was provided by Daryl Ewing and Johnny Gillen of Ewing's Sea Angling & Boat Charters, while scaffold was carefully erected by John Griffin and his team at Sligo Scaffold Hire. Albany Decorplan Sligo together with Bradite Industrial Coatings generously sponsored the painting materials.

The Metal Man has been a source of inspiration to many, including Jack B. Yeats who depicted the structure in his painting 'Memory Harbour'. More recently the 'Save the Metal Man' campaign highlighted the deteriorating condition of the beacon and lobbied for its conservation.

Locals and visitors to Rosses Point alike watched the works progress on the Metal Man and it's fair to say that the project has been warmly received and everyone is delighted to see that the Metal Man has been conserved to such a high standard.

The Metal Man, who is an identical twin to the Metal Man at Tramore, Co. Waterford, was established on the Perch Rock in 1821. The beacon has a range of 7 miles and a character of Fl (3) W 6.1 seconds that is synchronised with Oyster Island. Since 2003, the light is exhibited in hours of darkness only.

Historic Towns Initiative 2020

The historic built environment of Sligo received much-needed support and investment following the announcement that the Heritage Council awarded €220,787 to a heritage-led regeneration initiative for O'Connell Street, Sligo (Phase1). Match funding was provided by Sligo County Council, with leverage funding provided by the building owners. Nine historic buildings in the southern part of O'Connell Street, Sligo benefited from the Historic Towns Initiative in 2020. The conservation works planned under the Historic Towns Initiative include roof and chimney repairs, installation of cast-iron rainwater goods, reinstatement of timber sash windows and doors, the repair and reinstatement of historic shop fronts using traditional materials and informed by best conservation practice.



Historic Towns Initiative – Wehrly Bros and Hargadon Bros



Community Monuments Fund 2020

The core objective of the Community Monuments Fund is to support the conservation, maintenance, protection and promotion of local monuments and historic sites. It contains a number of different measures aimed at enabling conservation works to be carried out on monuments which are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support, encouraging access to monuments and improving their presentation and also building resilience in monuments to enable them to withstand the effects of climate change. In 2020, Sligo County Council secured €41,750 under CMF 2020 for Ballynaglogh Abbey, Enniscrone Castle and the Queen Maeve Trail.



A large sycamore tree threatens the walls of Ballynaglogh Abbey. Careful removal of the tree will be undertaken with the support of the Community Monuments Fund.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is an initiative under the Action Plan for Rural Development and is part of a package of national and local support measures to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland through the Government's Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration Programme. The Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Authorities.

In addition to the regular annual Town and Village Renewal Scheme, a new Measure in response to Covid-19 was introduced, named the *Accelerated Measure* in response to COVID-19.

Sligo County Council was successfully approved under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020 from Department of Rural and Community Development in respect of the following locations:

Project Approvals – 2020 Standard Town & Village Renewal Scheme

Location	Project	Amount
Drumcliffe	Public realm interventions to improve connectivity/accessibility between Drumcliffe and Rathcormac villages, sculptural elements, and heritage interpretation/signage.	€100,000
Enniscrone	Enhancing Enniscrone's tourism/visitor experience, including refurbishing public toilets, installing safety railings and sea swimming buoys at the Pier.	€100,000
Tubbercurry	Expansion of a forest walk amenity; provision of "SMART" technologies infrastructure and sustainable energy systems for a community enterprise building.	€70,000
Carraroe	Development of walking infrastructure in Carraroe and environs.	€100,000
Ballisodare	Redevelopment of backlands areas to create a cycleway trailhead, parking facilities, landscaping and associated enhancement.	€100,000
Ballymote	Provision of town centre pedestrian infrastructure, public realm enhancements, and a development plan for an important heritage structure.	€100,000
Rosses Point	Development of pedestrian infrastructure and green amenities and associated landscaping works in the village.	€100,000

Projects Approved - 2020 Town & Village Renewal Scheme - Accelerated Measure Round 1

Location	Project	Amount
Ballygawley	Widening and resurfacing of walking trail.	€25,000
Tubbercurry	Resurfacing of Wolfe Tone Square, including signage, landscaping and seating.	€25,000
Enniscrone	Enhancements to the Main Street business district streetscape, plus the delivery of targeted social media marketing and promotion to encourage visitors to the area.	€25,000
Grange	Increase the amenity value and attractiveness of Grange village centre through the delivery of improved footpaths to allow for safe physical distancing and enhanced streetscapes.	€40,000
Ballymote	Provision of looped footpaths allowing for safe physical distancing and access to the countryside and the enhancement of the town centre.	€25,000

Projects Approved - 2020 Town & Village Renewal Scheme - Accelerated Measure Round 2

Location	Project	Amount
Ballintogher	Refurbishment of community owned enterprise units.	€25,000
Banada	Completion of groundworks at Banada Abbey to improve multipurpose facilities.	€40,000
Carney	Delivery of improved looped walking trails and enhanced street scapes.	€25,000
Collooney	Funding for a town centre Community Garden.	€25,000
Keash	Upgrading recreational walking route infrastructure.	€40,000

Projects Approved - 2020 Town & Village Renewal Scheme - Accelerated Measure Round 3

Location	Project	Amount
Rathcormac	Infrastructural Interventions to enhance safety and accessibility.	€40,000
Coney Island	Laneway repairs to beach, amenity area enhancements and sea wall repairs.	€25,000
Bunnanadden	Pedestrian and seating amenities and landscaping.	€25,000

Project Approvals - Town & Village Renewal Scheme - Accelerated Measure Round 3

Large Towns

Location	Project	Amount
Sligo	Safe Recreational Facilities at Cleveragh Regional Park	€40,000

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme is part of the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development and will provide funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure or the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in Ireland.

Successful projects under Measure 1 – 2020

Project	Description of Project	Location	Funding Approved
Queen Maeve Trail	Upgrading of walking infrastructure.	Queen Maeve Trail, Knocknarea, Co. Sligo	€20,000
Ben Bulbin Forest Trail	Upgrading of Trail.	Benbulbin Forest Walk, Gortarowey, Co. Sligo	€20,000
Warren Way Trail	Upgrading of the visitor carpark and enhancement of trail.	Warren Way, Castleconnor, Co. Sligo	€20,000
Bunduff Lake	Repair works to trail.	Bunduff Lake, Cliffoney, Co. Sligo	€20,000
Sligo Way	Upgrading and enhancement of Slish wood section.	Slish Wood, Lough Gill, Co. Sligo	€20,000
Sligo Walks Upgrading Project	Marketing and promotion Co Sligo	Co Sligo	€20,000
Dooney Rock Trail	Upgrading / Enhancing of the trail	Dooney Rock, Lough Gill, Co. Sligo	€20,000
Coolaney River Walk	Maintenance of walk	Coolaney, Co. Sligo	€16,650
The Powellsboro Bog Walk	Upgrade and repair of the existing trail	Powellsboro, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo	€20,000

Successful projects under Measure 2 – 2020

Project	Description of Project	Location	Funding Approved
Ben Bulbin Access Upgrade Project	Improvement/expansion of trailhead parking facilities at the popular Ben Bulbin Forest, to include new disability and age-friendly spaces, bus turning area, interpretive and directional signage and landscaping.	Benbulbin Gortarowey, Co. Sligo	€198,000
Hazelwood Lady Anne Walk Upgrade Project	Upgrading/extending the Lady Anne Walk to create a 2km continuous off-road route from Sligo town to Hazelwood, extension to create 4km looped trail, furnishings, signage, sculptural element and promotional activities.	Hazelwood Demesne, Lough Gill, Co. Sligo	€198,000
Lough Talt Trail Extension Project	The project entails constructing new trail to allow re-routing of an on-road section of the existing Lough Talt Trail looped trail to provide for a safer off-road amenity.	Lough Talt, Co. Sligo	€198,000

The Beara-Breifne Way Route

Secured through the ORIS fund, The Beara-Breifne Way walking route situated in south Sligo passing adjacent to Lough Gara/ Monasteraden is a walking and cycling trail with work ongoing. When concluded it will encompass a long-distance recreational trail linking Co. Cork to Co Cavan. A successful award under RRDF was secured for the routes ongoing development.

EU Projects

Sligo County Council C&E/LEO Economic Development Unit is involved in a number of EU project proposals at present.

1. Interreg V

Atlantic Area programme to develop a transnational cycle route – EuroVelo Route 1. The name of the project is AtlanticOnBike (AoB).

2. SARURE – INTERREG Europe

Rural businesses face significant challenges in the marketplace leading to their unfeasibility and to dramatic consequences in terms of social and territorial cohesion.



SARURE partnership intends to exchange on the models essayed during the past decade but also on the possibilities that the new markets, the new mix of services, the new financing options and the new technologies open for retail SMEs today. 99% of the SMEs in the retail sector in partner rural areas are indeed micro SMEs especially vulnerable to crisis and with many barriers to innovation.

The aim of the project is to improve the partner regions policies in force supporting retail SMEs towards survival, innovation and overall competitiveness. Given the fact that today European regions from the diverse latitudes face the issue, Interreg Europe is deemed an excellent arena to exchange on successful experiences and policies.

3. TrailGazersBid

EU project under Atlantic Area Programme. Project Partner: Trail Gazers is setting out to examine how walks and recreational trails can be used as catalysts for the economic and social development of small rural economies and communities in an environmentally sustainable way.

4. Tide

EU Project under Atlantic Area, Associate Partner role, Project seeks to protect, develop and promote public cultural and heritage assets and services.

POSITIVE BALANCE AT THE 2ND STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE TRAILGAZERSBID

The partners found a virtual space present their works, showcasing the first steps of the effective implementation of this European project, which promotes the sustainable development of rural communities on eight pilot trails in the Atlantic Area.

The team recently presented at the second Steering Committee the progress of their last technical proposals and their application on the eight trails participating in this pilot experience. The goal? To share technology and experiences to progress towards the environmental, economic and social development of natural areas and their local populations.

The project, which will last until March 2022, will, on the one hand, measure the socioeconomic return of investments in trail infrastructure helping to define criteria of greater efficiency. Secondly, explore improvements in the promotion of these natural spaces with the use of new technologies such as social networks, augmented reality applications and digital marketing tools.

Out of the ten partners, eight have pilot itineraries participating in the project: Plazaola (Navarra), Chemin De Mémoires (Brittany), Taff Trail (South Wales), La Caldera de Taburiente (Canary Islands), Knocknarea/Killaspugbrone Loop (North West Ireland), Inch Levels (Northern Ireland), Sacred Mountain (Portugal) and Seven Hanging Valleys (Portugal).

Balance and monitoring

The online meeting, served to monitor the progress made in recent months and to define the next joint steps.

The Knocknarea/Killaspugbrone Trails were proposed to the Steering Committee for inclusion in an online tool that allows identifying the services, attractions and characteristics of the different itineraries.

The Knocknarea/Killaspugbrone trails highlights among its strengths its ability to unite two unique recreational experiences, with the attractiveness of each of them and the potential of a joint promotion of over 11 kilometers of trail which have Strandhill village at its core and easily reachable by public transport.

Additional strengths of the Sligo trails is that they are an established and developed recreational offering, with potential for future opportunities to be introduced which can be replicated through many of Co. Sligo outdoor trails. The project engagement will set an example for the rest of the Sligo Walks trail locations throughout Co. Sligo, which will be able to leverage the synergies and learning in terms of management and innovative promotion.



€2.5 million budget

TrailGazersBID is co-financed by the Interreg Atlantic Area program, through the European Regional Development Fund, and has a budget of 2.5 million euros.

The study of the eight pilot trails represents an opportunity for local actors, community groups, municipal entities or small companies to collaborate in the development of new nature tourism initiatives. The resulting experiences will be translated into a transferable toolkit for the management and promotion of sustainable itineraries. A boost to rural development.

Inland Fisheries Ireland

A successful application in 2019 was made for Duff River Walk. Significant recreational access was achieved along 1.2km stretch of River Duff in Co. Sligo. Match funding requirement €5,000.

Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF)

Sligo Cultural Plaza:

This is aligned to the Fáilte Ireland Capital project. A successful application for funding made under URDF was secured for €750,000. Work commenced in 2020.

Implementation of Sligo's Public Realm - €19.16 million

Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)

There was one recent successful application for funding secured in 2020 under the RRDF fund.

1. Category 2 2020 - Tubbercurry Regeneration Project - €222,000.
Feasibility works are underway.

Previous awards in 2019 included and are active throughout 2020

2. Category 1 2019 - Yeats Trail €500,000. Development works of which are underway.
3. Category 2 2019 - Enniscrone Pavilion and Cliff Baths €131,000. Feasibility works are underway.

Match funding requirement for all projects

1. € 74,000
2. €170,000
3. €43,000

Matching Funds

Funding has been provided under Matching Contributions for 2020 to allow the Council to benefit from opportunities that might arise to drawdown and match fund a number of grant schemes and programmes during the year. These include initiatives under tourism and recreational development, economic development, social inclusion, rural / community development etc.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Community and Economic Development section supports inter-agency strategic collaborative work with other organisations on a local and regional level in promoting and encouraging community and economic development within the County. It supports community organisations, encourages volunteerism and active citizenship, promotes social inclusion and provides a range of supports and grant aid to community based and non-profit organisations throughout the county.

Increasingly the economic agenda is growing as the section engages on a collaborative basis with stakeholders across the business and economic landscape such as the Sligo Economic Forum, Tourism sector, Atlantic Economic Corridor and Diaspora to mention but a few.

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Sligo LCDC was established in 2014 under the Local Government Reform 2014 Act for the purposes of developing, co-ordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The committee is made up of representatives from the local government and local development sectors, public bodies and representatives of social, economic, environmental and community interests.



In March 2020 Councillor Chris MacManus resigned as Chairperson of the Sligo Local Development Committee (LCDC)/Local Action Group (LAG) to take up a position as MEP in the European Parliament. Councillor MacManus had been elected Chairperson at the July 2019 LCDC meeting. Following his resignation, Mr. Hugh MacConville, Vice-Chair assumed the role of Chairperson in the interim as agreed by Members. The outbreak of Covid-19 delayed the election process as meetings were held virtually. Officials in the Department advised that it was in order to proceed with the election of a Chairperson by online means. Following the online election Councillor Dara Mulvey was formally ratified as LCDC Chairperson at the October meeting of the LCDC.

The LCDC, like many structures, became a relevant partner in the response to the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March 2020 and continued to meet, moving to virtual meetings, given the significance of its programmes in supporting the community at this time.



Sligo LCDC holding a virtual meeting of the LCDC/LAG in City Hall in April 2020.

In 2021 the focus of the LCDC will be to continue its overview of community activity in Sligo and review and monitor the implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021. The committee's interagency structure and its monitoring role places it in a key position to overview other programmes such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, the Public Participation Network, Healthy Ireland, funding opportunities EU programmes such as PEACE. Its function as the Local Action Group for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 in Sligo will ensure it has a key role in the delivery of the LEADER programme.

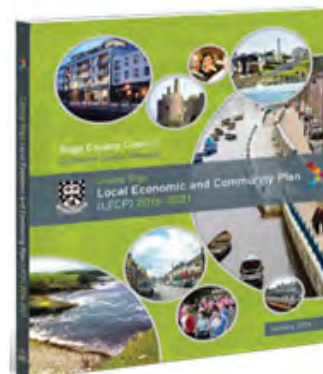
The LCDC has a keen interest in maximising opportunities for Sligo out of European funding, promoting investment in Sligo and establishing structures to ensure better collaboration at a county level.

Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2016 – 2021

The LECP provides a roadmap for collective action in relation to local economic and community development in County Sligo.

The six priority areas outlined in the Plan include:

- Employment and Sustainable Economic Activity
- Education and Training
- Health and Wellbeing
- Social Inclusion, Equality and Poverty
- Environment and Climate Change
- Collaborative Framework



Monitoring of actions set out in the LECP has been carried out on an ongoing basis and from time-to-time agencies with responsibility for delivering on key actions within the LECP present to the LCDC.

2021 will see the commencement of the next 5 years of planning for the next iteration of community and economic visions for Sligo. It is intended to combine this with the Sligo 2030 Jaspers project given the significant overlap that will be required in the consultation and collaboration process involved. In the process regard will be had to LECP guidance which is due to be released from the DRCD.

IT SLIGO DELIVER OVER 4,500 VISORS FOR COVID RESPONSE TEAMS

In response to a call from HSE, IT Sligo assembled a project team to manufacture face-visors to assist front-line staff to deal with the Covid-19 emergency, with over 4,500 visors produced and distributed across the region to date.

The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Tom MacSharry (*Cathaoirleach until AGM in June 2020*) expressed his gratitude to Sligo IT and especially Ruth Moran who coordinated the programme.



The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Tom MacSharry at IT Sligo to acknowledge the contribution of face visors manufactured by a team at the college.

Accompanying the Cathaoirleach were (L-R) Councillor Marie Casserly, Councillor Rosaleen O'Grady, Councillor Dónal Gilroy, Councillor Tom Fox, Dr Brendan McCormack, President IT Sligo, Councillor Martin Connolly, Councillor Thomas Walsh

'This gesture is greatly appreciated by Sligo County Council and Sligo Community Support Forum. The distribution of the facemasks to a wide range of agencies or groups has been an invaluable resource and is welcomed by the many people delivering essential services across our county.'

According to Project coordinator Ruth Moran, Research Office IT Sligo; 'There are currently 99 volunteers supporting the manufacture of three types of visor, a cross functional team deriving from the functions of Engineering and Design, Science and Research. We also have volunteers from the Students Union.'

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is a national programme which aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. SICAP was introduced in April 2015 with LCDC's responsible for managing the programme at local level with support from Pobal and funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development. It also receives funding from the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.



Members of Sligo LCDC in attendance at a Return-to-Work Information event for Women (funded under SICAP in collaboration with the DEASP and Cranmore Regeneration)

SICAP 2018 – 2022 commenced in 2018 with County Sligo LEADER Partnership successful in their bid to continue to deliver the programme in Sligo. Following a national consultation process, some changes were introduced to the new programme which will now run for five years. SICAP 2018 – 2022 is more flexible than its predecessor and has an increased focus on interventions and quality of work rather than reporting on quantitative targets as was the case in the previous SICAP.

The programme itself involves the provision of supports to marginalized individuals and groups and disadvantaged communities. Sligo County Council staff is responsible for the administration of the contract and the preparation of monitoring and oversight reports on behalf of the LCDC. The annual budget for SICAP was increased by 3% in 2020 to €603,079.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the delivery of the programme in 2020 and in accordance with Pobal's advice most interventions are carried out over the phone or using online supports to deliver training. In addition, the LCDC in conjunction with County Sligo LEADER Partnership CLG introduced the SICAP Grant Scheme to make funding available to support community groups and organisations within SICAP target groups that are directly responding to the COVID-19 emergency within County Sligo.

The budget allocated for SICAP 2021 is €603,079, however in November 2020, the Department advised that in light of the effects that Covid-19 has had on SICAP in 2020, they are prepared to allow carryover of under-spend up to 10% to 2021. Any under-spend carried forward can only be spent on action costs (both salary and non-salary action costs).

Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020

The Sligo LCDC is the Local Action Group (LAG) with the responsibility for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme (RDP/LEADER) working in partnership with Sligo County Council as Financial Partner and Sligo LEADER Partnership Company as Implementing Partner.

Themes and Budgets

County Sligo Local Development Strategy (2014-2020) (LDS) outlines three main themes that were identified as overarching needs for the county and out of that fall nine sub-themes as follows:

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation	Social Inclusion	Rural Environment
Sub Themes	Sub Themes	Sub Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rural Tourism ➤ Enterprise Development ➤ Rural Towns ➤ Broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Basic Services targeted at hard-to-reach communities ➤ Rural Youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Protection and sustainable use of water resources ➤ Local Biodiversity ➤ Renewable energy
€2.32m	€2.83m	€572,070

The Projects budget is €5.7m broken down as outlined in the table above. In addition, there is a sum of €1.9m provided in the LDS to cover the Administration, Support and Checking needed to deliver the strategy successfully. The overall budget for the RDP Programme 2014-2020 is €7.6m.



Above shows members of the LCDC/LAG, members of SCC, Sligo Leader Partnership, and community at the opening of the Coolaney Astro Turf Pitch & Community Park, funded by RDP programme

The Sligo LAG met 6 times during 2020 and approved a total of 65 projects to the value of €2,595,452.02. These projects cover a wide range of themes from the Local Development Strategy (LDS) including Rural Tourism, Enterprise Development, Basic Services for hard-to-reach communities, Rural Youth and Rural Towns.

Transitional LEADER Programme

On 16th December 2020, the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, T.D., announced an extension to the deadline for approvals under the 2014-2020 programme to 31st March 2021 along with a number of other amendments to the Programme (including Cooperation and LEADER Food Initiative). The Minister also announced funding of €20 million for a Transitional LEADER Programme as committed to in the Programme for Government. The aim of the Transitional LEADER Programme is to allow locally-led rural development projects to continue to be delivered using the current LEADER model until the new EU programme commences in 2023. The new Transitional LEADER Programme will commence on 1st April 2021 and run until 31st December 2022.

A key focus of the Transitional Programme will be on building capacity within communities which have not received LEADER funding to date. The programme will also support job creation, foster and encourage entrepreneurship, and support projects which address the climate agenda, digital transformation and encourage rural communities to build on their existing strengths and assets. Under the Transitional Programme, the grant rate for enterprises and commercial projects will be increased from a maximum of 50% to a maximum of 75% to support enterprise development and job creation in rural areas.

Communities Enhancement Programme

The Department of Rural and Community Development made two tranches of funding available under the Community Enhancement Programme in 2020. The initial general purposes allocation of €56,540 was launched in June and a total of 57 groups shared in this with grants ranging from €500 to €2,500 with the median grant value being €900.

A second tranche was announced in August, aimed specifically at Community Centres and Buildings. The allocation to Sligo LCDC was €116,932. The application window closed on 25th September and recommendations were presented at the LCDC meeting on 29th October 2020. Allocation of funding was approved for 49 community groups.

Support for the Community & Voluntary Sector

The Community and Voluntary Grant Scheme covers a broad range of community activity in the county including support for community led local development. This Scheme supports community groups such as Tidy Towns Committees, Burial Ground Committees, Festival Committees and Organisers of International / National and Local Events in promoting their area and the county in general. The grant scheme creates a great opportunity for communities to benefit from an income source to allow them implement programmes, carry out projects and activities at a local level that otherwise would not be possible. The combination of this fund along with a strong volunteering ethos provides for a “bottom- up” approach to local development and participation. An increased budget of €130,000 was set aside for this initiative in 2020 and 181 committees/groups benefited from the general Scheme this year. In addition, a further category was added to provide for ‘Rural Towns and Villages Christmas Lights’.

Each year sees an increase in interest in the Scheme with a rise in the number of applications received. It is anticipated that this budget will be maintained as a minimum for 2021.



