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**MIONTUAIRISCÍ CRUINNITHE BHUISÉID DE COMHAIRLE CHONTAE
CHIARRAÍ, A THIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE,
TRÁ LÍ, DÉ LUAN, 12 SAMHAIN 2018.**

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON MONDAY,
12 NOVEMBER 2018.**

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

T. Barry	R. Beasley	P. Connor-Scarteen
B. Cronin	J.J. Culloty	P. Daly
T. Ferris	J. Finucane	J.F. Flynn
N. Foley	D. Grady	J. Healy-Rae
N. Kelleher	M. Kennelly	S. Locke
J. Lucid	D. McCarthy	P. McCarthy
T. McEllistrim	J. Moloney	N. Moriarty
B. O'Connell	M. O'Shea	D. Quigg
J. Sheahan	G. Spring	A. Thornton

APOLOGIES/LEATH SCÉAL

M. Gleeson

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Ms. M. Murrell, Chief Executive	Mr. J. Breen, Director Water Services
Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Dir. of Operations	Mr. M. O'Donoghue, Director Housing
Mr. C. O'Connor, Director Corp. Servs.	Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance
Mr. L. Quinlan, Meetings Administrator	Ms. D. Griffin, SO Corporate Support
Mr. O. O'Shea, Press Officer	Ms. O. O'Shea, CO Corporate Support
Mr. P. Corkery, SEO Finance	Ms. K. Moriarty, A/SEO Finance
Ms. M. Moriarty, AO Finance	Mr. P. O'Shea, AO Finance
Ms. T. Browne, AO Revenue	Mr. J. McCarthy, AO Finance
Mr. P. O'Connor, AO Finance	Ms. S. Sheridan, SSO Finance
Ms. C. O'Connor-Galvin, SO Finance	Mr. R. Tangney, SO Finance
Ms. N. McCarthy, SO Finance	Mr. J.J. Canty, ASO Finance
Ms. G. Cotter, CO Finance	Ms. J. Foley, MD Officer
Mr. P. Neary, SE Operations	Mr. D. Doyle, SE Operations
Ms. M. West, AO Operations	Mr. J. Kennelly, SE Water Services
Ms. B. Fitzgerald, Economic Officer	Mr. G. O'Brien, A/SEO Environment
Mr. T. Hayes, LEO	Mr. L. Brosnan, AO Planning
Ms. N. O'Sullivan, SEO Community	Ms. K. Lynch, SEO Housing
Mr. T. O'Connor, Co. Librarian	Ms. N. O'Keefe, Snr. Exec. Librarian
Ms. L. O'Donnell, AO Environment	Ms. K. Kennelly, Arts Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.35 a.m.
Cllr. N. Foley, Cathaoirleach, took the Chair.

**12.11.18.01 Cathaoirleach's Report on the Budget CPG Meeting held on the
18th September 2018**

The Cathaoirleach read the following report into the record of the meeting:

“Consultation on Budget 2019, Budget Policy/Strategy and financial consequences of any variation in the Basic Rate of Local Property Tax, General Municipal Allocation, Rates Vacancy Refunds and Base Year Adjustment

Ms. K. Moriarty, A/Head of Finance, referred members to the draft Budget 2019 Strategy Report and the draft Chief Executive’s Report on the Setting of a Local Adjustment Factor for LPT for 2019 which were circulated. She briefed them on the Budget process and the legal requirements.

The Chief Executive briefed members on the Budget 2019 Strategy Report under the following headings:

- Financial support for County Economic Drivers
- Support for Operations
- Infrastructure Projects per MD
- Housing Construction Programme
- Income
- Proposed Local Property Tax rate for 2019

A discussion took place on Budget 2019, Budget Policy/Strategy, proposed variation of LPT and General Municipal Allocation during which members acknowledged in particular the importance of supporting tourism and economic initiatives.”

12.11.18.02 Consideration of the Local Authority Budget for the Local Financial Year ending 31st December 2019

The Chief Executive advised members on the Draft Budget prepared for Kerry County Council for the financial year ending 31st December 2019 in accordance with the Local Government Act 2001 and the Local Government Reform Act 2014, together with regulations and guidance issued under the auspices of both Acts for consideration by the Members at the Budget Meeting fixed for Monday, 12th November 2018. She briefed the members on the contents of her report previously circulated which outlines the provisions of the Draft Budget.

Presentation of the Statutory Budget for adoption by Members concludes the three stage Budget process for 2019. The first stage required Members to consider adoption of the Local Adjustment factor for the 2019 rate of LPT at the Budget Strategy meeting of the 24th September 2018. The second stage of the Budget process required consideration of the Municipal District Allocation for 2019 at the Municipal District Budgetary Plan meetings held on 22nd October 2018. The third and final stage of the Budget process commences during the prescribed Budget period at the Annual Statutory Budget Meeting of 12th November 2018.

Draft Budget 2019 as presented to members provides for income and expenditure of €143.96m. The balancing of this Draft Budget has presented many difficulties given increased service demands across the Council, increased budgetary requirements and a growing dependence on locally sourced income and once-off departmental compensatory payments.

At the Budget Strategy meeting in September, she outlined a shortfall in Budget requirements. In order to present the Budget today, the Draft Budget was reverted to, to give effect to additional expenditure cuts and propose increases in income streams, albeit limited. Further analysis of expenditure across all operational budgets has required a review. At this stage, a number of budgetary requests made from budget holders have been assessed and in many cases, projects and requests for additional staff either have been delayed or cannot be accommodated in 2019. In addition, the increased allocation from the Strategic Development Fund of the Community Support

Fund has provided funding to meet the own resources commitment required by current grant applications, to the value of €198,000. This has provided a cost saving to the Revenue Budget and this has been an important factor in balancing the overall Budget for 2019. A number of minor capital works in Budget 2019 have been supported by the Capital Account, for example, public conveniences, minor civic amenity site enhancements and funding for voids/vacant housing. This has been applied for 2019 only given the budgetary constraints, and it will not be possible to apply this funding into the future.

In addition, adjustments have been made to a limited number of local income streams as referred to earlier. Continued service delivery of the provision of waste disposal services throughout the County and the continued roll out of the burial ground programme has necessitated a review by management of charging structures and this is reflected in Draft Budget 2019.

Draft Budget 2019 reflects additional car parking income generated from targeted car parking enforcement across the County, aligned with the implementation of a Countywide Carparking Strategy. This Strategy will be developed over the course of 2019 and brought to Members for adoption in late 2019. Additional income is required to meet increased loan charges associated with the car parking development programme.

The proposed expenditure for 2019 of €143.96m represents a 5.3% increase on last year's budget and reflects increased activity across all operational levels. While some increases from central grant funding will meet an element of increased expenditure, this Council is required to fund any remaining shortfall. In relation to payroll, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has confirmed recently that 88% of the cumulative costs of national pay increases will be met by Central Government. This has provided additional income of €150,000 over earlier indications. In addition, following negotiation with Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance Ltd, the Council has minimised the increased premium for public liability for 2019. This will be subject to further review and negotiation during 2019. Many requests for additional funding in budgets have not been included this year. However, it will be necessary to continually re-examine expenditure requirements into 2019. Additional budget requirements by services will be absorbed within existing budgets, effectively building in a cost saving/diversion on the existing budget. Again, this is not a sustainable model into the future.

A number of significant challenges remain in relation to the ongoing financing of this Council. It is of serious concern that the Draft Budget 2019 is supported by once-off compensation payments to the value of €3.14m. This includes Payroll compensation and Irish Water rates compensation. A significantly reduced IPB projected dividend income is included for 2019. The Draft Budget includes an estimated income from the NPPR charge of €0.90m, which includes income from agreements by those with a liability to discharge the amount due, over an agreed period of time. A future alternative source of funding will have to be identified as the dependence on the ICR (Internal Capital Receipts) programme to fund voids expenditure in the Housing Budget is not sustainable. Reliance on these income streams to balance Budgets in the coming years is not prudent and Kerry County Council must put in place a financial plan to increase income over the next three years.

Kerry County Council has been successful in recent years in attracting Grants from a number of National Grant Schemes co-funding grants - Town and Village Renewal, CLÁR, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Enterprise Ireland Grants, LEADER. While we welcome the opportunities available from these schemes, co-funding is required. For Draft Budget 2019, the Strategic Fund of the Community Support Fund has supported co-funding for grant applications made recently. In addition to this allocation, it has been necessary to set aside a specific allocation from operational budgets to meet these co-funding requirements during 2019.

Commercial Rates of €41.29m contribute a significant proportion of income amounting to 29% of Kerry County Council's overall income. This income is reflective of significant previous and current year reductions of over €0.7m in global valuations. In addition, the current rates harmonisation process limits income generation from this income stream.

In balancing Draft Budget 2019 and taking all these factors into consideration, it is clear that there is very little discretionary funding available to the organisation and it is further eroded by the need to support additional expenditure. The extent of ongoing liabilities such as pensions, landfill obligations, servicing of land loans, funding of debit capital balances, ageing corporate buildings and increased information technology requirements require a phased financial plan, funded over the next three to five years, at minimum.

Current Financial Update

It is anticipated at this stage of the year that this Council will achieve a balanced Budget for 2018. The estimated expenditure outturn for 2018 is expected to exceed the 2018 Adopted Budget by 4.79% largely attributable to an increase in Roads & Transportation and LEADER Grant Funding.

The Draft Budget 2019 provides for expenditure of €143.96m. The proposed budget expenditure is funded as follows: -

• Grants and Subsidies	€ 40.68m
• Rates	€ 41.29m
• Local Property Tax Allocation	€ 13.78m
• Rents & Loans (inc. RAS)	€ 12.60m
• Irish Water recoupment	€ 12.16m
• Parking Charges and Fines	€ 3.06m
• Transfer Station and Refuse Charges	€ 2.43m
• Other Recoupable Income	€ 3.95m
• Other Misc Income	€ 14.01m
Total	€143.96m

Revenue Budget 2019 – Main Service Features

In reflecting the overall Budget Strategy, she said she has endeavoured to reflect the key requirements in the Draft Budget Allocations across all divisions. The identification of expenditure cuts, efficiencies, procurement savings and the maximising of income by each division has been critical to the overall balancing of this budget.

Commercial Rates

This Budget was framed in the context of limited buoyancy in the 2019 income. Commercial Rates of €41.29m contributes 29% to Kerry County Council's overall income. The Council, while making all efforts to optimise collections, will continue to review the position of businesses on a case-by-case basis, particularly those experiencing difficulties due to the current economic climate, subject to the submission of required documentation. A distinction, however, needs to be made between those businesses that have genuine trading difficulties and those apparently unwilling to pay. The latter businesses will be pursued through the appropriate channels. The rates collection has shown an improvement of 7% after 4 years and continues to represent a critical funding stream to fund the overall budget. 2019 represents the 5th year of the 8-year harmonisation period agreed with Members for Budget 2015. The 8-year harmonisation period will gradually result in a single Annual Rate on Valuation of €79.25 at the end of the harmonisation period by using the base year adjustment factor.

Local Authority Financing – Local Property Tax Allocation 2019

Kerry County Council received confirmation from DHPLG on 2nd October 2018 of the Provisional Local Property Tax Allocation for 2019. Following the decision by Members to maintain the basic rate of Local Property Tax for 2019, the allocation for Kerry County Council for 2019 is €13.78m.