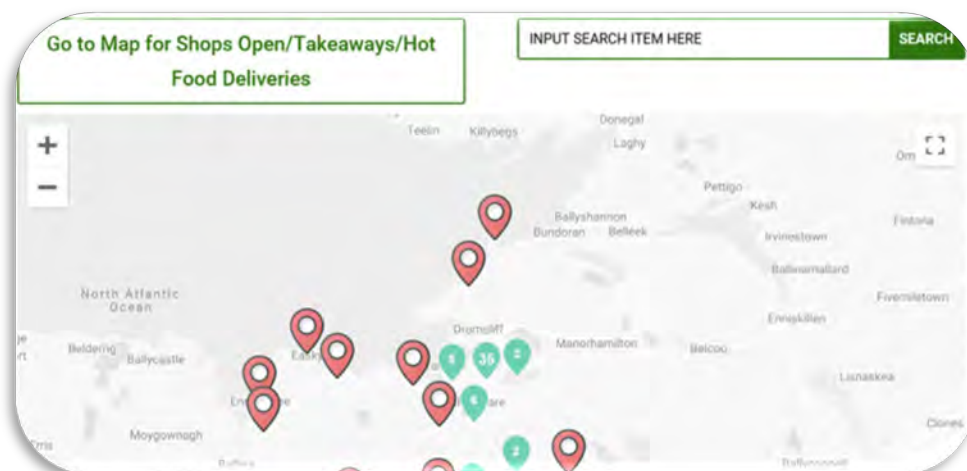
PPN (Public Participation Network)

2020 proved to be an exceptionally busy year for Sligo PPN. While Covid-19 forced the PPN to significantly adapt their work plan, they were able to continue with the majority of the PPN core objectives as well as taking an active role in Sligo's Covid-19 community response programme. The year started working with PPN newly elected community representatives and preparing them for roles across the Strategic Policy Committee (SPCs). The PPN also managed to host the official "Vision for Wellbeing" consultation which is part of a national initiative being rolled out across all PPNs in Ireland. To date over 1,000 people have engaged with and have been consulted on this process in Sligo. The PPN are putting an innovative spin on this vision development by working alongside KidsOwn Publishing to ensure that the voice of children is also captured, and they have an avenue to let decision makers know about their hopes and fears for their futures in Sligo.



Following stringent restrictive measures announced in March, the PPN played a forward role in harnessing the support of over 80 community groups who registered to support the most vulnerable in the community. These groups were mapped and were called upon to assist the Sligo County Council Helpdesk to respond to issues in the community as they emerged.

These groups worked alongside the Sligo County Council Helpdesk to address issues as they emerged in the community and ensure those most at risk received the help they needed. The PPN also replicated this process with local businesses, mapping open services in the county and created a dedicated Covid-19 hub within the PPN website for all relevant and up to date information. The PPN worked closely with Sligo County Council, Sligo Volunteer Centre and Sligo Leader Partnership to put in place a coordinated community response to support community groups and centres to re-open. The StepUpForSligo campaign, highlighting the contribution of the community sector was also a key PPN activity, as well as undertaking a piece of national research with IT Sligo assessing the economic and societal impact of volunteering across Covid-19 lockdown.



Sligo PPN Interactive Map

While many of the PPN's larger scale planned events, such as the PPN Awards and Environment Seminar had to be postponed, the PPN did continue to run a series of online programmes including our environmental series which featured speakers including Professor John Sweeney and Brian Kirwan from DCCAE. The general PPN operations also continued online including Secretariat and community representative meetings as well as National Advisory Group and national Resource workers sessions.

In September 2020 the PPN undertook a needs analysis survey with member groups and the findings from this will inform much of the PPN's work across the end of 2020. Initial actions include the hosting of social media clinics and the development of an education and information programme to support groups to become more environmentally friendly.

From a policy and planning perspective, the PPN has made submissions to the initial national review of SPC's, the Sligo County Council Corporate Plan and the national PPN Structural Review. We have also hosted a series of elections including nominating PPN representatives to the Sligo Disability Consultative Committee and Sligo Leader Partnership Company. By the end of 2020 the PPN will also have run elections for the North West Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force, Sligo Heritage Forum and Sligo Place Names Committee.

On an ongoing basis, the PPN continues to work with groups such as IT Sligo, Comhairle na nÓg and Sligo Intercultural project to try and broaden the reach and appeal of the PPN and to engage typically 'harder to reach' groups into the public participation process.

Age Friendly Programme



Sligo is part of the national Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme, an initiative aimed at making Ireland the best country in the world in which to grow old.

The Sligo Age Friendly Strategy for County Sligo was developed in 2016 and recognises that older people are a valuable resource with huge levels of expertise, experience and resources to assist in the growth and development of the county. While Sligo County Council has taken the leadership role in the development of the strategy, Age Friendly is very much a multi-agency approach, with older people at the core.

Age Friendly Initiatives undertaken in 2020

"Sligo Ageing Well from home exercise" was an initiative developed in April 2020 involving the Sligo Age Friendly Programme in partnership with the HSE Physio Department and Sligo Sports Recreation Partnership in conjunction with the Francie Boylan Show, Ocean Fm. The Programme encouraged Older People to partake in exercises at home alongside the live radio programme at 10.30 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the month of May. The Programme, which was aimed to support these cocooning was accompanied by an easy-to-follow booklet outlining the physio designed exercises encouraging people to do the exercises at home. Community & Economic Development staff dispersed approximately 3,000 leaflets countywide.



Pictured above at the launch of the Ageing well, exercises from Home Programme Cathaoirleach Councillor Tom MacSharry (May 2020), Ciarán Hayes, CE of Sligo County Council, and representatives from Sligo Age Friendly Programme, HSE Physio Department and Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership.

Healthy Ireland

The Healthy Ireland Framework (2019-2025) is a roadmap for building a healthier Ireland and a call to action to improve the Health and Wellbeing of the Irish population through a wide framework of actions that will be undertaken by Government. Its four goals are.

1. To increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life.
2. To reduce health inequalities.
3. To protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing.
4. To create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.



Update on the Healthy Sligo Plan

Under Round 3 of the Healthy Ireland Fund, Sligo LCDC was awarded €246,010 for the development and delivery of a Healthy Sligo Programme. The Healthy Sligo Co-ordinator took up position in August 2020 and the Programme consists in the delivery of 6 main projects under the following themes:

- Physical Health,
- Mental Health,
- Nutrition and
- Spaces and places for Health and Wellbeing.

The projects include:



- Sligo Breast feeding Friendly Project
- Ways to Wellness - Health and Wellness activities for target groups including Older People, New communities, Disadvantaged communities and Unemployed people.
- Social Prescribing
- Stronger for longer – a strength-based exercise programme for older people
- Mental Health Small Grants Scheme and Community Mental Health Action

The Programme has to be delivered by 31st December 2021, having been given an extension by the Department of Health and Pobal in November 2020, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Projects funded under the Programme are currently either underway, or to be delivered in 2021. Projects were reviewed in September 2020 at the request of Pobal and the Department of Health to reposition elements that could be run in a COVID environment. This resulted in project leads considering alternative options to deliver activity to participants, including online delivery and the use of mediums such as radio to reach those who are self-isolating/social distancing.



Pictured above at the launch of the Stronger for Longer Project funded under the LCDC's Healthy Ireland Programme
Left to Right: Shayne Hayes SSRP, Hugh MacConville, Acting Chairperson Sligo LCDC, Paul Toland, Oxfield Community Centre, Deirdre Lavin Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership, Aisling Smyth, Community & Economic Development.

Promotion of the Governments Keep Well Campaign (National and Local)

Healthy Sligo continues to promote the Governments Keep Well Campaign at a local level by promoting initiatives that are in-keeping with the campaign messages through the Councils website <https://www.sligococo.ie/keepwell/> and via social media, the Keep Well campaign is promoted through actions of the Healthy Sligo Plan and also through the actions set out in the Community Resilience Plan. Campaign messages include:



- **Keeping active** - and being outdoors even during the winter is a really good way to improve your mood and is important for your physical wellbeing too.
- **Keeping in contact** - staying connected with people and addressing isolation, as person-to-person connection is important to our wellbeing.
- **Switching off and being creative** - or learning something new, getting back to nature and finding ways to relax can help our general wellbeing.
- **Eating well** - by nourishing your body and mind we can positively impact our physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Managing your mood** - equipping people with information on where to go if they need support

The Sligo Community Resilience Plan:

The Healthy Sligo Team is also responsible for the delivery of Community Resilience Plan. Local Authorities were allocated €67,225.00 under the Community Resilience Fund to activate and deliver on key actions under the themes of “Your County” “Staying Connected” and “Switching off and being creative”. The Sligo Plan was developed by the Healthy Sligo Co-ordinator in collaboration with members of the COVID Community Response Forum. It sets out 16 practical, collaborative actions to be delivered by the extended timeframe of June 2021. Actions under the Plan which will be delivered in include a Virtual Diaspora Christmas Tree and in 2021 a Virtual Cook Along for older People, Live at 3, Acorn Pad Programme for Nursing Homes.



Pictured above at the launch of the Virtual Diaspora Christmas Tree, an initiative of the Community Resilience Fund.
Left to Right: Dorothy Clarke, Director of Services & Chief Officer Sligo LCDC, Marcella McGarry Healthy Sligo Co-ordinator, Aisling Smyth, Community & Economic Development, Councillor Dara Mulvey, Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council and Chair of Sligo LCDC and Des McFadden, Champ Cloud.

PEACE IV

Sligo County Council is currently implementing the Sligo PEACE IV Programme through the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The LCDC established the PEACE IV Sub Committee to oversee the implementation of the Programme. Organisations represented on the PEACE IV Sub Committee include Sligo County Council, Sligo Leader Partnership, Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education & Training Board, An Garda Síochána, the Public Participation Network (PPN), Irish Congress of Trade Unions and minority faiths.



The PEACE IV Programme is managed by the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) and the Sligo Programme with a budget of €979,395 is administered by Sligo County Council. The Programme includes a series of initiatives delivered under the following three themes:

1. Children and Young People
2. Shared Spaces and Services
3. Building Positive Relations

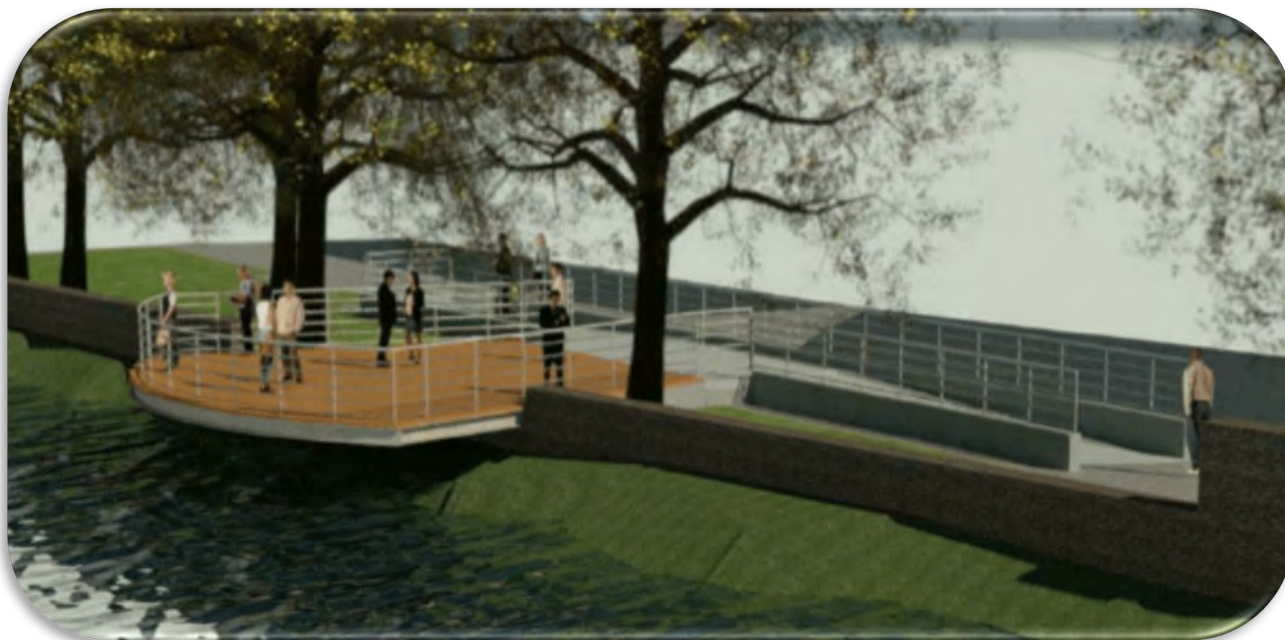
All projects under the Children and Young People theme were completed during 2019. Project activities under this theme were varied and included outdoor activity camps, music, promotion of diversity, active citizenship, community leadership and understanding of The Troubles. By their conclusion, the Projects had engaged a total of 283 individuals which exceeded the target of 243 as set by SEUPB.

The Building Positive Relations theme featured projects focussed on heritage, community placemaking and cross border literary connections. Also, under this theme, the Small Grants Fund has supported five community led peace building projects. This includes provision of funding for the eight stone sentinels which will be the centrepiece of the Great War Memorial Garden being developed by Lest Sligo Forgets at Cleveragh Regional Park, Sligo.



Visual representation of the Great War Memorial Garden approach footpath

As part of the Shared Spaces and Services theme, a cantilever has been constructed at Stephen Street Car Park on the banks of the River Garavogue in Sligo. This shared space will enhance the centre of Sligo and provide the local community and visitors with a meeting place and viewing point accessible to all.



Visual representation of the Cantilever Shared Space at Stephen Street Car Park

The PEACE IV Programme was completed in December 2020. The PEACE PLUS PROGRAMME is currently being developed by SEUPB with a statutory public consultation to follow. SEUPB have confirmed that Local Authority led Peace Action Plans will continue to be a feature in this new programme.

COVID-19 Community Response Forum and Community Call

The Community Call Initiative was announced by the Minister for Housing on Friday 27th March 2020. This saw the establishment of the COVID-19 Community Response Forum, chaired by the Chief Executive which had its inaugural meeting virtually on Sunday, 29th March 2020.



Screen shot of the Community Response Forum meeting in June 2020 with Ciarán Hayes, CE as chair

The purpose of the Forum as a collaborative entity was to lead and co-ordinate the response needed in the unprecedented experience of a world pandemic facing Sligo. It had to consider how best could all the statutory and relevant voluntary agencies come together to meet this immediate need and ensure that all those most vulnerable and most impacted were supported.

It had to build and nurture community resilience. The Forum membership covered agencies from a statutory perspective such as the HSE, the Gardaí, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Tusla, An Post, Local Community Development Committee, Civil Defence, Cranmore Regeneration, and other non-statutory voluntary, and community support organisations such as Sligo Leader Partnership, Public Participation Network, GAA, Sligo Volunteer Centre, Sligo BID, Local Link, Citizens Information, Alone, IFA, Sligo Traveller Support Group, Northside Community partnership, Order of Malta and many more.

Community Support Helpline

In tandem with the establishment of the COVID-19 Community Response Forum, the Community Support Helpline was critically needed to provide a one stop shop to take calls, emails and texts from people in the community who were impacted due to restrictions imposed.

The Corporate, IT and Community sections worked hand in hand and in haste to achieve this goal which was delivered largely from working remotely. The PPN developed a useful databank of community groups mapped geographically to easily identify community and voluntary groups on the ground who were willing to assist callers to the support line from food deliveries, requests for hot food, pharmacy collections and many more queries.



Staff responding to calls on the COVID-19 Community Support helpline

COVID-19 Emergency Fund

In 2020, the Community Section administered the COVID-19 Emergency Fund as a direct measure to assist the community and voluntary groups on the ground with costs involved in being part of the community call which helped support those vulnerable in the community during the pandemic. It also supported with costs incurred by the Community and Voluntary Sector in changing/adapting community settings in pandemic times. The Department of Rural and Community Development made available an Emergency Covid grant scheme in the amount of €63,000 which saw the funding of many groups to provide essential community supports such as PPE, food and fuel requirements.

The grants are towards funding exceptional, once-off costs related to the COVID-19 response work.



Sligo Sews & Masks: North West Sews Masks & Scrubs

Through a team of 40 volunteers has produced over 8,000 face masks and 550 sets of scrubs for front line workers since the onset of the Covid-19 crisis.

They have also provided for local voluntary groups such as the Men's Shed Association and the 'meals on wheels' service run by Sligo Social Services.

Pictured here representing the group are Anne Feehily, Councillor Marie Casserly, Mary Durcan and Jude Mannion (Sligo County Council LCDC office) with the latest batch prepared for the Active Retirement Association.



North West Sews Masks and Scrubs were successful in an application to the emergency fund grant scheme administered by Sligo LCDC and this will allow this great initiative to continue.

Tubbercurry Old Fair Day Committee quickly sprung into action in coming to the aid of vulnerable members of the local community when the Covid-19 crisis began to unfold.

'Care Bags' for distribution were put together and delivered with the assistance of the local Gardaí. These contained some basic provision such as tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits, marmalade, a newspaper etc. Just letting the most vulnerable and isolated people know that they had not been forgotten about. It was the thought behind the bag as opposed to the contents of the bag itself, as one lady commented, 'isn't it lovely to come down and see something left at your door'.

Volunteers when delivering, consciously took the time out to check in on people and have a chat, even if it was from the gate.

Pictured here are Jude Mannion (Sligo County Council LCDC office), Councillor Dara Mulvey, representing Sligo LCDC, local Councillor Paul Taylor, Lisa Maloney from the Old Fair Day Committee and Joan Brett of the local Active Retirement Association.



The role of Joan and the ARA was key in helping identify those most in need.

This initiative was funded by Sligo LCDC through an application to the emergency fund grant scheme.

Gurteen Community Care

Well done to Mary O'Hara and her team in Gurteen Community Care along with local Cllr Paul Taylor for their continued dedication to their local community during these difficult times. The temporary closure of the service due to the Covid-19 restrictions created challenges for the team in looking after the service users. However, (similar to an initiative in neighbouring Tubbercurry), 'care bags' were made up for distribution and thus important contact was maintained.

Acknowledgement also to Myra McCoy and all in Gurteen Active Retirement Association and the important role they play in the community.

This initiative was funded by Sligo LCDC through an application to the emergency fund grant scheme.



Pictured from L-R Jude Mannion (Sligo County Council LCDC office), Councillor Dara Mulvey representing Sligo LCDC, Kathleen Clancy, Councillor Paul Taylor, Mary O'Hara, Carmel Lennon, Packie Feeney and Myra McCoy

Calry Active Retirement Association and Calry St Josephs GAA are just 2 of the 80+ community and voluntary groups across Sligo that signed up to the 'Community Call and Helpline' initiative rolled out by Sligo County Council in response to the massive challenges brought about by the Covid-19 crisis.

Both Sandra, secretary of the GAA club and Chris Davis of CARA have willingly and enthusiastically dealt with many requests for help that the council's helpline has received, in particular from older and vulnerable members of the community.

Here Chris is receiving a batch of specially commissioned Bealtaine postcards from Jude Mannion (Sligo County Council LCDC office).



These follow the old Irish tradition of leaving May flowers at your neighbour's door to bring good luck. Chris personally delivered these to all the Active retirement association members along with the home Exercise booklets also specially developed for older persons during this time. Sandra and her club's team of volunteers responded to several requests to collect shopping, post and prescriptions.

PHIBRO'S GENEROUS DONATION TO COMMUNITY RESPONSE FORUM

The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Tom MacSharry (*Cathaoirleach until AGM in June 2020*) has welcomed the very generous donation of local firm Phibro Animal Health Corporation to Sligo Community Response Forum.

'Their contribution of €5,000 will be of enormous assistance in responding to the COVID-19 challenges in Sligo.'

Sligo LEADER Partnership was contacted in April by Phibro's Ottaline Cawley, who was aware of the Community Champion Programme. Managed by LEADER, this programme delivers a local response to the societal impact of the Coronavirus outbreak.

Phibro were anxious to ensure that their donation reached the heart of the community and would have the most impact during these challenging times. Sligo County Council established the Sligo Community Response Forum as the entity to coordinate COVID-19 related community supports, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and isolated in our community.



Standing from left: Aisling Smyth, Community & Economic Development Section, Sligo County Council; Cathaoirleach Councillor Tom MacSharry; Chief Executive Ciarán Hayes

Seated from left: Donna Taaffe, Community Champion/Sligo Leader; Ottaline Cawley, Phibro; June Murphy, Acting CEO Sligo Leader



The Sligo Economic Forum



The work of the Sligo Economic Forum (SEF) continues to centre around supporting, co-ordinating and promoting Sligo as a place to do business, to live, invest and visit. 2019 saw the launch of the new overarching Brand identity for Sligo and further progressed with developing a Marketing and Communications strategy supporting the brand. The SEF engaged with various stakeholders in developing Sligo specific messaging, centered upon the themes **Live**, **Invest** and **Visit**.



Sligo: One Voice One Vision - Towards 2030 (Sligo 2030)

The Sligo Economic Forum in conjunction with the Council hosted a delegation from the JASPERS European programme in 2020 and collaboratively discussed the strategic planning of a 10-year strategy for Sligo entitled *One Voice One Vision: Sligo 2030*. Sligo is nominated as a pilot town under this programme where supports will be provided in developing this strategic plan for the county. The JASPERS programme will also offer an advisory support in availing of opportunities around availing of EU funding.

The Council, working in partnership with Sligo Economic Forum and Sligo Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), intends to put in place an overarching countywide Strategic Framework to guide the development of all of County Sligo over next 10 years.

'Sligo: One Voice One Vision - Towards 2030' (Sligo 2030 Plan) will act as an integrated multi-sectoral strategy based on the principles of smart sustainable development, economic and environmental sustainability, be climate change responsive and create an equitable society that will be socially inclusive. The ambition is to place County Sligo at the forefront of smart technology utilisation, using its benefits to enable successful implementation of the climate action agenda, develop economic activity in Sligo and the North West region, improve social inclusion and create an environment which is an attractive place in which to live and work. The objective is to develop Sligo into a Smart City and County with the aim of realising energy efficient neighbourhoods, clean mobility and integration of current infrastructures. This will be achieved by working collaboratively with businesses, knowledge institutions and citizens while capitalizing on the potential of ICT, and the capability of using data analytics from smart technology to provide the information and processes which enables the ongoing improvement of all aspects of our city and county for the benefit of its citizens.

The process is currently commencing with the preferred bidder KPMG to develop the strategy which will also form the new Sligo Local Economic and Community Plan.

Atlantic Economic Corridor

The Atlantic Economic Corridor concept is an initiative developed by Government to maximise scale for the region from Kerry to Donegal with a shared goal to create a unified, connected and competitive Atlantic economic corridor. This initiative builds on the input of geographical, sectoral and thematic interests with the aim of building a brighter and sustainable future for the region and specifically for Sligo. It proposes to combine infrastructure, talent, tourism, smart technology and enterprise assets, and involve economic hubs, clusters and catchments to attract investment, improve competitiveness, support job creation, and offer of an improved quality of life.



The Sligo Economic Forum supports the outputs of the Atlantic Economic Corridor which will adopt a project-based structure into the future. The AEC has successfully mapped 277 enterprise spaces along the western seaboard and work is progressing in forming a cohesive strategy for the Enterprise hubs available in each participating county. The AEC issued an open call for funding for Remote Working Hubs. The aim was to assist hubs in taking the necessary measures to support and equip them to ensure they comply with guidelines on social distancing and rules relating to workplace layouts due to Covid-19 and to support them into the future to move on to become key locations on the corridor as successful work and business locations. Five Hubs applied in Sligo and were successful in obtaining funding.

The Smart Village Pilot Project was launched under the AEC structure in September 2020. The aim of this project, funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, is to develop a number of pilots villages that will provide smart solutions to key regional challenges that have been identified within the regional development policy framework. Sligo County Council submitted an application in conjunction with community leaders of the Smart Community in Tubbercurry and in early December received confirmation that our application had been successful. Funding of €29,779 will provide for a smart education suite and a virtual shop front in Tubbercurry.

The AEC Hubs - ICT systems project is being carried out by the Western Development Commission in conjunction with AEC Officers. An online platform is being developed to provide websites, booking engines and online networking facilities for all AEC Hubs who are participating.

Back to Business campaign

In conjunction with other business and Council initiatives as a result of the impact of Covid-19, the economic unit ran a 'Back to Business campaign' in mid-2020 to promote the effort that businesses were making through their own efforts and grant assistance and supports.

The following initiatives were undertaken:

Website

A new landing page developed on Sligo.ie with full directory of suite of supports available to businesses.

All supports documented under 4 categorises:

1. Guidance and Information
2. Financial and Enterprise
3. Industry reports
4. Evidence based resources

A series of newspaper articles on leadership and introduction to the campaign (CE, Sligo Economic Forum chair and Cathaoirleach) plus rural focus on Ballymote, Outdoor recreation businesses supported by LEO: Sligo Surf Experience/Island View Riding Stables, Pudding Row opening new cafe plus focus on BID member businesses opening up and their experiences under Covid and focus on staycation in Sligo/Tourism plus promotion of the Hubs (business and innovation and how AEC fund can assist).

Social Media

Tying in with Website content and directory plus video clips, testimonials and images arising out of the articles on businesses availing of supports etc and also using some of the original branding footage released on all social channels. (facebook, twitter, Instagram, youtube).



@SligoLiveInvestVisit



@SligoLiveInvestVisit



@Sligo



@SligoLiveInvestVisit

Ocean FM

Interviews on Ocean FM, to promote the supports available and relay practical examples of businesses availing of the supports eg Tourism, Fáilte Ireland for getting Back to Business.



A range of articles and images were generated during the campaign including Sligo Surf experience.



Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council, Councillor Dara Mulvey acknowledges the challenges facing rural towns getting back to business as he meets with the Manager of the Coach House Hotel, Ballymote, Patrick Ward

Enterprising Towns Awards

Sligo has entered the Bank of Ireland Enterprising Towns awards competition for a number of consecutive years and has been improving its position steadily. In 2020 we entered again and was very successful in reaching the last 2 towns in its population category. The competition this year had a particular Covid-19 slant and the number of applications was very high this year so Sligo was pleased to be a finalist. The presentation for the adjudication was on-line and took the form of an extensive collaborative effort under the aegis of the Council and the Economic Forum and involved video content with some speakers present in City Hall Chamber covering a range of topics from investment to education to community support. The engagement with the private sector and a multiplicity of agencies is key, all partnering and assisting in presenting Sligo as an all-round desirable and enterprising place in which to live.



Taken during the Presentation made to the Assessors under the Enterprising Towns Begin Together Awards 2020 in which Sligo took runner up prize

Sligo: Live Invest Visit Brand Marketing campaign

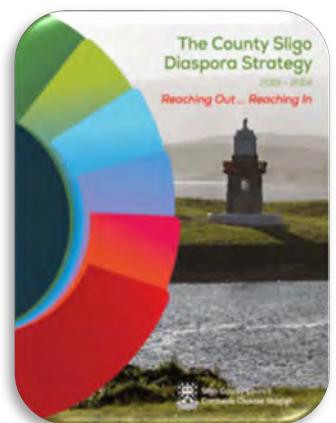
Sligo County Council are working with Bua Consulting following a competitive quote process to develop a Sligo Brand promotional campaign consisting of a suite of 4 videos, 6 articles and 30 new images to provide content to Sligo.ie and to promote the Sligo Live/invest/visit branding initiative to support Sligo's aim to become a world class destination to live, invest or visit.

The intention is that this material will go towards targeting families, professionals, creatives, and innovators to entice them to make Sligo their home, their location to visit or invest. It is to attract and encourage start-up businesses and investors to establish or expand operations in Sligo as a progressive destination to fulfil the needs of the great escapers, culturally curious and business development and investment.

County Sligo Diaspora Strategy 2019-2024

Sligo like many other counties has a large Diaspora world-wide who keep a keen interest in what is happening at 'home'. This resource has been largely untapped yet offers wonderful potential in expanding our opportunities. These relationships will be critical in achieving the social, economic and community development potential of the county.

The Strategy was launched in 2019 and was widely welcomed. The Diaspora became an important sector in our society in the circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic as many of our 'wider family' were unable to return home. The Council engaged in a 'Back home to Sligo' project whereby speakers were invited to generate content for Sligo.ie from amongst those who returned to Sligo to base themselves here as a result of the Pandemic.



In addition, the Council supported Comhaltas develop a Diaspora music project telling the story of well-known Sligo traditional musicians who emigrated to the US developing with a trans-Atlantic dimension which linked Sligo with its Diaspora community in the US through music and storytelling.

The Council in conjunction with the community and other partners has implemented a number of actions to deliver on the Diaspora Strategy so far and will continue to do so.

Tourism Development

Sligo County Council's ongoing collaboration with Sligo Tourism Ltd. and the broad range of stakeholders engaged in the promotion and development of County Sligo as a premier tourism visitor destination continues. This targeted and collaborative approach will harness public and private resources to support Sligo's aim to develop as a key tourism destination situated on the Wild Atlantic Way.



The continuing investment in tourism infrastructure and the growth in visitor numbers acts as an economic driver to the region, while also reinforcing important social and cultural benefits locally.

Sligo Tourism, supported by Sligo County Council and the Rural Development (LEADER) programme, have progressed plans in developing their Digital Media engagement with significant increase in website traffic and online social media presence. Work is continuing in the development of content creation and their latest promotional video was well received.

The County Sligo Tourism Strategy 2018-2023 was developed collaboratively by Sligo County Council and Sligo Tourism Ltd and aims to be an inclusive and strategic roadmap that will guide the development and direction of the industry in the county. It was approved by Sligo County Council in February 2018 and was officially launched in March 2018 and is currently being implemented.

The Strategy sets out 4 Strategic Priorities to be delivered over the lifetime of the Programme namely:

1. Product and Experience Development
2. Marketing and Communications
3. Industry and Capability Development
4. Leadership and Collaboration

To deliver on these Strategic Priorities a number of key objectives, initiatives and actions are set out. These include a concentrated focus on developing the Yeats Theme as the main theme /attractor for tourism in County Sligo both from a product and marketing point of view. This theme is selected on the basis that it can give County Sligo a Market Differentiation leading to advantage that cannot be copied. The Plan also focuses on developing a second tier of thematic experiences and attractors selected based on their relative strength and ability to capture visitors and offer compelling experiences. In this respect, they are:

- Outdoor Adventure
- Archaeology and history and
- Culture and Creativity.

The International Marketing of Ireland's North West focusing on Sligo, Donegal and Mayo

The Council is embarking on a joint project with Mayo and Donegal in the area of International Tourism marketing. Funding has been secured through the Rural dev LEADER programme's Co-operation fund to carry out a feasibility study to examine how the region can encourage more international tourists to come north of Galway on the Wild Atlantic Way to the beautiful North West.

Having carried out full research and mapping on the current landscape, identifying gaps and opportunities, a road map for the region is to be developed along best practice for the future. The outcome is to develop a joint strategy to inform the development of international marketing of the NW offering and work in consultation with key tourism stakeholders across the 3 counties to provide an evidence-based strategy accompanied by a plan of action and priorities.

The region is keen to avail of current LEADER funding as part of the new Transitional programme.

Festivals and Events

There are many festivals held on an annual basis in County Sligo from local festivals engrained in the community with a varying level of attraction for visitors to the larger festivals and events held which attract a substantial audience. All however provide a variety of colour to the community and bring people together.

Development of new festivals to act as economic attractors for Sligo is a key part of Tourism development



Events of this scale have the potential to attract visitors to an area and are a generator of income for that area, along with being a driver to instil civic pride in its inhabitants. In 2020, Festivals across the county revised their offer and were supported via a number of grant schemes including the Community and Voluntary Grants and the County Sligo Regional Festivals and Participative Events Scheme, the Contribution to the Arts scheme, the Creative Ireland fund and the LEADER programme. The County Sligo Tourism Strategy 2018-2023 looks at the concept of developing 6–7 larger events that demonstrate a uniqueness and ability to attract bed nights (overseas preferable) and grow business at off peak times.

The Council in conjunction with Sligo Leader Partnership is developing a Festival and Events Strategy for County Sligo. The strategy endeavours to provide a framework and set of recommendations to help deliver on the key findings of the Tourism strategy by supporting and prioritising the strengths that Sligo has in its Festivals offer in order to secure and attract further visitors to the county. The onset of Covid-19 has dramatically affected the holding of festival and events over 2020 and 2021 which also has delayed implementation of elements of the Tourism strategy and the finalisation of this festivals and events strategy.

Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way's acknowledged success and improved visitor numbers continues to attract visitors to the area as a result. Sligo has seven Discovery Points along the route; Enniscrone, Easkey, Aughris, Strandhill, Rosses Point, Streedagh and Mullaghmore. Mullaghmore has 'Signature Discovery Point' status, allied to its spectacular seascape backdrop, 'Big Wave' surfing phenomenon, Classibawn Castle and Ben Bulbin mountain backdrop. Improvements will continue at these locations to ensure the visitor experience is consistent with other Wild Atlantic Way locations. A Sligo Destination Development Plan commenced in 2020 and will be concluded in 2021 which will inform future strategic tourism priorities and investments.



Tourism Capital Projects

The successful application submitted to Fáilte Ireland's Large Tourism Projects Capital Scheme for Stage 2 (Delivery Stage) secured €2.5m to deliver the development of a Cultural Plaza/Civic Space in Stephen Street Car Park in commencing in 2021.



Artists impression of the Cultural Plaza/Civic Space in Stephen Street Car Park

This couples with URDF Funding of €750,000 and a further €91,000 match cash funding provided by Sligo County Council.

The funding application under Tourism Destination Town Capital Investment Programme 2019 for Enniscrone as Tourism Destination Town was also successful with €500,000 secured alongside a further €167,000 in Council Match Funding. Design development is currently underway.



Additional funding under Fáilte Ireland's Platforms for Growth is currently programmed for 2021, with Sligo County Council positioned to secure in excess of €500,000, following application submission in 2021. Additional cash match funding may be secured for delivery of this scheme.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund

Successful applications in 2020 for funding under Category 2 for

1. Tubbercurry; awarded €222,000
2. Enniscrone; awarded €131,000

are currently in design development, with the intent to progress the application to Category 1 in pursuance of delivery stage funding

Yeats Trail

This project received funding award under RRDF Category 1 of €500,000 with ongoing delivery implementation projected for 2021.

Adventure Tourism

Adventure products continue to grow in popularity and Sligo County Council supports many exciting opportunities throughout the year; Maritime Centre redevelopment at Strandhill, Off-road National Mountain Biking Centre on the Ox Mountains near Coolaney in conjunction with Coillte.

Recreational trails delivered in 2020 include, Aughris Head, Knocknashee, Roughly and Lady Ann Trail at Clogherevagh (at St. Angela's).



Recreational trails at Knocknashee, Roughly and the Lady Ann Walk at Cloghereevagh

Greenways

Sligo County Council is currently pursuing two cycleway /Greenways:

These cycleways are:

- Recreational walking/ cycle trail along the Western Greenway from Collooney to Bellaghy, along the closed Western Railway Corridor in Co. Sligo.

A successful application to the Carbon Tax Fund 2020 secured an award of €300,000 in 2020. Feasibility/design work will be undertaken with this funding in pursuit of attaining planning permission to develop a further application to the Department in 2021



- Recreational walking/ cycle trail along the SLNCR (Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway) from Sligo to Enniskillen in Co. Fermanagh.

Leitrim County Council as the lead partner on this project secured funding in excess of €500,000 from the Carbon Tax Fund 2020 to advance progress on a potential greenway on the SLNCR.

Pride of Place

Local communities throughout the county are encouraged to showcase their achievements and have participated in the IPB Pride of Place competition held in association with Co-operation Ireland since its inception in 2004. Entries are accepted in either population categories or single-issue categories and Sligo County Council supports entrants in their preparation for and during judging day. The competition fosters community participation and highlights the importance of communities working together to create civic pride in their area.

In 2020, Achonry-Mullinabreena Community Enhancement Group (Creative Place Initiative) and Ballygawley Community Park – on behalf of Ballygawley and Ballintogher (Population 1,000 – 2,000) represented the county in the competition.

In 2021 community groups will again be supported to enter and represent the county in this All-Island competition.



Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Dara Mulvey visited the members of Achonry-Mullinabreena Enhancement Committee to present them with their IPB Pride of Place 2020 Award in the 'Creative Place' category

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Sligo County Council is working with partner Counties Donegal and Mayo, to develop an International Marketing Strategy for the North West. The Strategy will focus on the North West region in attracting both domestic and overseas visitors. Funding is now in place under the Leader Co-Operation fund to carry out a feasibility study and plans are progressing in completing the overall application.



The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is the first-stop-shop for those entrepreneurs starting a small business or expanding an existing one. It provides an integrated support service focusing on the needs of small businesses from the Council's offices in City Hall. Since Covid-19, its training supports continue to be delivered online to clients. Likewise, the vast majority of meetings between LEO staff and clients have been conducted online. Online delivery is set to remain a significant component of the way LEO business is conducted going forward (and is an approach the LEO had been progressing prior to Covid-19).

Face to face training and other engagement from our Offices/training rooms in City Hall will also form part of that offering, given its advantages in terms of the learning that accrues from real-world networking of LEO clients.

Supports provided include training, mentoring, financial assistance, advice, counselling and promotion of an enterprise culture (including through programmes run in schools). The LEO also signposts clients to the Council's other business-related services and to business-related services operated by other agencies. Covid-19 saw the introduction of a number of additional Government supports for small businesses. In particular, *Business Continuity Vouchers* were made available to provide consultancy to business owner managers on how to sustain their businesses through the pandemic. 282 applications were received of which 207 were approved under this scheme, with the remainder offered other forms of support. In an effort to assist businesses start to trade online or to increase their existing online sales efforts, the LEO approved 273 *Trading Online Vouchers* and has also provided a range of complimentary training and mentoring programmes on doing business online.

As well as Covid-19, 2020 also involved a range of additional LEO programmes introduced to help businesses deal with the potential consequences of Brexit. Workshops were run on topics ranging from customs documentation to supply chain, potential implications on costs of materials, exporting to Britain post-Covid, and so on. While agreement between the EU and Britain was reached which will avoid a "hard Brexit" and, thus, the worst possible outcome for businesses, the implications of Brexit require further LEO supports into 2021.

The LEO assists broader economic development through, for example, the advancement of tourism, workspace and city centre developmental activities. In those regards, it was heavily involved with IDA Ireland and IT Sligo in the development of the *Landing Space*, which comprises ultra-modern office space for indigenous and external businesses looking to set up a base in Sligo. The LEO played a key role, with IT Sligo, in sourcing funding for an Industry 4.0 facility to be located in the Council premises in Market Yard. With a working title of *Digital Manufacturing Futures Centre*, it will specialise in logistics, provide services in all matters related to industry 4.0 and help advance Sligo's growing reputation in matters ICT. It will also contribute to the Council's objectives of smart city status for Sligo and feed into the achievement of some of the objectives of its Digital Strategy.

Broader economic development is also assisted through the LEO's membership of relevant local development bodies such as Sligo Business Improvement District (of which Councillor Gibbons and the Head of Enterprise are both directors), the Sligo Local Community Development Committee/Local Action Group and the Economic Forum. The LEO is represented on Boards and Committees of developmental bodies such as Sligo County Enterprise Fund Limited in Strandhill, the Tubbercurry Development Company Limited and Enniscrone Leisure Company Ltd. which operates Waterpoint, a key asset for Enniscrone. An application for funding for upgrades to Waterpoint (tracial roof membrane, PV panels to reduce energy consumption and improve the facility's carbon footprint and other works) was also spearheaded by the LEO.

At a cross-border and international level, the LEO's activities include sourcing/partnering for external funding (e.g. Co-Innovate Programme, a cross-border programme with InterTradelreland as lead partner geared towards promoting business efficiency and cross-border trade). Furthermore, together with colleagues in Mayo, Roscommon and Clare local authorities, the LEO is involved in an initiative aimed at fostering trade and business between Pennsylvania and this region. While this initiative was substantially put on hold in the Covid-19 context, it resumed prior to year's end using online channels. The LEO also promotes the Enterprise Europe Network initiative, under which businesses are facilitated in making international connections.

The Office is also involved in driving a number of Government initiatives locally. It works closely with Micro Finance Ireland on promotion of its loan offering to small businesses. The Office has been very successful in attracting external funding which, together with contributions from the Council and local contributions, has and continues to enable a broad range of projects in the areas of rural recreation, town and village enhancement and improvements to vantage points along the Wild Atlantic Way.

A significant element of the LEO's micro-enterprise funding is provided by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, co-funded by the European Union and channelled through Enterprise Ireland, which also provides key back-up expertise and assistance. In addition, an element of the Office's funding is made available through the Council. It normally generates income from training fees and from a refundable element of some grants advanced (also suspended as a small part of its response to Covid-19). It also sources funding from external funders such as competitive national and EU programmes and assists where possible other relevant organisations with their applications for such funding.



SLIGO STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS TAKE SECOND PLACE IN 2020 NATIONAL FINAL

In May 2020, for the first time since the Student Enterprise Programme began in 2003, the National Finals took place online, delivered by YouTube Live Streaming Podcast.

Originally scheduled for Croke Park Conference Centre on the 1st May, the winners of the Local Enterprise Office run awards were announced virtually on the Student Enterprise Programmes Facebook and YouTube channels.

In the Junior Category, second place went to “Bee Wrappi” from Summerhill College in Sligo, a first-year team under the tutelage of Business Teacher Ms. Dervilla Casey and supported in their endeavours by School Principal Paul Keogh. BEE-Wrappi, founded in early 2020, are a student enterprise company selling premium quality wraps which are a reusable, washable, and sustainable alternative to single use plastic and cling film.



Four Students, Thibaud Gerard, Ben O’Loughlin, Patrick Donlon and Mark Waldron are the founders of the BEE Wrappi business, with an extensive passion for saving the planet and reducing our plastic usage. They came up with their business idea, researched and prototyped their product, and with favourable trials under their belt, went into full production and sales at the beginning of the year.

The students and teachers from across the country logged online to the event hosted by RTE’s Rick O’Shea and he was joined during the ceremony by previous winners and Student Entrepreneur Programme Ambassador, Josh Van Der Flier. The rugby star previously took part in the initiative when he was a student at Wesley College in Dublin.

Local Enterprise Office Sligo delivers the Student Enterprise Programme (SEP) across the county every year, and supplies a business mentor and co-ordinator to each participating school throughout the school year.

John Reilly, Head of Enterprise, Sligo County Council, commented: “Congratulations to BEE Wrappi and to Ms. Dervilla Casey on their National Award in the SEP. To win second prize in the country in a competition with over 20,000 participants is a wonderful achievement. We are delighted to have Sligo represented on the national stage by these talented young entrepreneurs. I’d also like to thank our SEP Co-ordinator, Mr. Brian Dolan for all his efforts to ensure the Programme was completed in County Sligo, despite all the challenges posed by Covid-19”.

OPERATION OF LIBRARY AND ARCHIVAL SERVICE

Sligo Libraries rural branches are vital cogs for all members of the community, offering a free inclusive service of book and AV lending, events and activities, as well as PC and Wi-Fi access, printing and online services.

Services during the first quarter were halted when the global pandemic was declared. During periods when branches were closed, events were delivered online and use of eServices increased. As Libraries were deemed an essential service and reopened during Phase 2 (June 2020) of the Government Road Map, Library management and staff prepared for this throughout late April and May.

Visits to Library branches	56,359	32% decrease on 2019
Issues Overall	127,846	63% decrease on 2019
Issues Physical	57,886	34% decrease on 2019
Issues Online	69,960	140% increase on 2019

Library eServices:

Digital skills classes, customer service via telephone/email, combined with promotion on social media resulted in Sligo Libraries having the second highest use of BorrowBox nationally per population size.

- 11,236 eBooks borrowed through BorrowBox
- 12,856 eAudiobooks borrowed through BorrowBox
- 8,603 digital magazines borrowed through RBDigital
- 198,060 newspaper articles accessed through Press Reader
- 5,577 eLearning lessons taken through Universal Class
- 1,884 eLanguage learning sessions taken through Transparent Languages

COVID-19 Response

In response to Health and Safety guidelines, works were carried out in all branches to allow for a safe re-opening in June 2020.

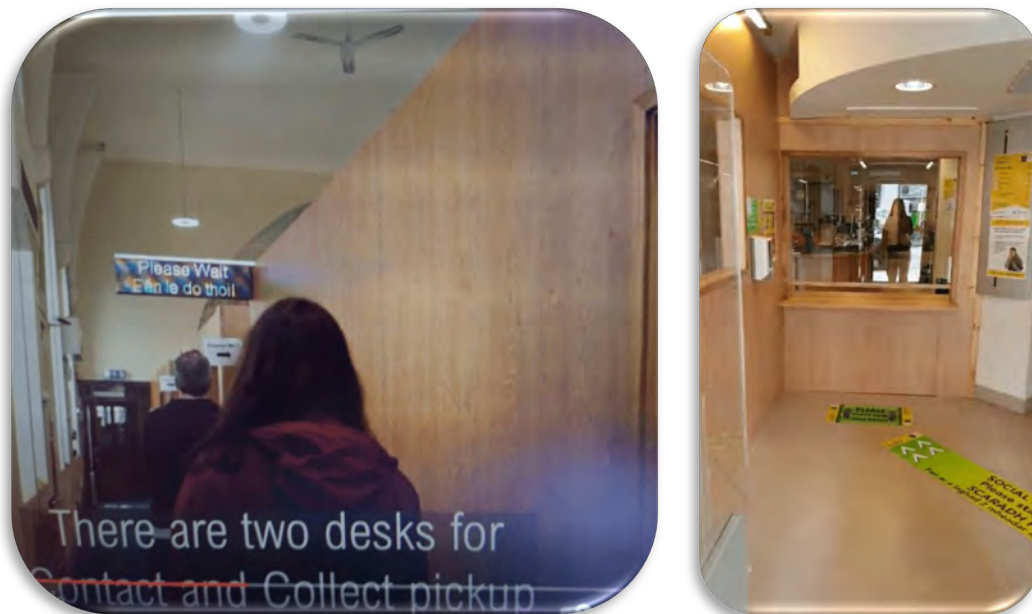
A process of quarantining of stock was put in place as a mark of quality to ensure the safety of users and staff and to instil a sense of confidence in our customers.