Housing and Building

Overall activity levels in the Housing area continue at a very high level. The operating environment continues to be difficult given the current property markets and overall construction activity generally. The Housing Department has an extensive Capital Programme under the Rebuilding Ireland 2017-2021 National Housing Strategy. The Council works in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies to deliver units as part of the overall capital Programme. In addition, the Council's Capital Infrastructure Unit provides support and services to smaller approved Housing Bodies in delivering smaller scale projects. Members will be aware of the details of the Projects planned to be delivered following the regular presentations and reports considered at full Council and at Municipal District Meetings. The Council is on target to deliver the 2018 construction targets and meet delivery targets across all other headings. A number of projects (e.g. Ard Bhearna and Mitchel's Regeneration) are due for completion before the end of 2018 and the allocation processes are currently underway to tenant these units.

The delivery of housing services to persons requiring emergency accommodation and to those who are homeless continues to be very challenging. The current private market conditions are proving difficult and challenging in attempting to secure short term solutions. Significant staff and financial resources are deployed in this area. While the position continues to be challenging we currently have sufficient emergency accommodation capacity to deal with the situation. A significant portion of expenditure in this area is recouped under established arrangements, however the Council does support this service area with staff resources and the use of some Council properties for emergency accommodation interventions. The outturn figure for this expenditure heading of €1.02m for 2017 is reflected in the Annual Financial Statement 2017. The estimated figure for 2018 is based on a best estimate for this stage of the year. This service remains under constant review.

This Council has an extensive portfolio of land for the construction of housing. The Council is obliged to service the loans on these lands out of the revenue budget. The Council consulted directly with the HFA in 2014 and negotiated a 5-year interest-only payment option for matured land loans. This is further extended for one year. The impact on the revenue Budget 2019 is €0.803m expenditure taking account of all factors in relation to this issue.

In 2019, this Council is liable for approximately €0.368m for Local Property Tax liabilities in respect of liable Council stock and properties.

Road Transport and Safety

The Draft Budget 2019 figures for the Roads Grant Schemes are prepared on the original 2018 National and Non-National road allocations from the Department of Transport Tourism & Sport (DTTAS) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

In 2018 the Department allowed discretion for the transfer of a portion of funding under the Road Restoration Improvement Grant to other works. This was used to fund an extensive footpath programme, which was targeted at the local road network, with each Municipal District benefitting from these works.

The Department also allocated specific funding of €477,500 for roadside drainage works. This was supplemented by €422,500 from the transfer of funding from the Restoration Improvement Programme and prioritised drainage works on local

secondary and tertiary roads. The Department has indicated that further specific funding will be provided for such drainage works in 2019.

In the recently adopted multi-annual road restoration programme, specific provision has also been made for improving urban roads and footpaths.

Kerry County Council has also secured funding under the Specific Improvement Grant scheme to advance improvements on the Tralee - Fenit route and the Tralee Northern Relief Road.

Unfinished Housing Estates

The Housing Estates Unit will continue to pursue the non-payment or resolution of bond claims still outstanding and in this regard has lodged 86 claims with Financial Institutions and Insurance Companies seeking payment of the proceeds of bonds to complete outstanding works in unfinished estates. Good progress is being made in resolving outstanding bond claims with our larger Bond Holders. We expect to finalise a substantial number of AIB claims over the coming months, having agreed a resolution process with them. Kerry County Council will continue to work with all Financial Institutions and Bond Companies in pursuit of outstanding Bond claims.

Taking in Charge of Estates

The Housing Estates Unit manage the "Taking in Charge" programme. A total of 18 estates have been formally taken in charge to date in 2018. A further 3 have recently been advertised and they will be taken in charge before year end. The Council currently has 44 "Taking in Charge" applications on hand. Many of the remaining estates to be taken in charge are historic estates where there is no bond in place. We also require the formal approval of Irish Water before proceeding to commence the taking in charge process in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed in 2015. In many cases, site resolution plans are also required to be prepared.

Water Services

Kerry County Council continues to provide Water Services in Kerry, operating as an Agent of Irish Water under a Service Level Agreement. The services provided in the Service Level Agreement include Operation and Maintenance of Water Supply, Drinking Water Compliance, Non-Domestic Meter Maintenance, Water Conservation and Leakage Reduction, Operation and Maintenance of Wastewater Plants and Networks, New Water and Sewer Connections and Non-Domestic Meter Reading.

This division also reflects areas retained by Kerry County Council and includes the operation of public conveniences and the administration of the Rural Water Programme.

Development Management

With a significant amount of work having been carried out in 2018 with the completion of the Local Area Plans for Tralee and Killarney, the final quarter of 2018 will see this Council publish the Local Area Plans for Iveragh West and Listowel.

In conjunction with the local plans, Planning staff are also involved in the preparation of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES), which is currently being drafted and will be developed throughout 2019. The plan, which is being produced by the Southern Regional Assembly, has as its main aim to bring the National Planning Framework down to regional level.

Once this RSES is completed, the regional policies and strategies in the plan will inform Kerry County Council as they commence the review of the Kerry County Development Plan in 2019. This review, which is a two-year process, will once again be delivered by in-house expertise, and will set out a vision for the future of this county

in a sustainable manner, for the benefit of all the people of Kerry and those visiting the county.

The in-house review of all these plans ensures a significant cost saving and also highlights the high standard of professional planning expertise retained by Kerry County Council planning staff. Provision is made, funded in part by the strategic development fund, to fund a Capital Unit tasked to manage the development of the County's opportunity sites. Specific focus in 2019 will be the Island of Geese site and the Áras Pádraig/ Lewis Road Masterplan.