Sligo Central Library

To ensure the safety of library users and staff, a partition wall with screened counter hatches and a queueing system was created in Sligo Central Library in June of this year.

The challenges of serving a large footfall which averaged over 400 visits per day with limited floor space, and the need to facilitate social distancing for staff and users, presented a unique and difficult problem to be resolved in a relatively small building.

In order to avoid turning away users or have them queue outside for long periods, an access and egress route was created which allowed users to queue in the shelter of the building itself.



Ballymote Community Library

An internal lobby with a screened counter hatch was created in Ballymote Library adding to the existing porch. The porch became the waiting area whilst our customers were served in the new lobby.

Further works are underway to adapt this porch area to ensure safe public PC access when appropriate public health and safety guidelines allow.

Tubbercurry Community Library

An internal lobby with counter service hatch was created in Tubbercurry Library directly inside the 'Open Library' door. This newly demarcated internal area became a waiting area whilst our customers were served at the new service point hatch.

Further works commenced in Tubbercurry Community Library in 2020 to build a new meeting room and public toilet within the library Area. This will greatly enhance and benefit the service, particularly for users of our Open Library Service.

Enniscrone Branch Library

A newly created internal screened counter hatch was created in Enniscrone Library inside the existing porch. The porch became the waiting area whilst our customers were served at the new counter hatch.

Further Library enhancement works are planned, supported by the Department funding allocated to Sligo County Council under the Public Libraries Small Scale Capital Works Programme.

Customer Focus

The design of all structures allows users to view the collection from the many windows and the large hatches where they can collect items that are safely quarantined and receive help from our expert staff in selecting new material.

In June 2020 the Newsread service was re-established. This facilitates borrowers requesting stock from the National Library Management System from any Library Authority in the Republic.

Given the disruption to our services from March to June 2020, engagement remained strong both in-branch when restrictions allowed and online throughout the various levels of restrictions.

Community Engagement Online

All services moved online in March 2020 in accordance with Government guidelines.

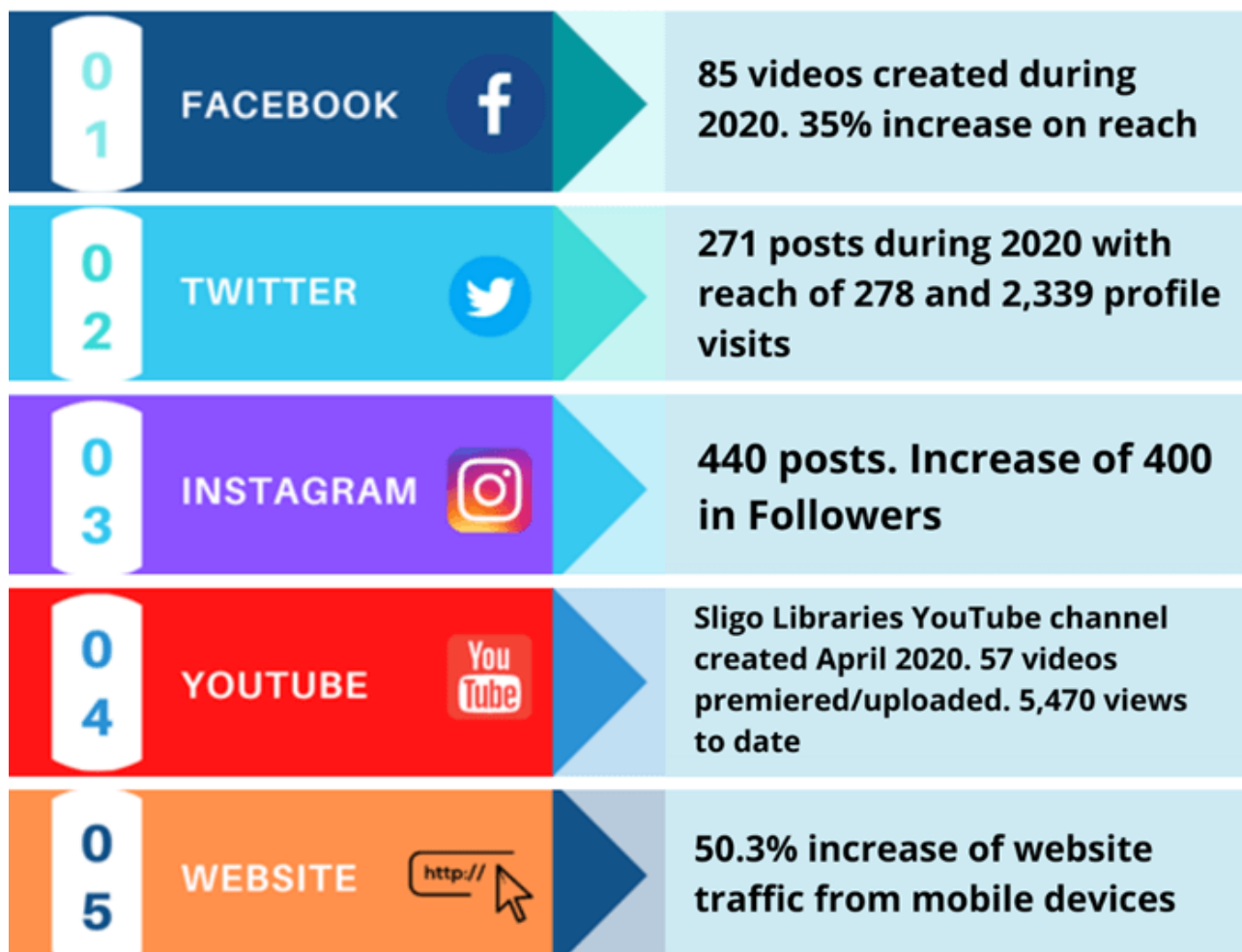
- Weekly story-time sessions online
- The Word monthly literary event
- Craft workshops online
- Baby sign-language classes
- Digital skills classes
- Online Decade of Centenaries lectures
- Online launches
- Story-times and book clubs for schools
- Presentations to secondary schools online
- Regular content updates across all social media platforms
- Sligo Library You Tube channel created where all video recordings can be accessed after the events

After wide ranging library operations running throughout the 1st quarter of 2020, library staff quickly adapted to working under the public health guidelines and undertook a series of bodies of work during lockdown.

- Training and roll out of Sugar CRM
- Community Call Help Line
- Cataloguing new material and donations
- Repair and renewal of existing stock
- Branch telephones transferred during lockdown
- Responding to customer queries by telephone and email
- Continuous Professional Development and up-skilling through online courses
- Designated staff continued to attend branches to process returned items through our quarantined returns system
- Planning and coordinating online events
- Social media updates and content creation



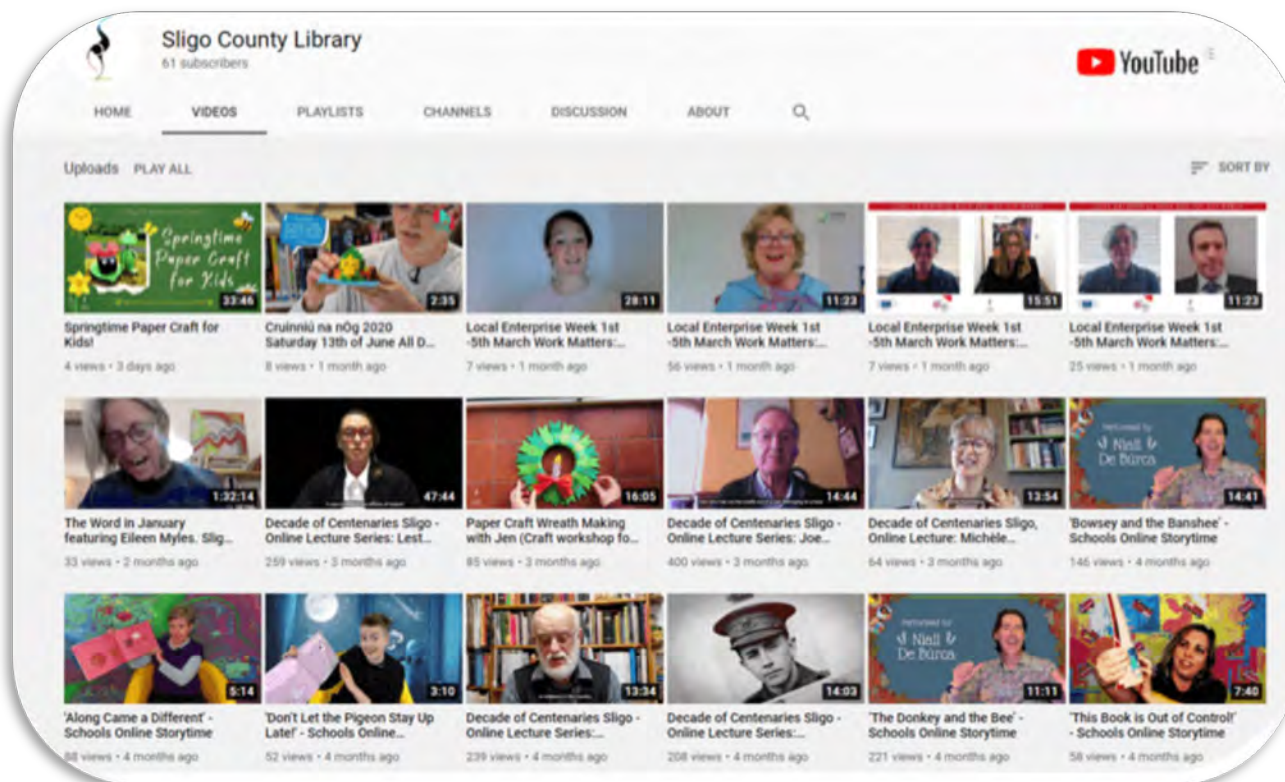
Libraries Social Media



A high level of content required regular updates during the pandemic and a team of Library staff was tasked with this.

The Sligo Libraries YouTube channel was created to house all videos and allow recorded events to be watched back.

A positive response has been received from the public regarding events for children and adult, free online service with assistance in accessing those and the variety of services and events available during all levels of restrictions.



First Quarter 2020

During the first quarter of 2020 Sligo Central Library introduced a new service The Hublet, a dock of six Android tablets available for Library Patrons to use in branch accessing free Wi-Fi.

Events during the first quarter included:

- Story time -Toddle Time, Pre-School and Primary School Class visits
- The Word monthly literary event in collaboration with Staff and students of the BA (Hons) Writing and Literature, IT Sligo
- Dyslexia Association Sligo weekly workshops
- Juvenile Book Club for schools
- Lunch time Chair Yoga classes
- Workshops with invited schools
- Digitalise the Nation digital skills classes
- Tráth Na gCeist
- Post-Primary School Induction Night presentations



Libraries Open Day February 2020

Sligo Libraries participated in the first national Open Day on Saturday 29th February 2020 with activities running throughout our branches. Library Patrons enjoyed the fun on the day with many families coming to join for the first time.

An outside broadcast with Ocean Fm ran from Sligo Central Library. There were children's events, competitions and prizes for everyone lucky enough to get a Golden ticket.



Sligo Libraries delivered the Right to Read programme during 2020, a national programme to promote literacy and reading development.

In order to do this throughout the pandemic, all events moved online for the 4 elements of the programme.



	Spring into Storytime	Summer Stars
Total Facebook views:	5,836	74,261
Total Instagram views:	264	1436
Total Facebook engagement (likes, shares, comments)	2,268	4,824
Total Instagram engagement:	8	6,990



	Children's Book Festival	Family Time at Your Library
Total number of online events organised:	22	6
Total participation / viewing of events:	330	306

Summer Stars

Reading was encouraged with Borrowbox, Contact and Collect and Counter service available. Events and competitions ran online.

- Sligo Library Competitions
 - Photo competition – Book you like
 - Write a short poem
 - Who is your favourite character/what is your favourite place in a book?
 - My favourite person is....
- National Competitions with Libraries Development LGMA
 - Story Competition “An Unexpected Adventure”
- 82% issues per Child Population
- 152 children entered competitions
- 46 prizes were awarded to children throughout County Sligo



Children's Book Festival 2020 - Sligo Libraries Story-telling Pilot Project

Following Health and Safety guidelines around Covid-19, and subsequent works to reconfigure the Library spaces, events could not take place in Libraries. This impacted the numbers usually attending and in particular Primary School classes.

In order to continue promoting literacy in children and encouraging young readers to borrow from the Library, a pilot programme was devised in collaboration with Community run after-school clubs. Lively, interactive story-telling events ran with Primary School age children in the following centres:

- Northside Community Centre, Forthill
- Bright Mind's, Avalon Centre, Chapel Street
- Kid's Lane, MCR Community Centre, Mail Coach Road
- Sligo Springboard Family Support Service, Resource House, Cranmore
- Dreamchaser's, Merville Community Centre, Maugheraboy

The success of this pilot, with positive feedback from staff and children, led to additional Christmas themed story-telling sessions taking place in the after-school clubs during December 2020.

Schools

Following the first quarter, all events moved online with deliveries to schools continuing by arrangement.

- Digital Skills classes for Post-Primary schools were delivered online with Library staff offering instructions to Library Apps and the range of free Library eServices
- 14 presentations to Post-Primary schools - Sligo Libraries recorded the highest nationally in LGMA evaluation
- Books in a Box ran throughout the year - Teachers requesting specific material and/or staff picks delivered safely to schools by arrangement
- Class Sets delivered to schools – Multiple copies of Class Novel
- CBI Mind Yourself Reading Guides, bookmarks, stickers and posters delivered to all Primary Schools in October 2020
- Contact maintained with schools with email updates
- Online Primary and Post Primary Book Clubs



SOS Schools Online Storytelling

This programme produced 8 online story time sessions, with titles selected and read by a staff member. Schedules and reminders were sent to all Primary Schools. Online story times ran twice weekly, over a 4-week period in November and December 2020.

The 'SOS' programme was attended by 121 classes from 41 Primary Schools throughout the county. The SOS stories are now available on Sligo Libraries YouTube Channel for schools and parents to view at their convenience.



Teachers commented the 'SOS' programme brought the Library to the classroom and was one of the positives during the pandemic.

Healthy Ireland

During 2020 Healthy Ireland at your Libraries brought many of its events online, including Yoga classes during lock down.

Grant allocations from the Department totalling €5,000 was utilised to assist the library to continue to provide our Healthy Ireland events with the new restrictions that the pandemic has necessitated. High quality Vlogging cameras, portable lighting, wireless microphones, speakers and software were purchased to help library staff make online content.



Training for staff in the use the new equipment is ongoing to ensure that vital Library services continue to reach those who need them.

Creative Ireland 2020

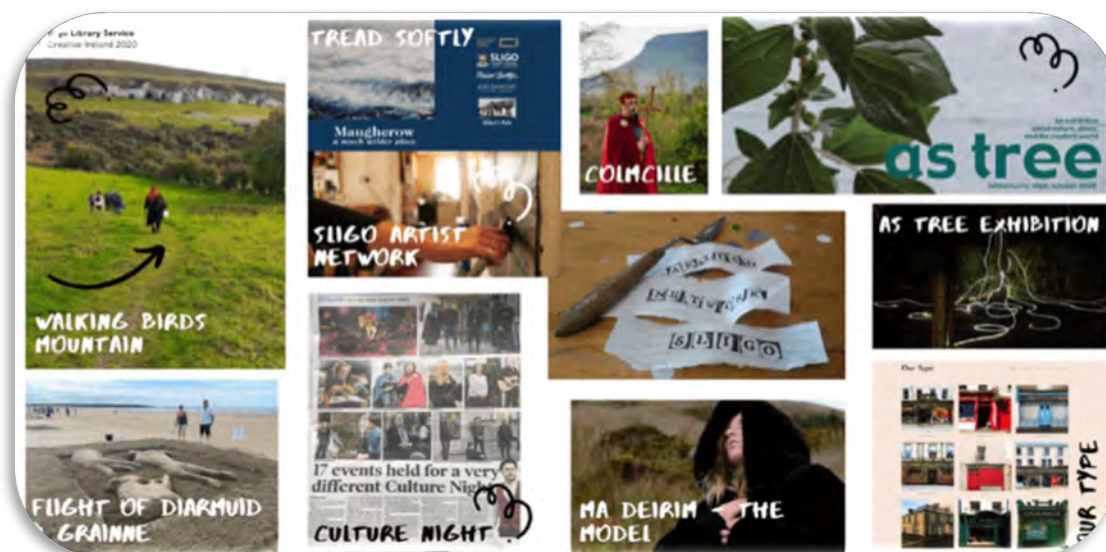
Open Call administration

The Open Call distributes €40,000 of Creative Ireland funding directly to support the creative potential of everyone in the community, in line with the themes and aspirations of the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022. Through the Open Call grants process 24 out of 48 applicants were selected, approved by elected members, funded and administered by the Library and Arts service in 2020.



From July the administration of the project was undertaken by the Library service who followed up with all of the participants to ensure that they were supported to pivot their projects to suit the pandemic restrictions and to redistribute funding from projects that could not be reworked.

The funding supported a diverse body of work, including the Underwave art installation in the sea by Bettina Seitz, the publication of a book Maugherow, a much Wilder Place by the Tread Softly festival working directly with the community and performances by the Mad Raven's theatre company brought directly to the streets of Sligo for Culture night, amongst many others.



Additional funding allocated under the Government's Job Stimulus Package was allocated to the following projects:

- Sligo Way
- Artist Network Sligo Bursary Project/Yeats Society
- Artist Network Sligo Bursary Project/Felippe Lopes
- Blue Raincoat Theatre Company Bursary Project
- Coleman Music Centre Master Classes Series
- Hawks Well Theatre Bursary Project
- Sligo Colmcille 2021 Battle of the Books
- The Model Bursary Project

Throughout 2020 the Culture Team engaged in partnerships and with creatives and communities in order to deliver a wide range of projects which met the criteria laid down in the five-year Culture and Creativity Strategy. Principal amongst the many works carried out by the Culture Team was the groundwork and preparations to provide an online international Conference entitled RIOT on the subject of place. The Conference and commission was launched in November 2020 to run over two days in Spring 2021.



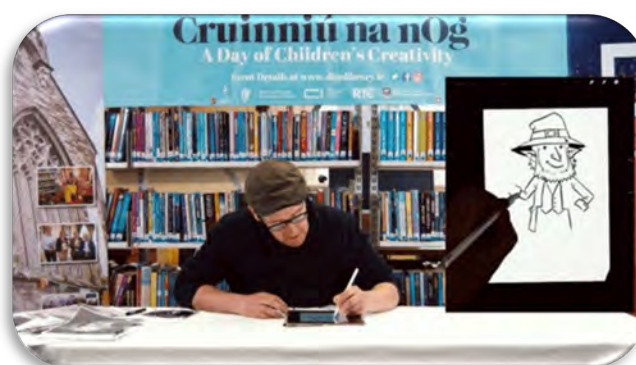
Additional programmes were funded through Creative Ireland Implementation funding:

- 2020 CI Made in Sligo Initiative
- Adjust Your Position: Sligo Youth Theatre
- Anna Newell: Sing Me to The Sea/The Hawk's Well
- Artists Network: Sligo Inside The Studio
- Best of Sligo Showcase
- Comhaltas Trans-Atlantic Connections
- Niall De Burca Storytelling Sessions
- Online Lecture Series Shane Martin, Psychologist
- Sligo Artist Network
- Sligo Colmcille 2021 Battle of the Books Video
- Sligo Musicfest
- The Book of Sligo: Blue Raincoat Theatre Company

Cruinniú na nÓg 2020

Cruinniú na nÓg is a flagship initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme. Its purpose is to enable the creative potential of children and young people.

This Covid-19 pandemic restricted branch events in this annual event. In 2020, Sligo's Cruinniú na nÓg on Saturday 13th June moved online via Sligo Libraries online social media platforms.



Families and young people were encouraged to take part online in a wide range of fun, free activities and this resulted in great engagement and response throughout the day.

Alongside the events many competitions also ran throughout the day. Crafts and Ceramics demonstrations, Technology (3d printing and Lego workshop), Puppet Shows, Illustration classes, storytelling and much more were showcased throughout the day.

Cruinniú na nÓg coincided with the annual Yeats Day celebrations to mark the birthday of William Butler Yeats. Our collaboration with the Yeats Society Sligo saw recitals from children broadcast throughout the day and shared across social media platforms.

Decade of Centenaries 2020

Programme of Events

- 1920 Republican County Council June 2020
- Commemorating the Centenary of the Connaught Rangers Mutiny in India 28th June 1920: Featuring Mary Henry, (granddaughter of James Gorman), Oliver Hawes, (grandson of Joseph Hawes), Danny Tiernan, (grandson of William Tiernan) and Ronan McGreevy, (author and journalist) took part in this conversation, along with Presenter and Moderator, Micheál Ó Domhnaill.
- Frank Carty: Escape from Sligo Gaol: A presentation by Dr. Pádraig Deignan tells the dramatic story of that escape, and of the life of an adventurous, colourful and committed Sligo man
- The Moneygold Ambush: IRA ambush of RIC patrol at Moneygold, Grange, Co. Sligo, 25 October 1920
- The Chaffpool Ambush: IRA ambush of RIC motor party at Chaffpool, Co. Sligo, 30 September 1920
- Linda Kearns (1920/21): Nurse Linda Kearns, native of Dromard, Co. Sligo, arrested November 1920 transporting firearms for the IRA
- A panel discussion with founding members of the Lest Sligo Forgets campaign: Lest Sligo Forgets is a Community Association whose aim is to create a Memorial Garden for volunteers and civilians from County Sligo who lost their lives in the Great War 1914 – 1918
- History of The Congregational Church Sligo

Events were promoted through all our Social Media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube. All videos can be accessed through Sligo Libraries Youtube channel.





Sligo County Council. June 1920.

***From Left. Back Row:** Seamus Devins, J J Mullarkey, Jim Hunt, Tom O'Donnell, Bernard Conlon, M Gray, P J Rooney, D Leonard, Laurence McHugh, James Gilligan.*

***Middle Row:** John Lynch, T H Murrice, Alec McCabe, J J Clancy, Sean McMorow, John Hennigan, D M Hanley.*

***Front Row:** Dan Kilcullen, Seamus MacGowan, Harry Cavanagh, Jack Brennan, Frank O'Beirne, Michael J Marren, Michael Finn. The vacant chair represented Frank Carty then in Sligo jail.*

Frank Carty Sligo Goal Escape



OPERATION OF ARTS PROGRAMME

Sligo Arts Service and Programme 2021

The Sligo Arts Plan 2020-2025 was adopted by Council in October 2020. One of the key priorities of the Plan is to support the artist which will be all the more important in 2021.