Economic and Community Development

Key areas identified by the Economic Development Unit and being progressed include implementation of key economic actions highlighted in the Regional Action Plan for Jobs and identifying funding opportunities both nationally and through the various European Programmes for the delivery of projects. In addition, this Unit has created strategic partnerships and linkages with private enterprise, education sector and retail sector to expand opportunities for growth and collaboration within the County and Region.

The recent announcement of the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund & Rural Regeneration Development Funds under the National Development Plan, Ireland 2040, has seen a fund of €2bn announced for projects for large urban centres and an additional €1bn for rural projects.

The Economic Development Unit has coordinated the submission made to these funding streams, as the Council looks to develop key strategic sites in Tralee and Killarney such as the Island of Geese, Sara Lee Opportunity Site, Rock Road Carpark Development, Flesk Cycleway and the Aras Pádraig/Lewis Road Masterplan. These are all projects which have been identified in both the Local Economic & Development Plan, County Development Plan and Tourism Strategy.

The Economic Development Unit has worked closely with the Community Development Unit in relation to the mid-term review of the Local Economic & Community Plan, reviewing progress under both the Community & Economic areas.

Kerry County Council's Community Development Unit has carried out significant work in coordinating the applications for funding under various grant programmes and administering grant funding received. Over the past two years, funding applications coordinated through the Community Development Unit has resulted in grant funding of over €2.5m being approved for projects in Kerry.

In addition, the rollout of Leader and SICAP funding under the administration of the Community Development Unit ensures greater visibility over the funding streams and greater value for money. Newer projects such as the Healthy Ireland initiative will positively impact young and old, while the continued support of the PPN Networks is a crucial linkage between this Council and community groups around Kerry.

Tourism

Key rural and tourist projects around the county have been targeted for funding under the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund, in particular the development of facilities along the Wild Atlantic Way. Such a project will look to add greatly to the county's tourism product.

The development of the Kerry Tourism Brand in 2018 has been responded to positively, giving a single brand identity to tourism in Kerry, with plans underway to further roll out the brand in 2019. This, along with the continued support of major tourism events and the support of local festivals, either through direct support, or

through the administration of Fáilte Ireland grants, will provide significant support to festivals in Kerry during 2019.

Environmental Services

The Budget Allocation for 2019 provides for the costs of operating the five Transfer Stations/Civic Amenity Sites in the county at Killarney, Milltown, Kenmare, Caherciveen and Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne. This includes the costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the facilities, the costs of the transport and disposal of the waste deposited and the cost of operating the recycling facilities at the Transfer Stations.

Significant expenditure has been incurred during 2018 to ensure compliance with our EPA Waste Licence requirements at the North Kerry Landfill. Significant improvements have been carried out by Kerry County Council. The impact of aftercare costs associated with our waste infrastructure and necessary upgrading works in our civic amenity sites and bring banks will require further investment during 2019.

Provision of €0.916m is retained towards the maintenance of 157 Burial Grounds Countywide and includes provision for additional expenditure in respect of the costs associated with the Burial Ground Development Program. This includes €0.056m as an allocation to community organisations in recognition of their ongoing involvement and valuable assistance, and also includes increased loan charges provision to support Burial Ground Development countywide.

Fire Services

The Kerry Fire Service continues to provide a critical service throughout the county, responding to 752 incidents up to the end of September. This marks an increase of over 8% on the same period in 2017 and includes 189 Gorse Fire incidents.

The 105 retained and 3 Whole-time Firefighters stationed in the 10 fire stations around Kerry, receive continuous training to the highest standards. In addition, there are significant fire safety programmes rolled out to communities and schools around the county, which link with Fire Safety week and other national fire safety programmes.

In addition, the Fire Service took delivery of a new fire appliance during 2018 and have received sanction for another new appliance, which is expected to be delivered in 2019.

Library Services

Kerry Libraries provide an invaluable and evolving service to the County through its 9 libraries and 2 mobile units. The usage of the network continues to go from strength to strength bringing its own challenges. In addition, record numbers of customers are using Kerry library services with increasing usage of online and e-learning resources. In recognition of their role in supporting communities, maintenance of the book fund allocation is provided for in Draft Budget 2019. One of the key targets of the National Strategy for Libraries 2018 - 2022 is universal access for all and to this effect it is envisaged that library fines will be removed nationally during 2019.

Following approval of a €266,750 grant from the Department of Rural and Community Development in November 2017 towards the roll out of self-service technology in libraries, Kerry Library has now introduced a self-service facility to allow members of the public to check in and check out their own books using the available kiosks or alternatively to the staffed public desk. It has been very well received in the libraries where it is presently operational – Tralee, Killarney, Listowel, Killorglin, Castleisland, Kenmare, Dingle - Daingean Uí Chúis and Caherciveen.

In July 2018, the Department of Rural & Community Development also announced national funding of €5.2m to support the establishment of public libraries as digital learning centres and enablers of digital services. Kerry County Council was approved for funding of €102,541 to provide a range of equipment at all its libraries

including public computers, iPads, digital microfilm units, interactive LCD screens and a 3D printer. This equipment will be installed over the coming months.

Miscellaneous Services

The amount provided in this Draft Budget for the General Municipal Allocation is €1.707m. This is comprised of the €0.75m for Municipal District allocation and is for the purpose of supporting Community Support/Community Initiatives, Town Development Projects and provides for an allocation to Rural and Village Development which seeks to maximise the opportunities provided by alternative sources of funding. In addition, the Councillor Specific Municipal District Operations allocation of €0.957m is maintained. This amount presented to members during the Budgetary Plan meetings was adopted by all Municipal Districts. This is a significant discretionary allocation for each Municipal District.

Also included is the cost of Local Representation and Civic Leadership. Agency and Recoupable Services and the costs associated with the Procurement Office, which is fully recoupable from other local authorities.

The Local Government Operational Procurement Office, Killarney

This Council is established as the National Procurement Office to host procurement initiatives on a shared service basis on behalf of all local authorities and other state agencies for 2019. Draft Budget 2019 reflects the income and expenditure arising from this initiative. The cost for this office is fully recouped from the Local Government Sector in 2019.

Capital Investment Plan

The Council will continue to invest in the infrastructure of the county aiming to maximise grant funding. The Capital Programme for the three-year period 2019-2021 prepared in accordance with Section 135 of the Local Government Act, 2001, is set out in Schedule 1 at the end of the Chief Executive's Report on Draft Budget 2019 and commented upon in the course of the details of each of the Division Budgets. The Capital Programme must have regard to the General Government Balance (GGB) requirement and the available resources, which have diminished in recent years due to limited borrowing capacity and development contributions. The Housing Capital Programme will lead to significant capital activity over the period. The Council will continue to ensure that all sources of capital funding, including government and EU grants, are fully explored and maximised.

Development Contributions

A statement regarding the amount of Development Contributions on hands, the estimated income expected for 2019 and an indicative statement of the proposed application of the funding available is included in Schedule 2 at the end of the Budget Explanatory Memorandum.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive stated that this Budget has been a particularly difficult budget to balance. An examination of all budgetary requirements has been reviewed, reassessed and the necessary changes made to both income and expenditure. On balance she is satisfied, within the resources available and the increasingly limited discretionary budget available to her, that the draft budget presented fairly represents the key priorities in supporting the economy of the County, Community Development, Roads infrastructure and the Housing programme.

The Chief Executive expressed her appreciation to the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Norma Foley, to Cllr. John Sheahan, the previous Cathaoirleach, the Members of the

Council, the Corporate Policy Group and the Strategic Policy Committees for their support, co-operation and application during the year.

She also paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of all Council staff to the County over the 2018 period. She thanked Angela McAllen, Head of Finance, and all the staff of the Finance Department for their professionalism and work ethic in preparing Budget 2019. The Chief Executive recommended the Budget for adoption.

The Cathaoirleach called on Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance, to present her overview on the Budget.

Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance, stated that the Chief Executive had outlined the financing issues that faced the Council in achieving an overall balanced position. Since the presentation of the Budget Strategy Report in September and the Municipal Budget Plan meetings in October, income and expenditure projections in most areas are now known and the balanced Budget as presented to Members today reflects a realistic pragmatic Budget which provides for ongoing service delivery as outlined by the Chief Executive, provides for our financial liabilities and obligations and also provides a budget that reflects the key priorities of the Council.

The 2019 Budget was a very difficult Budget to balance; compiling it required the usual reviewing, assessing and examination of all expenditure and income headings. Of the €3.4m shortfall after the September meeting, overall balancing has been broadly achieved by reducing overall the final expenditure requirements identified over the budget process by a net of €192,000 and increasing income projections by €3.2m. In relation to the expenditure requirements, it has been necessary for divisions to absorb additional cost requirements in existing Budgets, and for costs essentially to be deferred over the next number of years. For Budget 2019, each income stream was closely examined to ensure that cash collections are maximised, many of our locally sourced income streams as referred to earlier reflect an increase target for next year and increased to reflect increased costs in areas. Certainty in relation to once off compensation payments to the value of over €3.14m has been received since our Budget Strategy meeting and is reflected in the Budget as presented, as well as a significant amount transferred from Capital. She reiterated the Chief Executive's comments in relation to these income streams, Kerry County Council in balancing the Budget is reliant on unsustainable sources of income.

Across the expenditure headings Members will see continuation of the allocation of resources which reflect the financing of areas to enable the organisation to respond effectively to meet the very many challenges and achieve targets of adopted plans by this Council.

She referred members to the diagram on Page 38 of the Chief Executive's Report which gives an overview on expenditure for 2019. The expenditure proposed amounts to €143,959,520. This represents a 0.50% increase on the projected outturn for 2018. The 2019 expenditure reflects an estimated provision for Road Grant related works as to date the Council has not received any notification of Road Grants from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland for 2019. The combined expenditure of the Divisions titled Housing and Building, Road Transport, Water Services and Environmental Services accounts for 69% of the Council's overall Revenue Budget in 2019.

The graph on page 39 reflects the breakdown of expenditure, payroll continues to be the largest element of revenue consideration at 47% of overall expenditure, taking the recouped payroll costs into consideration this percentage drops to 39%. The graph also clearly indicates the proportion of spend on non-discretionary spend such as payroll, loan charges, insurance and energy cost and large elements of operational costs.

On page 40, the graph reflects sources of income, commercial rates being the largest source of income at 29%, followed by State Grants at 28%, Local Property Tax with the inclusion now of PRD forms 10% overall income. Our reliance on local income has increased on 2018 levels. These targets are pragmatic but challenging and reflect current outturn based on increased focus on debt management areas.

The Head of Finance then referred members to Page 42 of the Chief Executive's Report for details of State Sector Grants for Specified Purposes.

STATE SECTOR GRANTS FOR SPECIFIED PURPOSES **€40,679,718**

The total income under this heading represents 28% of the total income of this Council.

LOCAL PROPERTY TAX **€13,776,761**

Confirmation has been received from the DHPLG in Circular 06/2018 of 2nd October 2018 and has confirmed that the previously notified allocation for 2019 of €13,776,761 will remain unchanged.