The focus in 2020, as will be in 2021, was to ensure the ongoing viability of the arts sector. This will be achieved through an increased number of bursaries awarded to artists and grants to organisations.



Children and Young People

County Sligo Youth Theatre will continue to deliver weekly workshops to young people in three age groups. A full programme of productions, including a drama on The Battle of the Books, is planned to ensure that all members experience performance in all aspects. Public health guidelines will be strictly adhered to. Additional workshop and performance space has been kindly provided by the Blue Raincoat Theatre Company.

The Primary Colours visual arts programme for Primary schools has been adapted to be delivered by artists in a flexible manner, depending on the requirements of the participating schools. Print and online art materials developed by Sligo artists in 2020 will be distributed to schools.

Arts and Health and Older People

Sligo Arts Service was successful in its application to the Healthy Ireland Fund to create a very special remote project for older people which will support them to combat isolation by connecting through storytelling, conversation and stimulating their imagination. The project will create a sense of shared experience and connection with others in their community and County.

Community Arts and Artists

The Arts Service provides continual professional development to artists to work in the community and to adapt working practices due to the pandemic. The Arts Service Artists Panel was expanded in 2020 and represents a broad range of artistic practices and forms which the Service can call upon to deliver its programmes.

There will be enhanced funding opportunities for artists in the areas of exhibitions, projects, awards, commissions and bursaries.

Culture Night

Culture Nights is delivered by Sligo Arts Service in partnership with key arts venues and stakeholders and is funded by Sligo County Council and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.



Susan O'Keefe (Yeats Society Sligo, Ireland), Diarmuid Woods (Sligo Youth Theatre), Marie O'Byrne (Hawk's Well Theatre, Sligo), Bettina T. Gigante (Blue Raincoat Theatre Company), and Mary McDonagh (Sligo Arts Office, Sligo County Council) gather ahead of opening up for Culture Night 2020





Music

The 21st Sligo International Chamber Music Festival in 2020 did not go ahead due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we are hopeful that the Festival will continue in 2021 with the same 2020 programme which would have celebrated the 250th birthday of Beethoven. Funding from 2020 was used to commission three new works for Irish musicians performing in the Festival in 2021.

In the event that there is an international travel ban in place in May 2021, we would be able to stage a lovely scaled back festival with the Irish musicians and premiering the new works.

Film

2020 was a significant year for film production in Sligo. The success of Normal People put Sligo on the map for international film companies. Sligo Arts Service is the Council's point of contact for film companies and receives numerous enquiries and requests for assistance. The County Council plays an important role in film-making in the County and the region.

Sligo County Council is a member of the Western Region Audio-visual Producers Fund (WRAP) which is a Regional Fund committed to strategic investment on commercial terms that generates economic impact, supports local talent, creates sustainable employment, builds the audio-visual infrastructure and contributes to the culture and language of the West of Ireland.

SLR Film is a partnership initiative of Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon Arts Services. SLR Film is a partner in the successful bid to the Regional Enterprise Development Fund for the Creative Heartlands initiative. This project is designed to elevate enterprise and entrepreneurship within the Sligo, Leitrim, and Roscommon Creative SME base.





For Yeats Day on June 13th, the poet's 155th birthday was celebrated at home.

Public Art Programme & the Per Cent for Art Scheme

Art funding for the commissioning of public art is available through the Per Cent for Art Scheme on all capital projects. Sligo County Council has an adopted policy on the ongoing application of the Per Cent for Art Scheme since 2002.

A Public Art Project Manager was recruited in 2020. This role will involve establishing a Public Art Steering Group and supporting the Group in developing and delivering a Public Art Commissions Plan for the next 3-5 years.

In 2021 the Steering Group will appoint selectors who will select artists by assessing their artwork proposals. The Steering Group will approve the contracting of curators or mediators, should they be required for specific projects. The Public Art Commission's Plan will set out how the Per Cent for Art Scheme funding will be allocated and identify the number and type of commissions.

The Project Manager will implement the Commission's Plan by managing the roll-out of projects over the next 2-3 years. The Plan and projects timeline will be presented to the SPC 3 in due course.

INFRASTRUCTURE, ENVIRONMENT & FIRE SERVICES DIRECTORATE



DIRECTOR: MS EMER CONCANNON



INTRODUCTION

The Directorate is responsible for the development and maintenance of Sligo's road transportation network, water services infrastructure (under a service level agreement with Irish Water), piers and harbours, parks, recreation areas and cemeteries, along with the protection and enhancement of Sligo's environment, including coastal, and the operation and protection of life and property through the Fire Services. Climate Action, in terms of adaptation and reduction in energy consumption, continues to be an integral part of all actions in the Directorate.

2020 was a challenging year for all, with temporary site closures and Covid-19 protocols in place, but it was also a very productive year for the Directorate. Along with delivering annual work programmes across all Sections, there were huge advancements in major Infrastructural Projects that will have a transformative impact on Sligo and the Northwest, and feed into its designation as a Regional Centre in Project Ireland 2040. Infrastructure Projects under construction in Sligo in 2020 represent an investment of over €200 million, and include the following:

- N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Major Road Project
- N4-N15 Sligo Urban Improvement Scheme
- Western Distributor Road Scheme (opened to all modes of transport in early January 2021)
- O'Connell Street Enhancement Phase 1 (Completed at the end of 2020)
- Lough Talt Water Treatment Plant Upgrade (Completed at the end of 2020)
- Foxes Den Water Treatment Plant Upgrade
- Ballymote and, Collooney Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades

Significant projects at Design stage include:

- Eastern Garvogue Bridge Project
- N17 Knock to Collooney Scheme (Route Selection)

Sligo's environment came to the fore in 2020 with the importance of good quality amenities and public space appreciated during Covid-19 lockdowns. Sligo's many beaches including the Blue Flag Beach at Rosses Point, were appreciated during the summer months of 'staycations'.

I wish to acknowledge the exceptional commitment of all staff, in continuing to deliver excellent service, despite the challenges that faced us all in 2020.

Emer Concannon,
A/Director of Services

ROADS, TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

Roads Programme

A total of €73,696,023 was initially allocated to the roads programme for the improvement and maintenance of key strategic national and non-national road projects serving County Sligo and Sligo City – a designated Regional Growth Centre. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the Department of Transport (DOT), the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Sligo County Council (SCC) are the key funding agencies for this programme.

The tables below show the details of the National, Regional and Local Roads in Sligo.

National Primary Roads		
Route	Description	Length km
N4	Sligo City to Roscommon County Boundary	34.35
N15	Sligo City to Bunduff Br	27.04
N16	Sligo City to Leitrim County Boundary	10.39
N17	Collooney to Bellaghy	34.06
Total		105.84

National Secondary Road		
Route	Description	Length km
N59	Ballysadare to Mayo County Boundary	47.38
Total		47.38

Regional Roads		
Route	Description	Length km
R277	Killaspugbrone to Sligo Airport	1.7
R278	Sligo to Carrickoneilleen	7.63
R279	Cliffoney to Mullaghmore	4.4
R284	Carrowroe to Roscommon Co. Boundary	26.6

R286	Sligo City to Leitrim Co. Boundary	11.2
R287	Sligo City to Leitrim Co. Boundary via Carrowroe	15.89
R290	Ballysadare to Ballintogher	14.63
R291	Sligo City to Rosses Point	7.83
R292	Sligo City to Strandhill to Ballydrehid	18.23
R293	Ballinaboll to Gurteen to Roscommon Co. Boundary	25.8
R294	Cloonloo to Tubbercurry to Lough Talt	42.5
R295	Ballymote to Keash to Roscommon Co. Boundary	14.6
R296	Ballymote to Bunnannaddan to R294	10.2
R297	Dromore West to Enniscrone to Co. Boundary	29.8
R298	N59 to Lacknatlieva to R297	4.9
R361	Beside Roscommon County boundary	1.6
R869	Sligo City – Western Distributor Road	2.5
R870	Sligo City – Pearse Road / Markievicz Road	1.37
Total		241.38

Local Roads		
Route	Description	Length km
Local Primary (LP)	Main Local Roads	600
Local Secondary (LS)	Secondary Local Roads	980
Local Tertiary (LT)	Local access roads, Cul-de-sacs, estate roads	860
Total		2,440

National Roads:

Transport Infrastructure Ireland provide significant funding for National Roads in County Sligo. Funding is divided between Maintenance, Improvement, Safety and Major and Minor Realignment Schemes.

Maintenance

Maintenance works continued in 2020 with works including surface renewal, barrier repairs, bridge maintenance, signing and lining, drainage works, public lighting etc. All maintenance issues are logged on a Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Geo app via handheld tablets and the system allows applications to be made for additional funds for particular maintenance issues if required. Winter maintenance is an annual programme also carried out by Sligo County Council.

The total Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) allocation to Sligo County Council for Maintenance for all National Roads in 2020 was €700,000.

Improvement

Pavement Renewal Schemes

Just over €4 million was allocated by Transport Infrastructure Ireland for the restoration of road pavements on Sligo's National Road network in 2020. Locations where substantial works were carried out in 2020 include:

- N15 Cliffoney North
- N15 Cashelgarran

N15 Cliffoney North

The N15 Cliffoney North Pavement Overlay involved structural rehabilitation and strengthening of 2.5km of the existing N15 pavement between the Townlands of Creevykeel and Castlegal in Co. Sligo. Works were completed in March 2020.



N15 Cliffoney North Pavement Restoration February 2020

N15 Cashelgarran

The N15 Cashelgarran Pavement Overlay involves structural rehabilitation and strengthening of 3.6km of the existing N15 pavement between the Townlands of Aghagad, Munninane and Cashelgarran in North Sligo. Works commenced in October 2020 and are continuing into 2021.



N15 Cashelgarron Pavement Overlay December 2020

Capital Maintenance Repairs

A total of €490,000 was allocated under this heading by the TII. Schemes under this funding are for the repair of localised surface defects on the national road network which cost under €200,000. Funding of €490,000 was allocated in 2020 for Schemes at the following locations:

- N16 Glencar Junction
- N17 Rathscanlon
- N59 Stonehall and Fiddaun
- N15 Cliffoney and Grange
- N4 Castlebaldwin

Safety

Safety Improvement Schemes

N15 at Creevykeel

Just over €100,000 was allocated for a safety Scheme on the N15 at Creevykeel, which was carried out as a variation to the N15 Cliffoney North Pavement Renewal Contract and was completed in March 2020.



N15 Creevykeel Safety Improvement Scheme

N15 at Aughagad

This Safety Improvement Scheme involved the removal of a climbing lane on the south side of Grange Village and was carried out as a variation to the N15 Cashelgarran Pavement Renewal contract, following an allocation of €50,000 from TII.

National Road Safety Inspections

The TII carried out an overview survey on all national routes in the County under the Road Safety Inspection Scheme. A report has issued which identifies locations that could potentially be investigated further to determine if they could benefit from having localised safety improvements carried out. Sligo County Council is formalising a strategy to investigate these locations and to develop improvement schemes.

Major and Minor Realignment Schemes

National Road Major and Minor Realignment Schemes on Sligo's National Roads are managed by Sligo's TII National Roads Project Office (Sligo PO). The current Schemes are as follows:

- N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin – in construction
- N4/N15 Sligo Urban Improvement – in construction
- N16 Lugatober Realignment – in design
- N17 Knock to Collooney – in planning development
- N59 Corhawnagh to Crockacullion - in planning development

Non-National Roads

The Department of Transport is the primary funding source for non-national Roads. Additional funding is received from the National Transport Authority and Department of Rural and Community Development, as well as Sligo County Council's own funding.

Restoration Improvement Grant

An allocation of €6,897,500 was provided by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in 2020 for the restoration improvement of Regional and Local Roads. Some 55.6 km of roads at 66 locations throughout the County were programmed to be improved under this grant.

The types of work carried out included:

- Laying bitumen macadam surfacing to shape and strengthen the roads followed by surface dressing.
- Laying crushed stone to shape and strengthen the road and double surface dressing the stone to seal the road surface and provide skid resistance.
- Recycling – this was done where there were adequate stone already in the road structure, but the road had disintegrated (typically used in bog road locations).
- Replacement of road markings.

Restoration/Supplementary Restoration Maintenance Grants

These grants are intended for surface dressing regional and local roads which are still in a reasonable condition and are intended as preventative maintenance to ensure road surfaces do not deteriorate to the extent that substantial repairs are required later. Grants totalling €1,982,500 were provided in 2020 for surface dressing of Regional and Local roads. These grants enabled the surface dressing of 101.3 km of roads at 78 locations throughout the county.

Discretionary Grant

A discretionary grant of €2,313,500 was allocated in 2020 for improvement and maintenance works on Regional and Local Roads throughout the county. Works carried out with this grant included regional/local road maintenance, road repairs, winter maintenance, bridge maintenance, road marking etc.

Drainage Grant

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport provided a specific grant in 2020 of €573,238 for drainage improvement measures. This funding was used to undertake much needed drainage improvement works at 46 no. locations throughout the County.

Community Involvement Schemes

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport allocated funding for Community Involvement Schemes in 2020. This grant has funded works on mostly Class 3 local roads that have received little funding over the years. It relies on part funding coming from the local community. During 2020 Sligo County Council received an allocation of €730,000 under this heading for works at 24 no. locations.

Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads

A grant of €270,000 was obtained in 2020 for Safety Improvement Works at a number of locations as follows:

- Ballintogher village
- Riverstown Village
- Woodville Court
- Clarion Road
- Cleveragh Road
- R296 Ballymote
- Ballygawley Village
- Kilglass National School
- Gurteen

Bridge Rehabilitation

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport provide support each year for bridge repair and improvement works and the 2020 grant was increased by 25% to €489,000 from the 2019 figure. Despite delays because of Covid-19 restrictions, a comprehensive bridge rehabilitation programme involving the repair and refurbishment of 18 bridges was successfully delivered in 2020.

Major masonry repair works were undertaken at several locations including:

- Rooghan Bridge, Ballintogher
- Rathdooney Bridge, Ballymote
- Cloonagh Bridge, Gurteen
- Frenchford Bridge, Cloonacool and
- Rannatruffaun, Geevagh.



Aghagad Bridge, Grange – new deck, masonry walls and parapet rails



Frenchford Bridge, Cloonacool – February 2020



Frenchford Bridge, Cloonacool – September 2020

Specific Improvement Grants

R284

€212,000 was allocated in 2020 to carry out verge widening and strengthening on the R284. This continued work which commenced in 2019.

City Centre Projects (Specific Improvement Grants)

Burton Street Link Road

It is proposed to construct a Link Road between Burton Street and the Mail Coach Road, South of Sligo City centre. This link road will form part of an overall plan to encourage a *circular route around the city centre* in lieu of using the core commercial city centre streets. To progress the development of this scheme a CPO order was published in March of 2020. This scheme will be progressed in 2021, pending confirmation of the CPO by An Bord Pleanála.

Markievicz Footbridge Project

This scheme forms a pedestrian footway adjacent to Markievicz Bridge in the centre of Sligo City. This will form an integral part of the integrated transportation strategy for the city centre. In order to progress the planning status of this development, the following documents have been prepared:

- Planning Report
- EIA screening report
- Natura Impact Statement



It is anticipated that a planning submission will be made to An Board Pleanála in 2021. A compulsory purchase order (CPO) for the lands required to build the structure is also being prepared.

O'Connell Street Enhancement Project

O'Connell Street - Phase 1:

Construction for Phase 1 of the Project commenced on the ground in April 2019. Phase 1 was completed at the end of 2020.

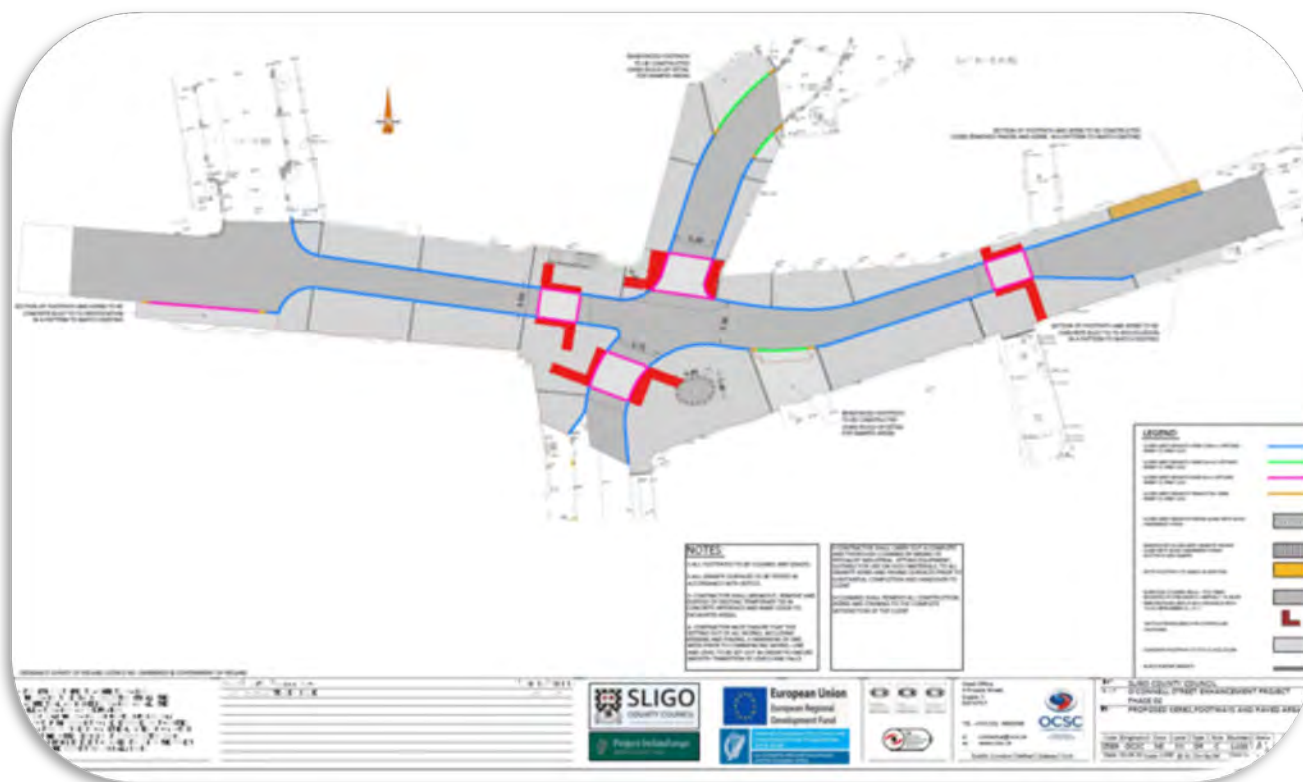


Completed Streetscape for Phase 1 of O'Connell Street Enhancement Project Sligo

Phase 1 of the project has delivered a quality metropolitan space with unique characteristics while maintaining the street's identifiable cultural and heritage features. The scheme has maximised connections to other pedestrian areas within the city core. It has created the foundation for a dynamic and vibrant modern city area. At the outset the design ethos was to improve the pedestrian experience on O'Connell Street. The streetscape has provided a notable transition to pedestrian priority from motor vehicle use for the inner-city core.

O'Connell Street - Phase 2:

The procurement for Phase 2 was carried out in 2020 and construction is expected to be carried out in 2021.



Proposed Layout for Phase 2 O'Connell Street Enhancement Project Sligo

Phase 2 will continue the design principles that have been applied in Phase 1. Phase 2 will continue the new streetscape on O'Connell Street in both an easterly and westerly direction to Wine Street and lower Knox Street respectively. This approach will provide a seamless transition from one street to another, further adding to the pedestrian experience. Phase 2 will provide an upgraded junction (Wine Street/O'Connell Street/Lower Knox Street) incorporating new controlled pedestrian crossings. This will provide enhanced safety measures for vulnerable road users.

Phase 2 will continue to incorporate innovation by providing substantial measures to cater for future smart-technologies that may be employed for the exchange of data in the city area. These include the provision of Wi-Fi on the Street, gathering real-time environmental data, and monitoring pedestrian and traffic movements.

Strategic Non-National Road Improvement Schemes:

Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads

The proposed Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads Scheme will provide a local link road on the eastern side of Sligo City. It is required to overcome the inadequacies of the existing road network in facilitating local travel between the eastern parts of Sligo City without need for travel through the city centre. The development will join communities north and south of the Garavogue River, will improve circulation and will reduce traffic congestion in the city centre.

An Bord Pleanála have approved the Environmental Impact Statement and Compulsory Purchase Order for this scheme. An advanced site clearance and fencing contract was completed in December 2018 securing the northern lands for the construction stage. Archaeological investigations and ground investigations are complete. Land acquisition is ongoing.



The scheme has been included for construction funding in the current National Development Plan. Sligo County Council made a funding application for the scheme in 2018 to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). A commitment was received in 2019 from the DHPLG for an allocation of €6m from this fund. The Department of Transport are also committed to funding the scheme. It is expected that the detailed design and tender document preparation will be finalised in 2021 with construction to start in 2022.

Western Distributor Road Phase 2

The newly constructed Western Distributor Road was close to completion at the end of 2020 and was opened to traffic in January 2021. This roadway which links the N4 National Primary route at Caltragh with the Roger Eames Road (Ballydoogan) and onwards to the R292 Strandhill Road will provide much improved access to the existing Finisklin Business Park. The scheme comprises the following elements:

- 2.0km single carriageway including central hatching for future right turn lanes
- Verges with 2m cycleway and 2m footway on each side of the carriageway
- 0.4km realignment of the existing Oakfield Road
- New road bridge crossing the existing Dublin-Sligo railway line, and
- 2 no at-grade roundabout junctions at Oakfield

It will also provide quality access to the proposed IDA Business Park at Oakfield, and to zoned lands to the south-west of Sligo city. It is expected also to help reduce traffic congestion during peak times on the Sligo Inner Relief Road, Church Hill and the Strandhill Road.

The scheme was designed by Atkins Lavalin and constructed by SIAC Construction Ltd.



Ballydoogan Road – Roger Eames Road



Maugheraboy roundabout looking east towards Caltragh (N4)



Maugheraboy roundabout looking north towards Ballydoogan



New Rail Bridge



Oakfield (IDA) roundabout looking back towards Sligo City

NATIONAL ROAD MAJOR AND MINOR SCHEMES

The Sligo National Roads Project Office (Sligo PO) is responsible for the delivery of all Major and Minor National Road improvement and realignment Schemes in County Sligo. The following are the Schemes currently being developed by the Sligo PO, which progressed through 2020.

N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Road Development Scheme

The N4 National Primary Route is the main Inter-Urban link between Dublin and the North West Region. The N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Road Project was included in the Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment Capital Plan 2016-2021, as a key priority in the roads programme which will support economic growth. The Plan identified it as one of the “critical gaps” in our existing infrastructure, which needs to be upgraded.

A core priority under Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework is the essential requirement to enhance and upgrade accessibility between urban centres of population and their regions, in parallel with the initiation of compact growth of urban centres. This has a crucial role to play in maximising the growth potential of the regional urban centres, one of which is Sligo, and the economy as a whole. The delivery of the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Scheme is listed as one of the key Schemes to be delivered under Strategic Outcome No. 2 ‘Enhanced Regional Accessibility’ of the National Development Plan.

The Scheme will provide just under 14km of Type 2 Dual Carriageway, and just under 1km of Single Carriageway on the National Road Network, linking the existing N4 dual carriageway at Collooney to the Curlews By-Pass, just south of Castlebaldwin village. This will complete the upgrade of the N4 to modern standards in County Sligo. The Project will significantly improve the safety of this stretch of road that has seen 30 fatalities over the past 40 years or so.

Following the Restricted procurement process for Works Designed by the Contractor, updating of Scheme Business Case and Cabinet approval, the Scheme construction contract was awarded to Roadbridge Ltd. in February 2019. The contract duration is 30 months, giving the initial date for substantial completion of 21st July 2021.

Construction continued to Q1 2020, but the site was closed for 7 weeks from 29th March to 18th May 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, following Government Guidelines. Works recommenced on a phased basis following reopening in May 2020, in line with Government and CIF Guidelines, with operations being scaled up as the weeks progressed. Works have progressed steadily throughout the remainder of 2020 and Q1 2021 with the site remaining open during the Level 5 Covid Restrictions announced in early January, in full compliance with HSE Guidelines and Protocols relating to Covid-19.



Aerial view looking south towards newly constructed Castlebaldwin Roundabout



Aerial view looking north of Castlebaldwin Roundabout and approach roads

Structures

The Project requires the construction of four overbridges, six underbridges and two clear span river bridges across the Drumfin and Turnalaydan rivers. All of these structures progressed in 2020 to close to completion.



View looking northwest at Structure 1 in Toberbride Td.



Doorly Underbridge, over Local Road L-55015-0, looking east (Ch. 3+400)



16-07-2020: Ch4+000 North;
S-04 Deck Pour

Knocknagroagh Overbridge, which will form part of the realigned Local Road L-55016-0, looking north (Ch. 4+000)

Culverts

The Project also required the construction of approximately 50 substantial culverts to facilitate connectivity of existing streams and drainage networks. These culverts were designed and constructed in consultation with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and taking into account all requirements of these Statutory Bodies.



23-09-2020: N4 at Ch1+120 Culvert 0 extension
under the existing N4.

Aerial view looking northeast of Culvert 0 under construction at Toberscanavan Td. which serves the outlet channel of Toberscanavan Lough



View looking northeast of a culvert under construction in Cloghoge Lower Td. to facilitate a landowner accommodation road (Stream Riverbed mitigation evident)

Combined Footway/Cycleway

The Project includes construction of 3.4km of combined footway/cycleway from Toberbride Td. in Collooney to Doorly Td. During the detailed design stage, its location was redesigned offline to provide a facility which more replicates a greenway and which shall provide a safer environment with increased amenity value. Construction of this greenway was completed in 2020 with only snagging works outstanding.



View looking northeast of a culvert under construction in Cloghoge Lower Td. to facilitate a landowner accommodation road (Stream Riverbed mitigation evident)

Land and House Acquisition

The Project required the compulsory acquisition of approximately 450 acres of land which impacted 135 landowners and 16 house owners. All house cases have been closed out with only four land acquisition cases remaining.

Current Progress

Site clearance works are complete. Pre earthworks drainage and all earthworks operations are approaching completion. Permanent network drainage and diversion of utilities are almost 90% complete. Structures are also nearing completion with almost 95% of works undertaken. Side road construction works are approximately 95% complete with ten of the eleven realigned local roads now open to traffic. Pavement works are advancing very well and are approximately 80% complete. Accommodation works for landowners are ongoing with approximately 45% completed to date. Construction will continue in 2021 and taking account of the site closure and delays due to Covid-19 in 2020, and the further restrictions and requirement to adopt significant Covid Protocols in order to proceed with the works in a safe manner, the new road is expected to be open to traffic in Q3-Q4 2021.



Aerial view looking north east of the L-5502 following opening under traffic management to traffic in September 2020



Aerial view looking north of the Compact Grade separated junction at Drumfin / Cloonlurg Td. on the L-1502 under construction



Eastern Parallel Link Road, with adjacent off-road cycleway, looking South (Ch. 1+450)



Western Parallel Link Road and Eastern Parallel Link Road looking north (Ch. 2+100)



Laying Cement Bound Granular Material (Ch. 10+500)

N17 Knock to Collooney



The N17 Knock to Collooney [Atlantic Economic Corridor] Project (www.n17knockcollooney.ie) is at Phase 2 (Options Selection) of the TII Project Management Guidelines. The purpose of Phase 2 is to examine alternative options in order to determine a Preferred Option.

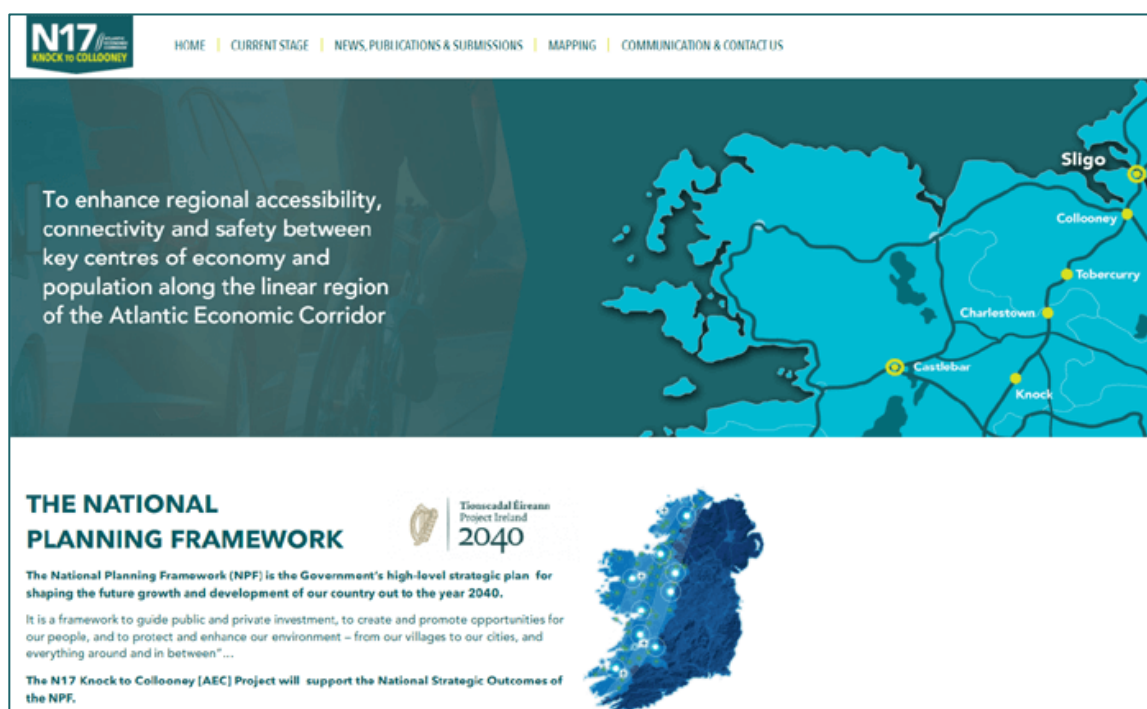
Improvements to the N17 between Knock and Collooney will enhance regional connectivity thereby facilitating and supporting the economy of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) and the North-West region in general. This will enable the opportunity for transformational growth in employment and enhanced economic output, allowing the AEC to compliment and act as counterbalance to the thriving East Coast.

The project is being Project Managed, designed and delivered by a dedicated in-house team within the Sligo National Roads Project Office; this team has support from a wide team of multi-disciplinary experts who were procured in early 2020.

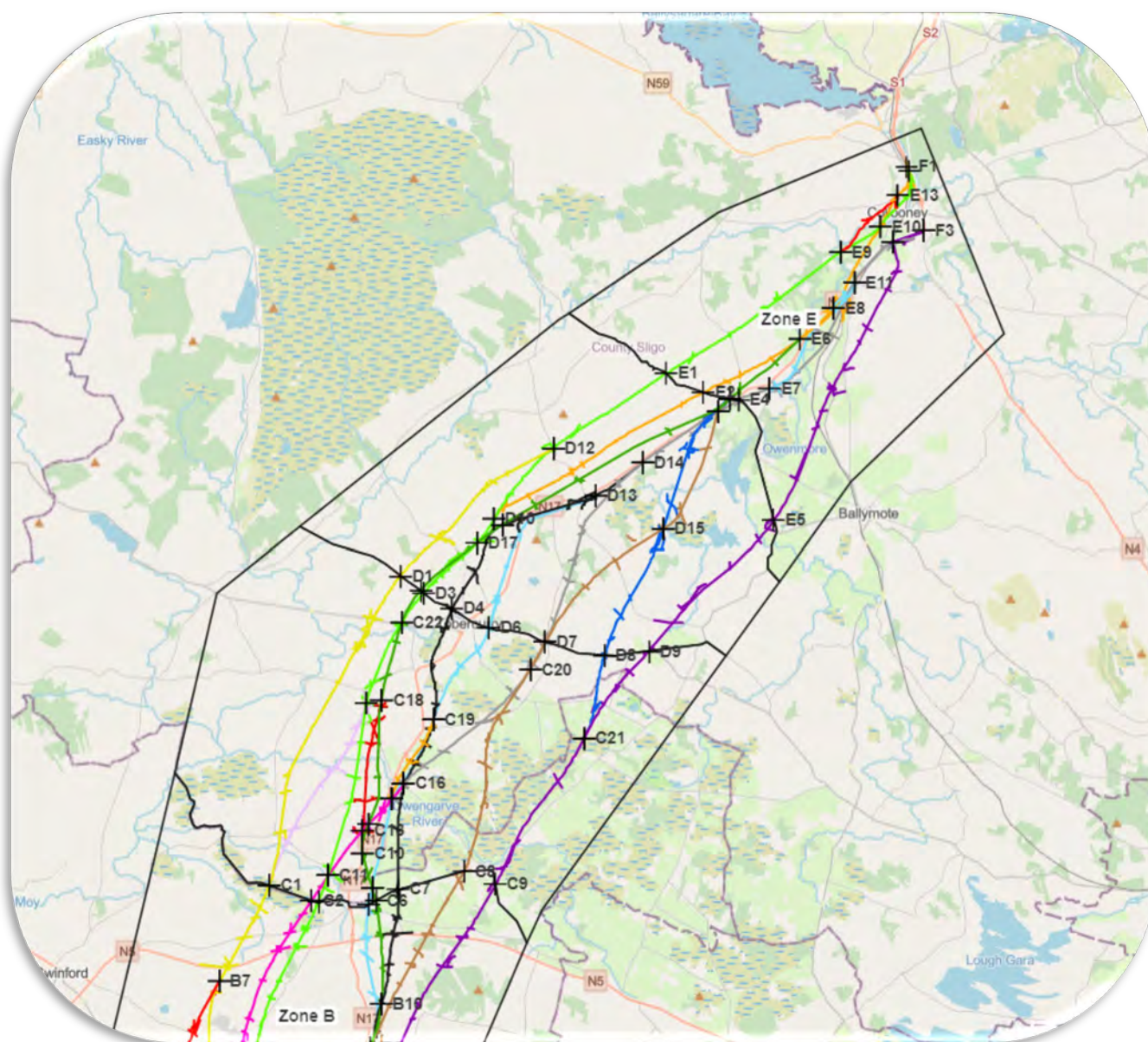
Initial Feasible Options (The 'Long List') and Public Consultation

Following an intensive design process, approximately 450km of Initial Feasible Options (the Long List) were established during the summer of 2020 and subsequently released for public information on the 6th of October 2020; a non-statutory public consultation period extended from this date until the 15th January 2021, during which time submissions were encouraged from the public.

The Consultation process included the launching of a project specific website, publications in local/regional newspapers, press releases in newspapers and social media, interviews on local radio, advertisements on local radio, presentations to the Public Participation Network, 2 no. Hotel Dates (with approximately 200 scheduled appointments), and almost 500 no. telephone conversations (by project engineers) with members of the public. In total over 500 submissions were received by the project team during this Public Consultation period; each submission has been reviewed and referred where necessary to various experts conducting the environmental appraisal (including for example those dealing with Community, Property, Biodiversity, Water, Heritage, etc.).



N17 Knock to Collooney [Atlantic Economic Corridor] Project Website



The Long List of Options in County Sligo

Preliminary Options Assessment and Current Status

Preliminary Options Assessment (which is of a Multi Criteria Analysis nature over a range of various multi-disciplinary studies) on the Long List of Option is ongoing, and a further non-statutory public consultation associated with those Refined Options (the Short List of Options) is expected to take place in the summer of 2021, with the Preferred Option selected by the end of 2021.

N16 Lugatober (Lugatober to Lugnagall) Road Development

The N16 Lugatober (Drumkilsellagh to Lugnagall) Road Development was brought through the early design and Statutory Planning stage by Sligo County Council's National Roads Project Office Team and in addition to the design process involved the preparation of an Environment Impact Assessment Report and a Natura Impact Statement. This followed a route selection process for the full N16 in County Sligo, completed in 2017.

When constructed, the Scheme will remove one of the poorest geometric sections of Sligo's national road network. It involves the green-field realignment of just over 2.5km of National Primary Road, from the Drum Road (L3406-0) north to just past the Glencar Road (L3404-0) junction. It will reduce journey times and improve safety along the route, along with improving accessibility for vulnerable road users through the provision of dedicated cycle tracks.

Land and House Acquisition

The Compulsory Purchase Order for the Road Development was confirmed by Sligo County Council on the 27th of August 2019 and included a total acquisition of 23.8355 hectares made up of:

- 41 CPO Groups
- 130 CPO Plots
- 51 individual owners, or reputed owners and
- 3 individual lessees, or reputed lessees.

It also included the extinguishment of 11 Public and 2 Private Rights of Way.

The Notice to Treat was served in February 2020 and possession of all lands took place throughout the year. Over 40% of the Land Acquisition Claims were also agreed throughout the course of 2020.

Archaeological Resolution

Archaeological Management Solutions (AMS) were appointed by Sligo County Council in the Summer of 2020 to complete a full archaeological resolution of the site.

The investigation works involved approximately 9 hectares of geophysical survey and over eleven kilometres of archaeological test trenching, which assisted archaeologists in locating new archaeological sites that were hidden beneath the ground over several millennia. Survey works also included archaeological waste and metal detection surveys of watercourses and built heritage surveys. The investigation and excavation works were conducted between June and December 2020 and involved up to 30 archaeologists working on 15 different sites.

One of the most notable discoveries was a large, palisaded (timber fenced) enclosure, prominently located on a rise at the western foot of Cope's Mountain in the townland of Castlegal. The enclosure may date to the Bronze Age or Iron Age (between 4,500 – 1,500 years ago) and could have been used for religious or ritual ceremonies and other important communal activities. Three prehistoric burial monuments known as ring-ditches were also discovered and excavated nearby (in Castlegal and Lugatober townlands) which reflect a landscape where the dead were buried and revered in prehistoric times. Other important finds included a possible prehistoric building and charcoal-production pits, as well as spreads of charcoal and burnt stone that may be the remains of ancient cooking places.



Aerial view of prehistoric palisade enclosure in Castlegal [photo courtesy of AMS]



Flint blade unearthed by archaeologists from a prehistoric timber building in Lugatober townland [photo courtesy of AMS]

Since excavation works concluded at the end of 2020, post excavation works are now underway which will involve scientific analysis of archaeological materials and finds retrieved during the excavations. The results of the post excavation works will no doubt provide new and exciting insights into interpreting these fascinating sites.

Advance Clearance and Temporary Fencing

P&D Lydon Contractors were appointed in November 2020 to complete advance site clearance which included the removal of hedgerows and treelines within the land take of the Road Development. In addition, over 6km of temporary fence lines were erected (permanent fencing will be erected as part of the main construction contract).

These works, in conjunction with the archaeological resolution, now leave the project in a shovel ready state.



Site Clearance and Some Archaeological Resolution Sites

Detailed Design and Main Construction Contract

JB Barry Transportation were appointed as Technical Advisors to Sligo County Council on the 3rd of February 2020. The commission requires the consultant to provide engineering consultancy services for the Client during Phase 5 (Enabling and Procurement), Phase 6 (Construction Administration) and Phase 7 (Closeout), of the TII Project Management Guidelines.

The Contract Documents were signed by Sligo County Council Chief Executive, Ciarán Hayes and Director of Barry Transportation, Eamon Daly, in the presence of Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Gino O'Boyle. Present at the signing were members of the Project Team, and amongst the Councillors present was Councillor Tom Fox, whose mother was a long-time campaigner for improvements to the N16 during her time as a Councillor on Sligo County Council.



Signing of Contract documents for N16 Lugatober Minor Scheme by Sligo County Council Chief Executive, Ciarán Hayes and Director of Barry Transportation, Eamon Daly, in the presence of Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Gino O'Boyle and Councillors Dónal Gilroy, Tom Fox, Thomas Healy, and Thomas Walsh as well as members of the Project Team from Sligo County Council

Detailed design work and the preparation of Construction Contract Documents took place throughout 2020. These Documents are currently being subjected to an independent Peer Review in advance of proceeding to Tender Publication.

It is hoped (subject to TII funding) that the works can progress to Construction in the later part of 2021, or very early in 2022.

All of the above works involved significant Landowner Liaison.

Approval to go to tender for scheme construction will be sought from TII in 2021.

Further information in relation to the project can be found at www.sligococo.ie/n16lugatober.

N4/N15 Sligo Urban Improvement Scheme

Following the completion of the N4 Hughes Bridge Scheme, the N4-N15 Sligo Urban Improvement Scheme is the next section of the N4-N15 which is currently under development. The Sligo PO is Project Managing this Scheme and engaged Jacobs Engineering Ireland Ltd to carry out the Detailed Design, prepare the Statutory Process Documents and provide Construction Supervision Services.

This Scheme, which received An Bord Pleanála approval in February 2018, includes the widening and realigning of the N4/N15 National Primary Road from the northern end of Hughes Bridge to north of the Rosses Point Road junction, along with the upgrade of the Rosses Point, Duck Street and Markievicz Road Junctions. The upgrading of the Copper River Bridge along with significant retaining walls, Irish Water Infrastructure, numerous utilities upgrades, all form part of the Scheme.

In addition, a total of 13 junctions along the Inner Relief Road and the adjacent Local/Regional Road network

will be upgraded to an Urban Traffic Control System, incorporating the latest advances in traffic signal and fibre-optic communication technology. This Intelligent Transportation System will use real-time data from vehicle detectors to enable the individual traffic signals speak to each other and make 'intelligent' decisions, which will optimise traffic flows.

Approximately 4 hectares of land (including temporary plots) is being acquired in total for this Scheme. The Notice to Treat was issued to affected landowners on 27th June 2018, which enabled land acquisition for the Scheme to commence. Negotiations on land acquisition is ongoing, with the majority of cases finalised. This process will continue through 2021.

Following a procurement process for the Main Construction Contractor, the construction contract was awarded to Fox Building & Engineering Ltd. and construction commenced on site in September 2019. Construction continued to Q1 2020, but the site was closed for 7 weeks from 29th March to 18th May 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, following Government Guidelines. Works recommenced on a phased basis following reopening, in line with Government and CIF Guidelines, with operations being scaled up as the weeks progressed.

Traffic Management is a key feature to this Scheme due to its location at the confluence of 3 No. National Primary Routes, one of which, the N4, having an annual average daily traffic (AADT) volume of 25,000 vehicles.

Significant progress has been made in relation to the construction of the scheme to date, with individual works at the 7 designated structures, including the Copper River Bridge, nearing completion. Widening and realignment of the mainline carriageway is also well advanced as is the upgrade and re-orientation of the Rosses Point, Duck Street and Markievicz Road Junctions with the newly designed footprints of these junctions now in place.

Likewise, the substantial third-party utility upgrades and associated diversions and the installation of the new and strategic Irish Water Capital Infrastructure are also well advanced. Installation of the Urban Traffic Control System and associated communications network is also underway. Overall construction works are expected to be completed by early Q3 2021.



Overview of Site



Overview of installation of Copper River Culvert looking east from the outfall at Rosses Point Road Junction
- crane lifting in individual precast concrete units



Overview of Site looking north from just north of Duck Street junction
- Copper River Culvert visible traversing the N15 of Site from N15 looking south



Foundation for Retaining Wall north of Hughes Bridge on Estuary side (west), looking south



Paving Works on N15 Northbound Lane, looking south

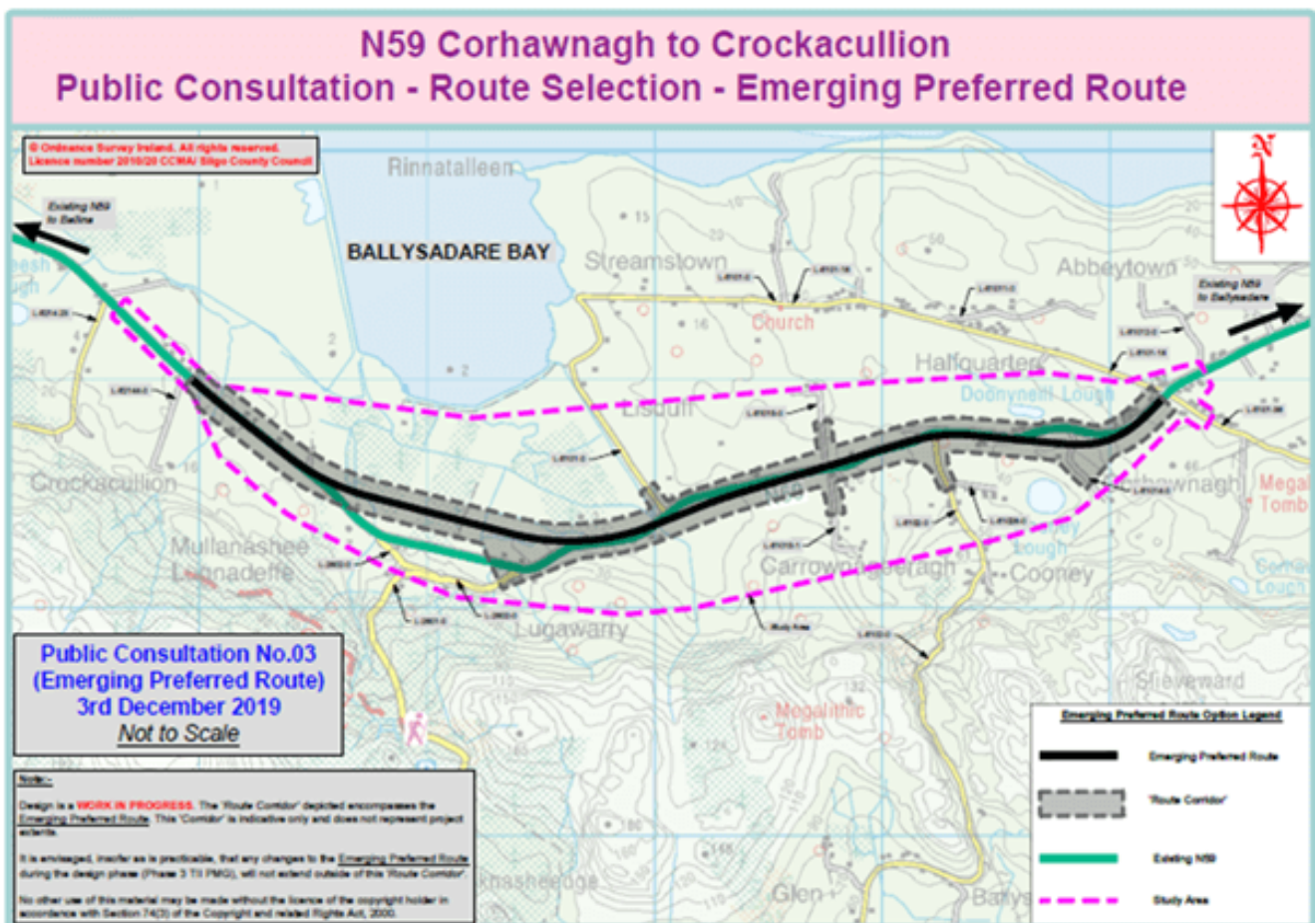


N59 Corhawnagh to Crockacullion Road Improvement Scheme

Following completion of the Feasibility and Constraint phases, this project is currently being progressed through Phase 2 (Option Selection) of the TII Project Management Guidelines. The Scheme involves the Realignment of the N59 between Corhawnagh and Crockacullion. The Sligo PO are Project Managing this Scheme and are also the Lead Road Designers and PSDP for the Scheme.