RATES ON COMMERCIAL PROPERTY **€41,292,888**

Rates on commercial property forms 29% of our income. The rates harmonisation process is underway following the decision by Elected Members to adopt an annual rate of valuation of €79.25, which would apply over an eight-year period of harmonisation. 2019 represents the 5th year of the harmonisation process.

Provision has been made to maximise the collection of rates, which is vital to service delivery by the Council. The Council, while making all efforts to optimise collections, will continue to review the position of businesses experiencing difficulties, where supporting documentation indicates a serious downturn in activities and turnover for a period of time, on an individual case by case basis. Any additional buoyancy in this area is limited for the foreseeable future. Notwithstanding the above, the Council has increased collections and achieved targets set by the Local Government sector.

C0701 - IRISH WATER RECOUPMENT **€12,157,649**

Income reflected here represents the recoupment of Water Services related expenditure.

OTHER LOCAL INCOME:

- A0101 – Housing Rents **€9,680,000**
This sum represents income expected from housing tenants.
- A0801 – Housing Loan Repayments **€365,385**
At 31 October 2018, there are 343 loan accounts with the Council, with 28 redeemed, 10 expired and 8 new loans in 2018 to date. These include loans approved under the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan scheme.
- B0903 – Parking Fines and Charges **€3,064,000**
Parking revenue is a critical source of local income for the Council to fund Revenue Budget. Draft Budget 2019 reflects additional carparking income generated from targeted carparking enforcement across the County aligned with the implementation of a Countywide Carparking Strategy. This additional income is also required to meet increased loan charges associated with the car parking development programme. This Strategy will be developed over the course of 2019 and brought to Members for adoption in late 2019.

- D0201 – Planning Application Fees/Charges €729,000
 This income is determined by the level of fees fixed by the DHPLG for the different categories of development and the actual number of applications received. The income included is reflective of current and anticipated activity in this area in 2019.
- D0801 – Fire Safety Certificates, Disability Access Certificates & Inspection Fees €273,000
 The level of fees is fixed by the DHPLG and income derived is therefore determined by the volume of applications received.
- E0101 – Use of Waste Disposal Sites €1,704,989
 Continued service delivery of the provision of waste disposal services throughout the county has necessitated a review by management of charging structures, in line with the ‘Polluter Pays’ principle. Draft Budget 2019 reflects an increase in the disposal cost of a single bag of waste from €4.50 to €5.00 and the disposal cost of 6 bags will increase from €25.00 to €27.50. The cost per tonne over the weighbridge will also increase from €350 to €400. This increase is required to meet the rising cost of disposal of waste.
- E0201 & E0202 – Recycling Facilities €532,995
- E0901 – Burial Fees €270,000
 Draft Budget 2019 reflects the continued roll-out of the burial ground programme which has necessitated a review by management of charging structures. The delivery of the Burial Ground Development programme requires the acquisition of lands for burial grounds, and burial ground development costs, will have to be met by loan charges. The Draft Budget figure reflects the income expected from the sale of grave spaces in the coming year. It is proposed to increase the cost of a burial plot from €425 to €500 for 2019.
- E1101 – Charges for attending at fires €302,000
- F0201 – Library Charges €38,600
 Membership for the use of core library services is free to members of the public
- G0404 & G0405 – Dog Licence, Horse & Pound Fees €342,360
 The budgeted figure provides for a sum of €334,000 in respect of dog licence fees, fines and pound fees. These fees are decided at national level. A sum of €8,360 is provided for Fees/Grants under Control of Horses Act.
- H1102 – Charges on Non-Principal Private Residences (NPPR) €900,000
 This income is based on projected outturns for 2018.

Ms. McAllen said that concluded her overview of the Budget, and estimated income for 2019. She referred Elected Members to the Summary of Directorate Service Priorities for 2019, pages 11-35 of the Chief Executive’s Report, which sets out the principal services and their objectives and priorities for delivery in 2019. The directorate reports identify the principal services to be provided, priorities for the delivery of these services, the performance indicators to be met in the delivery of these services, including those performance indicators prescribed by NOAC. These are consistent with the overall objectives of the Corporate Plan.

She proceeded to brief members on the Division A Housing and Building.

Division A - Housing Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 11-13 of the Budget Tables and Pages 46-62 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division, the Capital Account for each division is set out in Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 provides detail of the Development Contributions. Pages 46-50 outlines the extensive Capital Programme underway within this Division. She referred members to Page 51 of the Chief Executive's Report for details of the revenue budget for this Division.

Maintenance of LA Units (A0101)

€3,423,000

Ms. McAllen said, as this programme is one of the Council's main priority areas, a special effort has been made to maintain the budget allocation in this area in 2019. The combined stock of the Council totals to over 4,200 units. This is a very sizeable stock, requiring significant resources to maintain. This allocation will provide for the cost of maintaining these assets, labour costs for maintenance and repair crews, purchase of materials, hire of plant and payments to contractors for specialist services and provides for both planned and regular maintenance.

A sum of €1.5m is again included in the 2019 Budget for the purpose of carrying out pre-letting works to vacant properties. This provision is subject to funding being made available by DHPLG. In previous years, approximately 78% of these works were funded by the Department under the Voids programme with the balance being funded from the Council's Internal Capital Receipts (ICRs). Recent indications from the Department suggest that funding under this programme is being reviewed nationally. It is likely that a fundamental policy change will occur with the emphasis moving from the current Voids approach to a planned maintenance programme approach.

Any reduction in this funding source will have a negative impact on the Voids work programme. When this matter has been finalised nationally and the Council receive clarity on the future approaches, the Members will be advised.

Given the level of expenditure in this area, the need to achieve value for money in repairs to both occupied and vacant stock is essential. Given the scale of many of the projects being carried out, the external procurement of contractors is necessary. Procurement is carried out by advertising mini-tenders. Obtaining the most competitive prices from competent contractors ensures that the output achieved from the housing maintenance expenditure budget will be maximised. National Frameworks are in place for electrical and plumbing contractors and a Minor Building Works Framework is scheduled to go live in early 2019. Given the upturn in construction generally, it is increasingly difficult to source contractors and construction costs are also increasing.

In 2018, a specific housing improvement programme of €0.2m was put in place, allowing for upgrading works. A sum of €200,000 is again included in Budget 2019 to continue with advancement of this programme.

Maintenance & Management of Traveller Accommodation

€318,000

This provision reflects a slight increase on 2018.

Estate Maintenance (A0104)

€122,000

This allocation has been maintained at €122,000. The availability of this funding and the work of the Tenancy Management Officers has contributed to proactive tenant participation in the vast majority of the Local Authority estates in the county. Currently, the Council is actively involved with 47 resident associations. This includes 5 new residents' associations set up in 2018. With the assistance of the Community Employment Scheme, Partnership Companies and other local community-based groups, these bodies have helped significantly to contribute to the physical improvement of estates.

The Council continues to work with an identified number of estates in the County, in conjunction with local development companies, in order to deliver a range of government funded programmes, to help combat disadvantage and promote rural development. One of the key programmes is the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP). It is hoped that the Council will forge strong links with the identified estates and work closely with the residents to promote social inclusion, combat anti-social behaviour and promote a sense of pride and togetherness of tenants living in those estates.

Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer (A02)

Assessment of Housing Needs, Allocations and Transfer (A0201) €929,000

This allocation is in respect of the administrative cost of employing investigation officers and administrative support staff engaged in offering housing advice, liaising with the Department of Social Protection, the HSE, other relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies, assessing housing need and making recommendations on the allocation of individual tenancies. Page 53 and page 54 outline the extensive work programme in this area.

Debt Management and Rent Assessment (A0301) €1,048,000

This allocation covers costs associated with the collection of rent and tenant purchase annuities and the implementation of the differential rent assessment scheme. The Council continues to work with tenants to assist them in management of payment of their rent and offers a variety of payment methods including Household Budget, Bill Pay, Standing Order, Direct Debit, Cash, or directly to the Revenue Collector. Approximately 82% of tenants regularly use electronic or 'non-cash' payments methods.

The Council has also implemented a Rent Arrears Strategy, which is a very pro-active approach to assist tenants having trouble in paying their weekly rent.

The Rent Arrears Strategy also includes a dedicated office administration support team for Revenue Collectors, to enable them to perform their duties as debt managers in a very pro-active manner.

Housing Community Development Support (A04)

Housing Estate Management & Tenancy Management €351,000

The Tenancy Compliance role is a very important role in estates in Kerry, ensuring compliance with Council policies and procedures in respect of lettings, anti-social behaviour and the enforcement of terms of tenancy agreements.

This area has recently been considered under the Housing Area of the Quality of Life, Strategic Policy Committee and will receive particular focus as part of the 2019 work programme.

A sum of €45,000 is included in Budget 2019 from internal capital receipts, to progress the roll-out of an estate enhancement programme across the four Municipal Districts.

Homeless Grants, Other Bodies & Homeless Service €1,620,000

This allocation is a best estimate based on activity levels and the outturn figure of €1.02m for 2017 Annual Financial Statement. This allocation is being provided towards the operation and running costs of Novas Initiatives' Accommodation in Tralee, which consists of Arlington Lodge and 4 other additional reduced support facilities in Tralee, which provide long-term, supported living. This allocation also provides for the cost of external emergency accommodation. A significant proportion of the cost is recouped from the DHPLG homelessness allocation to the Southwest Region, of which the Council is a member. An increased allocation is provided to meet the on-going

projected needs of the service. In addition, a portion of this allocation is in respect of salaries to support this service, included under service support costs.

Support to Housing Capital Programme (A06)

Technical and Administrative Support (A0601)

€557,000

This allocation is in respect of the technical, administrative and legal costs involved in the delivery of social housing in the county. Additional resources have been assigned to this area to deal with the increased activity in Turnkey developments and Part V delivery targets.

Loan charges (A0602)

€422,500

This provision is for associated recoupable loan charges on voluntary housing schemes.

RAS Operations (A0701)

€7,244,000

This provision reflects increased activity in the operation of the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

Long Term Leasing / Availability Agreements (A0702)

€3,466,000

This provision reflects increased activity in the operation of Long Term Leasing/ Availability Agreements. This allocation is in respect of the leasing costs anticipated in 2019, together with salary and support costs. The leasing cost is recoupable from the DHPLG.

Leasing continues to represent an essential element of supply of social housing supports. As it is the Council's objective to maximise the delivery of social housing using all of the resources available, this scheme will continue to be operated and promoted by the Local Authority.

Loan Interest and Other Charges (A0801)

€1,783,000

Mortgage Loans

This sum covers the repayment of the interest on loans raised by the Council to fund various housing loan schemes. Activity on Mortgage Loans has increased substantially due to the introduction of the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan. This loan is a new Government backed mortgage for first time buyers and was made available from 1st February 2018.

Since its introduction the Loans Department has received over 100 applications for the new Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan. To date, loans of a value €437,100 have been drawn down and it is expected that activity in this area will continue to grow in 2019 with an increased volume of applications.

Land Purchase Service

There has been a further extension for one year of the agreement on an interest-only payment option for matured land loans. The impact on the revenue Budget 2019 is €0.803m expenditure taking account of all factors in relation to this issue.

The Council has reviewed all current land holdings and sites that are developable, appropriately zoned and with the necessary infrastructure for house building. These are currently included in the Housing Capital Programme out to 2021.