The Scheme is nearing completion of Phase 2 (Options Selection) of the TII Project Management Guidelines. This process involved public consultation and Landowner Liaison, along with specialist environmental, engineering and economic input into the design. The Emerging Preferred Route was placed on public display during December 2019 and January 2020.

The Sligo PO are hoping to bring this Scheme into Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) of the TII Project Management Guidelines in 2021.



PARKS AND RECREATION

Sligo County Council recognise the importance of the adequate provision of conveniently located open space throughout the city. People are attracted to live, work, visit and invest in areas which have good quality developed green recreational infrastructure. The Covid-19 pandemic emphasised the importance of this infrastructure, not only for recreational purposes but also for our health and wellbeing.

Sligo County Council continues to progress and invest in the development of parkland and recreational infrastructure for Sligo. The provision of funding for Parks infrastructure and maintenance is a challenging issue but the elected members and the executive team remain committed to developing and maintaining high quality green infrastructure. The Parks Service, in consultation and cooperation with the community, continue to improve the quality and beauty of the local environment.

The Parks Department continued the management and maintenance of an expanding range of facilities including Doorly Park, Cleveragh Regional Park, Forthill Park, Mitchell Curley Park, the Fairgreen, Sea View Park, Sea View Drive Promenade Salmon Point and The Fairgreen. Along with, and incorporated into some of the Parks are 11 playing pitches, 6 playgrounds, 6 MUGAs, outdoor gym equipment, walking/jogging/cycling pathways and trails, amenity areas, a range of landscaped inner urban areas, 33 acres of partially landscaped and developed open space, and 290 acres of undeveloped open space incorporating woodland and pathways and undeveloped agricultural pastureland. The maintenance work conducted by the Parks department in open space areas include such activities as grass cutting, litter collection, maintenance and improvement of landscaped areas, maintenance of fencing, tree management and planting and maintenance of monuments and parks furniture all of which continued in 2020.

Biodiversity

We have created a number of Wildflower Meadows along roadsides, and in Parks, which includes planting areas of wildflower meadows and managing grass areas by limiting the number of cuts throughout the year. Other areas are managed by the motto "Don't mow let it grow". Delaying grass cutting in spring/early summer has allowed flowers, particularly dandelion, to flourish and bloom. Natural wildflower meadows have developed along a number of walkways etc. We have also increased pollinator planting in the Bee Garden.



We have allowed the Salix and Gorse to increase and spread in appropriate areas in the parks and open spaces. We planted our urban planter boxes with an emphasis on pollinator friendly plants - anthirrhinum, tagetes, salvia, cosmos etc., and planted native tree saplings including Sorbus and Bird Cherry.

We increased our display of spring/early summer bulb displays in the parks and roadsides including more pollinator friendly varieties, aconites, snowdrops, crocus, muscari, alliums.

Facilities

The following is a list of all the Parks and the facilities in each Park, for which the Parks Department manage and maintain:

Park/Amenity Area	Facilities
Cleveragh Regional Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1no. Rugby Pitch • 1no. GAA pitch • 1no. Tennis Court • 1no. Lawn Bowls Area • Walking/Jogging/Cycling Trails (Floodlights)
Doorly Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 No. Soccer Pitch • MUGA • Playground • Walking/Jogging/Cycling Trails (Floodlights) • Seating
Mitchell Curley Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 No. Soccer Pitch • 1no. GAA pitch • MUGA • Boules Court • Outdoor Gym & Trail • Playground • Walking/Jogging Trails • Seating
O'Boyle Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 No. Soccer Pitches • 1 No. GAA Pitch • Pitch Dressing Rooms • MUGA • 2 No. Basketball Courts (Floodlights) • Walking/Jogging Trail
Sea View Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 NO. Soccer Pitch • MUGA • Playground
Sean Fallon Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 No. Soccer Pitch
Acorn Play Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground
Hillside Adventure Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground
M.C.R. Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground
Ballytivnan Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MUGA
Sea View Drive Promenade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity Area
Salmon Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity Area
Fairgreen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MUGA

Sports Pitches

The Parks Department continue to oversee and regulate the management, maintenance, booking and hire of the 11 public playing pitches in Sligo Town. High quality soccer, GAA and rugby pitches are available for hire to clubs, organisations and schools throughout Sligo. Various sports clubs and groups were accommodated with the hire of pitches to the greatest possible extent and the ongoing regime of quality pitch maintenance programmes including regular grass cutting, verti-draining, weed control, fertilising and turfing ensures the quality of the pitches year-round.



WATER SERVICES

Sligo County Council Water Services operate under a Service Level agreement with Irish Water, which is in place since January 2014.

2020 once again was a very busy year for Water Services both in Operations and the Capital Section. The areas outlined below were the key drivers for the section throughout the year.

- The continued provision and maintenance of first-class Drinking Water and Wastewater Services on a daily basis to the people of Sligo in accordance with the terms of the SLA with Irish Water.
- The continued development of water and wastewater infrastructure Projects in Sligo through partnership with Irish Water.
- The continued implementation of the Irish Water funded “Find and Fix” project to efficiently deliver major leakage savings.
- The continued management of Irish Water “Change” issues.

Along with a number of smaller projects, the following were the major projects that were ongoing or completed in Water Services, in conjunction with Irish Water during 2020:

- Tubbercurry, Grange, Strandhill and Ballinafad Wastewater Treatment plant upgrades – completed early 2020
- Lough Talt Water Treatment Plant Upgrade – completed in 2020
- Foxes Den Water Treatment Plant Upgrade, Phase 2 – to be completed early 2021
- Ballymote and Collooney Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades – to be completed early 2021
- Rosses Point Sewer Network to Sligo City Wastewater Treatment Works – construction scheduled to start towards the end of 2021.

Rural Water Programme

Water Services acts as the facilitator in the delivery, improvement and ongoing maintenance of the Rural Water Programme funded by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government Rural Water Programme 2019 to 2021. Approval was received by Sligo County Council for €2,000,428 funding to be spread over 43 schemes during this period.

Sligo County Council continued to work with schemes regarding their Multi Annual Rural Water Programme allocation and subsidy payments allocated.



Lough Talt Water Treatment Plant



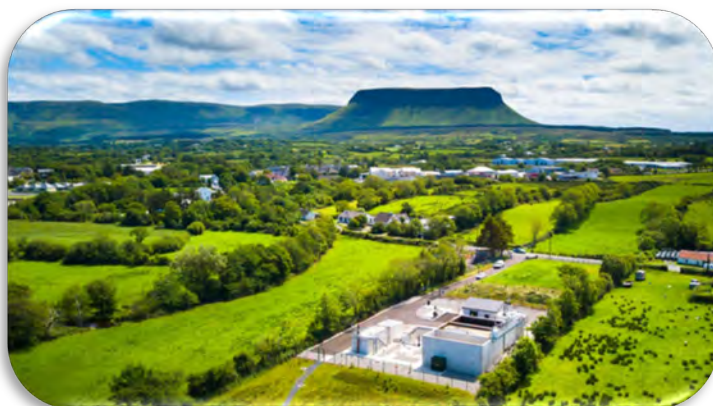
Strandhill Wastewater Treatment Plant



Tubbercurry Wastewater Treatment Plant



Ballinafad Wastewater Treatment Plant



Grange Wastewater Treatment Plant

PIERS, HARBOURS AND COASTAL PROTECTION

Sligo Harbour

Sligo is the only working harbour between Galway and Derry. The main cargoes at the harbour are slack, timber (logs and pulp) and fish meal. It is expected that approximately 20 No. Ships will have docked at Sligo Harbour by the end of 2020 and indications are that shipping movements are likely to increase in 2021.



Loading of logs at Deep Water Quay

Aids to Navigation

Sligo County Council are responsible for ensuring that all navigational aids within the channel and leading to Sligo Harbour are fully operational at all times. This includes:

- 29No. Aids to Navigation with lights
- 7No. unlit perches within the channel

As part of their annual contract, Triur Construction Ltd., monitor and maintain all Aids to Navigation on behalf of Sligo County Council.

As many of these Aids to Navigational were in excess of 15 years old and becoming somewhat unreliable, a complete programme of replacement was carried out by Triur Construction Ltd. towards the end of 2020. All such lights are fully operational and have been inspected and passed by the Commission for Irish Lights.

Sligo County Council are also responsible for the following structures:

- the Metal Man
- the Bungar Buoy
- the Lower Rosses Lighthouse
- Oyster Island Lighthouse

The Metal Man underwent significant refurbishment works during 2020.



Lower Rosses Lighthouse – Light fittings refurbished 2020

Floating Pontoon

The pontoon on Ballast Quay at Sligo Harbour is available for use by owners and authorised crew of leisure craft. It is owned, managed and operated by Sligo County Council. The pontoon is 60m long and is available to all local and visiting leisure craft for day trips, short term stays or long term berthings.

Leisure craft can berth safely and securely within easy reach of the city enhancing the tourism potential of Sligo.

The Department of Agricultural, Food and The Marine provide 75% funding support for qualifying rehabilitation and repair works to Piers and Harbours in Sligo.

In 2020 the following projects were supported by the Department.

These included:

- Aughris Pier – major strengthening works to the head of the pier
- Milk Harbour – minor repair works and enhancement works.



Aughris Pier: Pier head strengthening works - drilling and grouting steel bars down into bedrock

Coastal Protection

For decades Sligo County Council's Marine and Structures Unit has been carrying out studies and works relating to the protection of the coastal environment. Depending on the particular situation and issues involved, both soft and hard engineering solutions have been deployed to protect the coast.

Towards the end of 2020, Sligo County Council were awarded a contributory grant from the O.P.W. towards the installation of defence measures at the access to Rosses Point Second Beach. Construction is scheduled for spring 2021.

WATER QUALITY, AIR & NOISE POLLUTION

Catchment Management

The principal piece of legislation relating to the protection of surface water, groundwater, tidal, and coastal water quality in Ireland is the EU Water Framework Directive. Nationally, work is ongoing on the second cycle of implementing the Directive in Ireland. The River Basin District Management Plan for Ireland (2018-2021) was published by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in April 2018. Under the provisions of the Plan, all public bodies are required to coordinate their policies, functions and operations so as to maintain existing good status water bodies and improve existing unsatisfactory water bodies. Local authorities play a key role in implementing the programmes of measures detailed in the Plan within their functional areas.

Consultation work is also ongoing with the aim of delivering a new National River Basin Management Plan for the third cycle of implementation of the Water Framework Directive. The production of the new management plan will involve significant consultation with the public and other state agencies.

During 2020, Sligo County Council continued to liaise with the Environmental Protection Agency and other state agencies in relation to implementing the current plan and the preparation of the new national plan. Management and operational committees were established, and Sligo County Council actively participated in the process of implementation during 2020.

Nationally, the emphasis is on integrated catchment management and relates primarily to the following specific areas of work, which continued to be prioritized during 2020:

- Licensing and enforcement of trade and domestic effluent discharges to waters under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, as amended.
- Assessing planning proposals for domestic, commercial, agricultural and forestry developments in terms of environmental impact, with particular reference to protection of water quality.
- Implementation of the National Inspection Plan for domestic wastewater treatment systems as published by the Environmental Protection Agency, and implementation of the recently introduced inspection procedures for domestic wastewater treatment systems in High Status Catchments and Priority Areas for Action detailed in the National River Basin District Management Plan.
- Implementation of the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice For Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017, S.I. No. 605 of 2017, as amended.
- Complaint and query response relating to general environmental, water quality and planning related issues.

Drinking Water

The quality of drinking water in Ireland is governed by the EU (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 and 2017. The legislation defines what parameters are tested, and the monitoring frequency. All public water supplies, regulated Group Water Schemes (GWSs) and Small Private Supplies (SPSs) were monitored in 2020 in accordance with statutory requirements and those set by Irish Water (IW) where relevant. Sligo County Council liaised with Irish Water in relation to drinking water non compliances/incidents and managed their monitoring program and reporting of drinking water results.

Sligo County Council continued to act as the supervisory authority in relation to the provision of drinking water by Group Water Schemes (GWSs) and Small Private Supplies (SPSs) and managed the monitoring of GWSs and SPSs in 2020 to ensure they met the requirements of the Drinking Water Regulations. Sligo County Council liaised with the HSE in relation to drinking water non compliances.

Due to resource constraints the level of work carried out on unregulated supplies was limited in 2020.

Bathing Water

Sligo County Council fulfilled our statutory obligations in relation to the Bathing Water Regulations as outlined below:

- Identification of Bathing Waters
- Preparation and management of the annual monitoring programme
- Management, assessment and reporting of Bathing Water results
- Bathing Water incident management
- Bathing water returns to EPA.

In 2020, Sligo County Council formally identified five beaches under the 2008 Bathing Water Regulations; these were:

- Rosses Point
- Enniscrone
- Mullaghmore
- Streedagh
- Dunmoran.

Monitoring of the 5 bathing water beaches was undertaken in 2020 as well as monitoring at Strandhill beach. Results of the monitoring were displayed locally at each of the bathing water beaches and on the council's website throughout the bathing season. Applications were made to An Taisce for the Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards.



Pete, our Water Safety Officer and 2 of our Lifeguards welcome the Blue Flag for Rosses Point for 2020

Blue Flag / Green Coast Awards

The Sligo coastline, along the Wild Atlantic Way, is the home of spectacular unspoilt beaches, that are overlooked by majestic mountain ranges.

In 2020 Sligo had 3 beaches (Streedagh, Dunmoran and Rosses Point) that were awarded with a Green Coast/Green Flag by An Taisce and had 1 beach (Rosses Point) awarded the Blue Flag Status. Only 5 beaches in the country received dual award status in 2020 and Sligo's Rosses Point Beach was one of these beaches awarded both a Green Flag and Blue Flag.

Rosses Point fulfilled all Blue Flag criteria relating to water quality, facilities for visitors, beach management, environmental education and the provision of information, while also fulfilling the Green Coast Award requirement of community involvement in the management of the site.

2020 was one of the busiest at our beaches with large numbers attending at all of the beaches over the summer months, this is mainly due to Covid-19 restrictions and 'staycations' coupled with good weather.



Dunmoran Beach awarded Green Coast/Green Flag by An Taisce



Streedagh Beach awarded Green Coast/Green Flag by An Taisce



Rosses Point Beach awarded Green Coast/Green Flag and Blue Flag by An Taisce

Water Safety

During the bathing season of 2020 Sligo County Council provided lifeguard cover at Enniscrone, Dunmoran, Streedagh and Rosses Point beaches, as well as Beach Warden cover at Strandhill. No lifeguard cover was provided at Mullaghmore due to ongoing Health and Safety concerns. Public rescue equipment was also provided in other locations close to water. Some of this is taken in during the winter, but much of it is available all year round. It is inspected periodically and repaired/replaced as necessary if found to be in disrepair or has been interfered with, or has been removed. Additional warning signage was also erected in several locations due to the increased number of people using these amenities. We also engaged with Water Safety Ireland and the local Water Safety Area Committee, as well as several other interested parties, on issues related to water safety.

Rivers and Lakes

Sligo County Council managed and supervised the Lake Monitoring programme and undertook the river monitoring in accordance with the EPA National Monitoring Programme.



Lough Bo



Lough Gara



Lough Gill

Noise Control

The Environment Section provide advice and information on residential and commercial noise under the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992.

Air Quality

The Environment Section continues to enforce 1 No. Air Pollution Licence. The installation of the EPA's Air Quality monitor on the inner relief road was completed in 2020 and this was supplemented by the purchase of a number of smaller Air Quality monitors. These have been placed outside Sligo County Council's Offices and in the Cranmore area, and will continue to gather data on Air Quality in those areas. This data will be used to inform public information campaigns on the importance of good air quality. We also intend to work with 3rd level institutes in the future in order to make the best use of the available data.

Ban on Smoky Fuels

In 2012, the Department introduced new regulations extending the restricted area with regard to the marketing, sale and distribution of Smoky Fuels (Bituminous Coal). They also made the use of this fuel type, within the restricted area, an offence. Sligo County Council is responsible for the enforcement of these Regulations. The enforcement of these regulations continues to be challenging and requires a change in habits for inhabitants of Sligo Town and Environs regarding the type of fuel they use to heat their homes. However, it should ensure that the increase in air quality, observed since the original Regulations were introduced in 2003, are maintained and improved upon.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Bring Banks, Textile Banks and Recycling and Composting Facilities

The following facilities will continue to be made available to the public:

- Bring Banks (x 44 sites)
- Textile Banks
- Recycling Centre Tubbercurry
- Ballisodare Composting Facility

The bring bank in Carraroe was completed in December 2020.

Casual Trading

The Casual Trading Act 1955 covers open air trading of goods at designated bays throughout the County of Sligo. The Environment Section enforces the Casual Trading Bye-Laws 2018 in order to regulate casual trading on public property. Regular inspections will continue to be carried out by the Council's appointed Trading Officers to ensure that the trading bays are being operated in accordance with legislation.



Lorraine welcoming back some Casual Traders in the Market Yard.

Litter

Sligo County Council employs 2 full time Litter Wardens having responsibility for specific areas within the County. Routine patrols take place within these areas, in both a pro-active patrol capacity and also in response to complaints received from members of the public and from other government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), An Taisce, etc.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment have a programme of initiatives to support and strengthen Local Authority against litter. These have included

- On the spot fines of €150
- Allocating grants to the local Authorities to co-fund public anti-litter awareness campaigns
- Introduction of the Protection of the Environment Act 2003, which gives Local Authority powers in relation to litter
- Levy on plastic bags
- Allocating funds to the Local Authorities under the Anti-Dumping Initiative which ensures all litter black spot areas are targeted, cleaned and adequate signage erected together with holding recycling events such as bulky goods amnesty and mattress amnesty etc. Sligo County Council has held these events in the last number of years and they have been very successful.



Littering in Sligo before clean-up



Brian, our Litter Warden investigating illegal dumping in North Sligo.

Litter Complaints

Sligo County Council operates a Complaints Management System (CRM) where details of all complaints received are recorded in a central database from where they are assigned to the relevant member of staff to investigate and resolve. Investigation of instances of littering or dumping may result in the issuing of legal enforcement notices, fines or prosecutions of offenders (working in conjunction with the County Solicitor and the Courts Service). Litter Wardens also work to clear up the smaller occurrences of littering and illegal dumping and, where necessary, will liaise with the Roads Section of the County in the clearing up of illegally dumped waste.

Environmental Awareness

Sligo County Council supports a number of environmental awareness initiatives including Green Aware Sligo, National Spring Clean, Green Schools Programme and administration of Environmental Grants: Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme and the Community Environment Action Fund (formerly known as the Local Agenda 21 Grant Scheme). The delivery of several of these initiatives was impacted by Covid-19, but it is expected that they will be operating again as normal in 2021.

The Environment Section also works closely with An Taisce, the Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN), Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), the Regional Awareness Office, the PPN, Tidy Towns and many other organisations in promoting various schemes and initiatives throughout the year.

For the past number of years, the Environment Section has delivered various clean-up projects under the National Anti-Dumping Initiative, funding which has been administered by the Connacht Ulster WERLA in conjunction with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Projects carried out throughout 2020 included a bulky waste event and mattress collection, as well as the very successful Bikes for Africa initiative which has seen hundreds of bicycles donated by members of the public. This particular project is being run in cooperation with the Rotary Club of Ireland. Large scale clean-ups were also carried out at up to 20 sites throughout the county with a total of 86 tonnes of waste collected throughout the year.



Bricklieve/Carrowkeel Mountain Clean-up held throughout July and August 2020



Bulky Waste Event held on Saturday 8th August 2020



Bikes for Africa Initiative -

Tom Kilfeather, Director of Services Sligo County Council with Jimmy Waters, President of Sligo Rotary Club along with other Sligo County Council staff and members of Sligo Rotary Club



Climate Action

Following from the adoption of Sligo Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy in September 2019, the Council's Climate Action Team was formed to plan the implementation of the Climate Adaptation Strategy. The Council continued to work with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) on several different topics, including training for staff, developing support mechanisms for local Sustainable Energy Communities and on implementing actions contained within the Climate Adaptation Strategy.

The Strategic Policy Committee on Climate (SPC4) also held its first meeting in 2020 and drafted a work program for this area. This covers both adaptation and mitigation actions ranging from preparing to participate in the Establishment of Native Woodlands grant scheme, to working with other organisations on issues such as the installation of EV charging infrastructure. We also continued to work with the ESB on a major lighting refitting project that will get underway in 2021. The OPW's energy awareness initiative did not see any significant progress in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions, but it is hoped this will progress in 2021.

The Council's energy efficiency improved from 13.8% in 2018 to 26.4% in 2019, a significant improvement, which was measured in 2020. The target for the end of 2020, to be measured in 2021, is 33%. The area of Climate Action and Energy Efficiency has become a greater organisational priority, and this is set to continue as we strive to implement measures to meet our National Targets.

Waste Management

Waste Management continues to be to the fore of EI and Governmental priorities. It receives recognition through increased amounts of legislation and funding. Waste enforcement activities continue to be fully recoupable from Governmental funding. This funding originates from initiatives such as the plastic bag levy and landfill levy. The legislation introduced by Government has encompassed producer responsibility which also generates additional monies.

There are ever increasing demands placed on organisations and families but the need for proper waste management continues to be of importance for economic, legislative and environmental reasons.

There is continuing need to avoid the production of waste at source and try and divert as much as possible from landfill. This diversion of waste is achieved through the provision of facilities and services followed by education and enforcement. The Bring Bank Network, Civic Amenity Sites, Composting Site, Kerbside Recycling, Home Composting and the introduction of a separate organic collection all assist towards diverting waste from landfill.

Another element of waste management is trying to ensure that people manage their waste in a manner that avoids the creation of environmental pollution. Ongoing waste enforcement activities will endeavour to reduce this to a minimum.



James, our Bottle Bank Caretaker continuing service as usual on the bottle bank network, despite increased demand throughout lockdown.

Waste Management and Enforcement priorities will continue to involve bringing unauthorised sites into environmental compliance, increasing the recycling and recovery rates and to try and ensure that works undertaken by Sligo Local Authorities are carried out in compliance with Environmental Legislation.

Waste Management Planning

For the purposes of Waste Management Planning the country is divided into 3 waste regions. Sligo is in the Connacht Ulster Region. A 6-year plan was agreed in 2015 which sets out a road map for achieving commitments and is the framework for the prevention and management of waste. The plan is a statutory document and Sligo County Council has obligations to fund initiatives in the plan as well as the regional office based in Mayo County Council.

Waste Management Enforcement

The Regional Waste Enforcement Office is in operation since January 2016 with the intention of ensuring the effective implementation of Waste Enforcement policy in the Connaught Ulster Region. A key objective is the delivery of an integrated approach to waste enforcement which will drive consistent enforcement of legislation.



VETERINARY SERVICE

Food Safety

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, Sligo County Council continues to implement all relevant food safety legislation under the Service Contract between Sligo County Council and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. This includes the supervision of two abattoirs and two small meat manufacturing plants. The funding is based on a Service Contract negotiated nationally between FSAI and CCMA. There were difficult negotiations regarding funding between the FSAI and CCMA but an agreement was finally reached in late 2020, to roll over the contract for another year. The long-term future of the service is still under discussion.

Animal Welfare

The Council continues to implement the Control of Horses Act and has seen a major reduction in abandoned horses. The contract for seizure of horses continues to operate from a National framework.

The Dog Warden service operated under the COVID-19 restrictions. There was a noticeable fall in the number of dogs taken in and there were no dogs euthanized in 2020 in the shelter. Re-homing from the shelter is continuing with a number of charities but the uncertainty surrounding Brexit may affect this as many of the dogs go to the UK. Inspections of Dog Breeding establishments also took place in 2020, with 1 establishment renewing its licence but a second premises opted not to renew. The new National Dog Licence system was introduced by An Post and LGMA in 2018 and An Post now also send out first reminders. The system also has an online portal for dog licences which has been popular since its introduction in Summer 2018.

FIRE SERVICES

Sligo County Council is statutorily designated as the Fire Authority for the County of Sligo under Section 9 of the Fire Services Acts 1981-2003

Sligo Fire Service has four broad areas of activity that are mutually supportive in the delivery of an integrated service to the public:

- Fire/Emergency Operations
- Fire Prevention and Community Fire Safety
- Major Emergency Planning
- Regional Training Centre

Fire/Emergency Operations

Sligo Fire Service delivers operational emergency fire and rescue services across 4 Fire Brigade Units located in Sligo, Ballymote, Tubbercurry, and Enniscrone.

2020 has been a difficult and unusual time for all. Despite a COVID-19 pandemic and national lock down as Emergency First responders Sligo Fire Service continued to provide a Fire Service to the county.





Sligo Fire Service undertook many operational changes to ensure the provision of a Fire Service in a safe manner for all Fire Service Personnel and the public. Some of the changes include Crews re-structured to minimise contacts, additional control measures for all activities including extra PPE and revised Operation Procedures for all activities.

In 2020, Sligo Fire Service attended a total of 458 emergency incidents compared with 448 in 2019, 470 in 2018 and 448 in 2017. 2020 seen an increase in the number of environmental effect incidents with a high volume of Gorse/Forest Fire and Flooding events. The number of these incident types has seen an increase of 45% compared to 2019.

June 2020 was an exceptionally busy period for Sligo Fire Service Operations with four Level 3 (highest level of operational resources) incidents within an 8-day period, which included 3 No. large forest fire incidents and 1 No. large commercial premises structural fire which involved a 24,000sq ft industrial unit fully involved fire. These incidents were protracted events with the full resources of Sligo Fire Service in committed, assisted at times by our neighbouring Brigades.





Sligo Fire Services battle large blaze at recycling depot in town
in June 2020





Sligo Fire Service initiated a recruitment campaign for retained Fire-fighters in 2020 for Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Enniscrone Fire Stations for at least 6 No. new recruits. Recruit Fire-fighters are required to successfully complete a 3-week Firefighting Skills Course, 2 week Breathing Apparatus Course and 1 week Compartment Fire Behaviour Course plus extensive on station training.

The Firefighting Skills, Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour courses are QQI accredited and on successful completion learners achieve Level 6 award under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Fire Prevention and Community Fire Safety

Fire Safety and Prevention is an important function of Sligo Fire Service. The Fire Services Department process all applications for Fire Safety Certificates under building control legislation. In July 2020 Fire Safety Certificate applications moved to the BCMS online system, full roll out was completed with positive engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

Sligo Fire Service are also involved in planning referrals for commercial developments, inspecting and reporting on Circuit and District Court applications for Places of Public Entertainment, Registration of Fire Arms and Explosives Stores and Petroleum Regulations Licences.

Inspection of licensed premises and addressing premises Fire Safety concerns brought forward by members of the public, other sections of Sligo County Council and Fire Service Operations continued in 2020 even under COVID-19 conditions. Any buildings, which were non-compliant, were followed up on by issuing advice to the owners and applying the powers legislated under the Fire Services Act 1981 and 2003 as required. In 2020 Sligo Fire Service continued to engage with stakeholders, licensed premises and apartment management companies to promote the importance of fire safety in the built environment.

Sligo Fire Service engages with and promoted National Fire Safety Week, Carbon Monoxide Awareness, Schools Fire Safety programmes and fire safety talks and free smoke detectors to vulnerable groups. Sligo Fire Service actively promote Community Fire Safety throughout the year, focusing on vulnerable groups in the community and personnel from each fire station facilitated visits to their stations and requests from voluntary groups, such as the elderly and active retirement to provide fire safety talks

In light of COVID-19 restrictions Sligo Fire Service provided Fire Safety advice through various media outlets including extensive Fire Safety social media campaign.

S

SMOKE ALARM

A smoke alarm is a warning device that detects smoke at the earliest stages of fire

Fit at least one smoke alarm on every floor of your home ideally in the hallway

Follow the manufacturers' instructions of how to fit and position the alarm

T

TEST IT

Always test your smoke alarm once a week

Change the battery once a year or when it starts to beep

Have a spare battery in the house for your alarm

Assist vulnerable people by testing their alarms for them

Keep your alarm free from dust

O

OBVIOUS DANGERS

Extinguish and dispose of cigarettes properly

Never smoke in bed and be extra careful if you are tired, taking prescription drugs or having a drink.

Never leave cooking appliances unattended

Use a spark guard for an open fire

Don't use candles near flammable materials and don't leave them unattended

Keep matches and lighters away from children

Don't overload electrical sockets

P

PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

Ensure your family know what to do in a fire and how to escape safely

Know where keys are kept at night

Keep hallways clear from obstructions

Plan a bedtime routine (close doors, turn off electric appliances that are not required)

Get out, stay out and get the fire service out



NATIONAL FIRE SAFETY WEEK

**STOP
FIRE**

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A GREASE FIRE IN YOUR KITCHEN?

- 1 - Turn off the heat.
- 2 - Cover the pot with lid to smother flames.
- 3 - Douse with lots of baking soda.
- 4 - Spray with Class B Fire Extinguisher
(designed for Grease Fires).
- 5 - Call 999 / 112.

Caution: **DO NOT** throw water on it.

Counterintuitively this may cause the fire to spread.



NATIONAL FIRE SAFETY WEEK

**STOP
FIRE**

Way Out Wednesday



Make an escape plan and practice regularly together



NATIONAL FIRE SAFETY WEEK

**STOP
FIRE**

Always dampen your cigarette butts and ashes before you dispose of them



NATIONAL FIRE SAFETY WEEK

**STOP
FIRE**

✓ BEDTIME CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check the cooker is turned off.
- ☐ Turn off and unplug electrical appliances (unless they are meant to be left on, like your freezer).
- ☐ Put candles and cigarettes out properly.
- ☐ Turn heaters off and put up fireguards.
- ☐ Close internal doors at night to stop a fire from spreading.
- ☐ Make sure exits are clear.
- ☐ Know where your keys are.
- ☐ Take a phone to your bedroom.

Some of the images used during National Fire Safety Week 2020 on our social media

Major Emergency Planning

A Major Emergency is an event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens injury or death, or serious disruption of essential services. It may also cause damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services in the area in which the event occurs. It requires the use of additional procedures and the use of additional resources to ensure an efficient and effective response.

This current Framework for Major Emergency Management (MEM) was introduced in 2006. The purpose of this Framework is to put in place arrangements that will enable the principal emergency response agencies, the local authorities, An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive to co-ordinate their efforts whenever a major emergency occurs, enhancing Ireland's capability to meet the challenges posed by such an event.

Sligo Fire Service are the lead for Major Emergency planning for Sligo County Council and have continued to update the Sligo County Council Major Emergency Plan and sub-plans. Sligo Fire Service co-ordinated responses to incidents - though not major emergencies utilising the principles and systems of the MEM framework.

During the 2020 COVID-19 response, the North West Regional Major Emergency structures were used to ensure appropriate preparedness and co-ordination across the three Principle Response Agencies, which included the development of a Mass Fatalities Plan etc.

In 2020, Sligo Fire Service updated the Sligo County Council Major Emergency Plan and developed the Sligo County Council Flood Emergency Response Plan.

Regional Training Centre


Sligo Fire Station is the Fire Service Regional Training Centre for the North West, providing national, regional and centralised training. The centre has a breathing apparatus (BA) training building, providing realistic live fire environment to train fire-fighters to the highest and safest of standards in search and rescue techniques in complex burning buildings.

Once Phase 3 of Re-opening Plan was in place, Sligo Fire Service re-commenced training of personnel based on a training needs assessment.



Under the Governments Resilience and Recovery Plan for Living with COVID-19, local authorities and the Fire Service are recognised as being an essential service. With the implementation of appropriate control measures, our Training Centre continued to provide Breathing Apparatus (BA) Training and Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) facilities and instructors to other Fire Authorities at Sligo and Tubbercurry Fire Stations.

Sligo Fire Service is the only Fire Service other than Dublin Fire Service in Ireland that is a recognised PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council) Training Centre. We have qualified trainers providing courses for First Aid Responder, Cardiac First Responder and Emergency First Responder. In 2020 with extra control measure in place Sligo Fire Service provided training Cardiac First Responder and Emergency First Responder to other Fire Authorities.



A WORKING SMOKE ALARM CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

<p>S</p> <p>Smoke alarms</p> <p>Make sure you have at least one on every floor.</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Test your smoke alarms weekly</p> <p>Test your smoke alarm weekly, or ask someone to check it for you.</p>	<p>O</p> <p>Obvious dangers</p> <p>Look for fire risks like overloaded sockets, candles and unattended appliances.</p>	<p>P</p> <p>Plan your escape route</p> <p>Keep access routes clear and have your keys at the ready.</p>
---	--	--	---

FINANCE DIRECTORATE



DIRECTOR: MS MARIE WHELAN

INTRODUCTION

This Directorate includes Finance, Procurement and Information Technology.

A revenue surplus of €1.028m was delivered in 2020 as compared to a surplus of €1.017m for 2019.

Funding support was received from Government to compensate the Council towards the loss of income and additional costs incurred as result of Covid -19.

There was a continued focus within the Council on disciplined budgetary control, implementation of efficiencies, reduction in cost base and adoption of prudent budgets.

It is the sixth consecutive year in which the council has produced a Revenue surplus amounting to a cumulative of €9.1m for period 2015 - 2020. The effect of the strong performance has meant a reduction of the Council's accumulated Revenue deficit from a high of €26.6m in 2014 to €17.45m at end of 2020.

The overall good performance has facilitated a number of other financial benefits such as the improvements to cashflow and the overall reduced reliance on overdraft facility, with associated savings in the cost of funds.

The restart grant scheme delivered direct grant aid to micro and small businesses to help them with the costs associated with reopening and reemploying workers following Covid-19 closures.

Sligo County Council administered and paid restart grants to the value of €9m during 2020. The funding for the restart grants was recouped from the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

The IT section played a central role in 2020 in ensuring the continued provision of Information Technology (I.T.) services to the council as Ireland grappled to deal with Covid -19 restrictions.

Solutions were speedily put in place by IS staff to enable users to work from home. Virtual meetings became the norm with I.T. support given to staff and councillors so that meetings could continue to take place. Security was also enhanced by ensuring staff use multi-factor authentication to access the council network remotely.

Analysis of Collection of Yields 2020:

Commercial Rates

The percentage revenue collection from commercial rates for 2020 was 69%. To alleviate the impact of Covid-19 on eligible businesses during 2020 the Government funded a 9-month rate waiver scheme for commercial rates scheme.

For prior year's comparison purpose, if the waiver income was added to the amount collected, the percentage collected in 2020 would have been 81% as compared to 82% in 2019.

Housing Loans

The percentage collection from Housing Loans at the end of 2020 was 68%, an increase of 4% on the collection at the end of 2019.

Housing Rents

The percentage collection on Rents improved from 80% in 2019 to 82% in 2020 resulting in a reduction of rent arrears of €171k during 2020.

Motor Tax

The percentage of Motor Tax transaction which were dealt with online i.e. transactions processed and tax disc issued in 2020 was 80% compared to 64% in 2019.

Marie Whelan

Head of Finance

FINANCE

Income and Expenditure Account

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT) FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020

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

	Gross Expenditure 2020 €	Income 2020 €	Net Expenditure 2020 €	Net Expenditure 2019 €
Expenditure by Division				
Housing and Building	12,233,009	11,163,778	1,069,231	917,608
Roads, Transportation & Safety	24,971,168	19,020,867	5,950,300	5,150,056
Water Services	4,497,851	4,543,787	(45,935)	10,966
Development Management	15,759,080	11,976,903	3,782,177	3,586,404
Environmental Services	6,831,050	1,213,586	5,617,464	5,760,262
Recreation & Amenity	4,680,706	256,334	4,424,372	3,800,799
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	1,147,815	850,518	297,297	81,395
Miscellaneous Services	14,289,862	12,710,311	1,579,551	3,307,065
Total Expenditure/Income	84,410,541	61,736,084		
Net Cost of Division to be funded from Rates and Local Property Tax			22,674,457	22,614,555
Rates			14,119,007	13,546,966
Local Property Tax			11,293,320	10,802,627
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfer			2,737,870	1,735,038
Transfers from/(to) Reserves			(1,709,187)	(717,949)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year			1,028,683	1,017,089
General Reserve at 1st January			(18,483,135)	(19,500,224)
General Reserve at 31st December			(17,454,453)	(18,483,135)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (BALANCE SHEET) AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2020

	2020	2019
	€	€
Fixed Assets		
Operational	457,651,382	448,680,264
Infrastructural	1,187,513,456	1,187,559,070
Community	9,063,942	9,063,942
Non-Operational	19,673,719	19,673,719
	1,673,902,499	1,664,976,995
Work-in-Progress and Preliminary Expenses	250,333,079	195,125,531
Long Term Debtors	24,352,997	26,446,563
Current Assets		
Stock	292,576	258,470
Trade Debtors & Prepayments	10,971,442	8,207,549
Bank Investments	1,481,170	1,472,376
Cash at Bank	17,929,452	15,531,743
Cash in Transit	1,625	1,625
	30,676,264	25,471,762
Current Liabilities		
Bank Overdraft	-	-
Creditors & Accruals	35,759,150	32,630,320
Finance Leases	-	-
	35,759,150	32,630,320
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)	(5,082,886)	(7,158,558)
Creditors (Amounts greater than one year)		
Loans Payable	83,883,530	87,253,368
Finance Leases	-	-
Refundable Deposits	768,766	772,670
Other	-	-
	84,652,297	88,026,038
Net Assets / (Liabilities)	1,858,853,392	1,791,364,494
Represented By		
Capitalisation	1,673,902,494	1,664,976,991
Income WIP	248,353,387	193,142,673
Specific Revenue Reserve	32,264	32,264
General Revenue Reserve	(17,454,453)	(18,483,135)
Other Balances	(45,980,300)	(48,304,298)
Total Reserves	1,858,853,391	1,791,364,494

MOTOR TAX

The Motor Taxation Offices for County Sligo are located in County Hall, Riverside, Sligo Telephone: 071 911 1830 and in Teach Laighne, Humbert Street, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo Telephone: 071 911 1719, where applications for Motor Tax are processed for owners of vehicles which are ordinarily kept in County Sligo. All business relating to Motor Tax offices can be found on our website at www.sligococo.ie/Services/MotorTaxation/

In the year 2020, €2,923,737 was paid by the registered owners of vehicles to the Motor Tax Offices in Sligo and Tubbercurry for Motor Tax transactions. This was a 40% decrease from the €4,861,276 recorded for the year 2019. The decrease in office transactions related to the Covid-19 pandemic when public desks were closed and customers were advised to carry out their transactions online where possible.

Declaring a Vehicle Temporarily off the Road

New procedures were introduced in 2013 for declaring a vehicle is temporarily off the road so that customers do not have to pay motor tax for that period. Since 1st October 2013 it is necessary to declare in advance that a vehicle will be off the road and not in use for a period of between 3 and 12 months using Declaration of Non-Use of a Motor Vehicle Form RF150. The declaration of non-use must be made in the same month that the current motor tax disc expires. If arrears in motor tax are due these must be paid in full plus a minimum of 3 months motor tax, before a declaration of non-use can be made.

Motor Tax Online

www.motortax.ie is an online service provided by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and motor tax customers are encouraged to tax their cars online to avoid queuing delays at their local offices.

Statistics from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport statistics show On-Line Motor Tax transactions for Co. Sligo as follows:

➤ 31% in 2011	➤ 56% in 2016
➤ 35% in 2012	➤ 58% in 2017
➤ 39% in 2013	➤ 62% in 2018
➤ 48% in 2014	➤ 64% in 2019
➤ 53% in 2015	➤ 80% in 2020

Driving Licences

The Road Safety Authority assumed full responsibility for the driving licence service in 2013. The National Driver Licence Service office in Sligo is located at Ground Floor, Millennium House, Stephen Street, Sligo, opposite the Ulster Bank – Telephone: 076 108 7880 and is open from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday and from 9am to 2pm on Saturdays. See also www.ndls.ie.



PROCUREMENT

The primary procurement objective for Sligo County Council is to get optimum value for money while complying with all EU Directives, National Legislation, Public Procurement Policy, Circulars and Guidelines. The key procurement principles incorporate fairness, openness, transparency, mutual recognition, non-discrimination and proportionality.

Sligo County Council actively uses national procurement arrangements where they are suitable to our needs.

These arrangements have been put in place by the Office of Government Procurement and the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre.

The Procurement Section under the guidance of the Procurement Officer is in place to provide a dedicated in-house resource for the organisation in respect of Public Procurement requirements.

Formal responsibility for Procurement Governance is assigned to the Head of Finance.

Procurement within the organisation is decentralised, with buyers in all areas of the council, with most of the high value procurement being conducted using the two electronic procurement portals: www.etenders.gov.ie and www.SupplyGov.ie. Suppliers interested in tendering for contracts should ensure to register with both of these portals.

In 2020 Sligo County Council went to market with 182 tender opportunities for supply of goods and services or works contracts. The sudden onset of the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated urgent procurement of appropriate PPE, cleaning services, IT equipment, signage, and modification works to public buildings and public spaces.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Systems (IS) department manages all the Council's Information Communications technology (ICT) hardware and software. This infrastructure spans multiple locations in the County and is utilised by close to 400 users. The department is responsible for the councils' websites, social media channels and both internal and external web-based applications. The department is also responsible for the management of the councils' data which ranges from file servers to a considerable number of databases. The section is constantly reviewing and refining its infrastructure as new challenges emerge.

The section played a central role in 2020 in ensuring the continued provision of Information Technology (I.T.) services to the council as Ireland grappled to deal with COVID-19 restrictions.



Solutions were speedily put in place by I.S. staff to enable users to work from home. Virtual meetings became the norm with I.T. support given to staff and councillors so that meetings could continue to take place. Security was also enhanced by ensuring staff use multi-factor authentication to access the council network remotely.

The I.S. section took on additional work including the setup of the Community Call Response Desk and the ability for local business to apply for the Business Restart Grants on www.sligococo.ie website. The I.S. section staff were key players in developing a new Wellbeing section on the council website which evolved into the Keep Well campaign in 2021 <https://www.sligococo.ie/keepwell/>. 2020 saw the council meetings move around different locations such as IT Sligo, Sligo Park Hotel and the Sligo Sports Complex, the I.S. section facilitated these meetings by sourcing a mobile microphone discussion system and providing I.T. support services.

2020 was a challenging year for the technical support team as it continued its commitment to delivering a high-quality technical support service to users. This team manages the Council's Network, desktop and laptops, telephony systems, mobile phones, tablets, data logger devices and sims. The number of issues logged with the helpdesk rose significantly.

2020 saw a successful pilot of the Microsoft Office 365 environment with over 60 users upgraded and it is envisaged all staff will be setup on Office 365 by the end of 2021.



Council meetings took place in a number of locations in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions

Broadband Officer

The Broadband Officer continued to facilitate the rollout of the National Broadband Plan across the county. In 2020, work on delivering wireless broadband services continued under very difficult circumstances. Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) providing designated community centres and sports halls throughout the county with dedicated, high speed, internal and external Wi-Fi, are being installed and going live incrementally during 2021.

Under the National Broadband Plan, there are 14,800 premises listed in the state intervention area in Co. Sligo as not having access to high-speed broadband. It is planned that 2,513 of these premises will be available for connection to high-speed broadband during 2021. The first deployment area in Co. Sligo is from the regional exchange in Sligo town and builds outward from there (yellow area on map below). This area has been surveyed and designed and it is planned to go live in Q3 / Q4 of 2021. The build out to the other areas in county Sligo will follow.



A digital strategy was developed for the county and was adopted by the Council at the November 2020 Council meeting. The strategy was developed in collaboration with multiple stakeholders representing all sectors in the county including business, education, citizens, and communities. Work now turns to implementing the action plans set out in the strategy.

The Council aims to provide public Wi-Fi around the county and is active in rolling out the Wifi4EU scheme across communities. The Wifi4EU scheme is supported by funding from the EU and Department of Rural and Community Development, with running costs being funded by the council. This roll-out will deliver public Wi-Fi at 20 locations initially, with potential for further expansion.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: STAFF RETIREMENTS 2020

APPENDIX 1

Staff Retirements in 2020

- Bartley Gavin
- Brendan Lynch
- Brian McMorrow
- Janet McNamara
- Jerome Walsh
- John O'Donnell
- Martin McCrann
- Mary Anderson
- Maura Marren
- Paul Harper
- Rose Jordan
- Seamus Egan



L I V E



I N V E S T



V I S I T