Housing Support Grants (A0901, A0903 & A0905)

€2,312,000

In the year to date, the Council approved 418 new grant applications, which together with the committed grants brought forward from 2017 will almost fully account for the 2018 funding allocation. The 2018 approved grants consist of: -

- Mobility Aid Grants (194)
- Housing Aid for Older People grants (133)
- Housing Adaptation Grants (91)

Overall, however, the Council recognises the immense benefit to be gained from these schemes as living conditions of eligible elderly and disabled household members in our County are improved. The schemes also continue to provide a welcome stimulus package for construction, plumbing and electrical trades in the sector.

Housing Assistance Payment Programme (HAP) (A12)

There continues to be a strong demand for this service among social housing applicants which provides financial assistance and security of tenure at a time of high housing demand in the private rented sector.

Ms. McAllen referred Elected Members to page 62 which sets out details of efficiencies achieved during 2018 in the Housing Division.

Division B - Road Transport & Safety

Ms. McAllen, Head of Finance, referred Elected Members to pages 63-81 which set out the Revenue work programme for this division. The amount of Roads own resources allocation has increased for 2019 to €18.4m and is outlined in more detail on page 78, it represents a significant portion of the Budget and includes the Councillors allocation of €957,000 maintained at previous years.

The amounts combined with the provision for street cleaning shown under Division E of €2.2m is a considerable Budget allocation.

The own resources allocation in Roads enables Kerry County Council to continue to attract grant funding throughout the year. As previously advised to Members the plant and machinery account is reflected in the Revenue Budget again for 2019 and is reflected as self-financing for Budget 2019, page 77 and page 78 outline a number of efficiencies and value for money initiatives taken by the Operations Department in 2018 continuing into 2019 to maximize this budget allocation. In addition, page 79-80 outlines a number of achievements/targets for 2019 by the Energy Office in relation to energy conservation.

Division C - Water Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 17-18 of the Budget Tables and Pages 82-85 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Irish Water Operations

Kerry County Council continues to provide Water Services in the county as agents of Irish Water operating under a Service Level Agreement. For 2019, the following service areas are covered under the Service Level Agreement:-

C01	Water Supply	€7,887,145
C02	Waste Water Treatment	€3,274,854
C03	Collection of Water/Waste Water Charges	€265,072
C06	Support to Water Capital Programme	€1,053,184
C07	Agency and Recoupable Services	€297,098

The amounts shown in the tables reflect monies recoupable – Payroll, Central Management Charge (net of Superannuation Income) and, to a lesser extent, Goods

and Services as more of this water services expenditure moves over to Irish Water's Financial Procurement system.

Rural Water Programme (C05)

Provision made for the Rural Water Programme is covered on pages 83-85 of the Chief Executive's Report.

Division D - Development Management

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 19-21 of the Budget Tables and Pages 86-105 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

1. Planning and Sustainable Development

The Development Management/Planning Function Programme of the Council Budget includes:

Forward Planning (D0101)

€715,000

This allocation covers the salaries and other costs associated with the preparation of Local Area Plans and other Statutory Plans and Policy. A sum of €80,000 is to be transferred from Capital to assist with planning studies, principally the Listowel Municipal District Plan, Kilcummin Local Area Plan, and John Joe Sheehy Road, Tralee.

Key to the work plan for 2019 will be the Council's work in relation to the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategic (RSES), which is currently being drafted and will be developed throughout 2019. This plan, which is being produced by the Southern Regional Assembly, has as its main aim to bring the National Planning Framework down to regional level.

Preparation and completion of this plan will also allow for work to begin in 2019 for the review of the Kerry County Development Plan 2021 - 2027. This process, which is a two-year programme, will be informed by the strategies embedded in the RSES, and will set out a vision for the future of this county in a sustainable manner,

All these works will be carried out in-house by the Council's highly-trained planning staff, leading to significant cost savings.

Additionally, other works to be carried out in 2019 will include: -

- The new Planning Policy framework for the West Iveragh Areas will be completed.
- The new Planning Policy framework for the Listowel and the remainder of the South and West Kerry Municipal Districts will be completed.

These works have followed on from significant work which was carried out during 2018. The primary programme was the adoption of a new Planning Policy framework for the Tralee Municipal District, while the Killarney Municipal District framework is near completion.

Page 87 of the Chief Executive's Report outlines other work carried out by the Forward Planning unit.

Planning Control (D0201)

A provision of €1,920,000 is included.

Service Support Costs (D0299)

€748,700

This allocation includes salaries which relate to OPW Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment & Management (CFRAM) Plans.

Enforcement Costs (D0301)**€892,000**

Enforcement Activity Levels 2018 are reflected in the Table on page 89 of the Chief Executive's Report.

An Allocation has been made for Unfinished Housing Estates and Taking in Charge of Estates.

Tourism Development (D05)**General Economic Promotion (D0501)****€976,000**

This allocation includes the salaries, operational and associated costs of the Council's Tourism Unit. One of the key priorities of the Tourism Unit is the implementation of the Actions contained in the Kerry Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2022. Pages 91-93 of the Chief Executive's Report outline the extensive work programme of this unit continuing into 2019 which include allocation of and processing of both the Outdoor Recreation Scheme and Festivals and Events funding recouped from Fáilte Ireland. Page 92 provides an update on accessible Tourism.

Tourist Facilities Operations (D0502)**€190,500**

Provision has been made for Tourism Facilities Operations. This allocation relates to the staff costs for the Blennerville Windmill in Tralee together with a contribution of €96,000 in respect of the operation of the Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre and a contribution in respect of Valentia Lighthouse.

Tralee Bay Wetlands

During the current year the Council has strengthened the management of the centre with greater focus on marketing and business development. For 2019, the level of subsidy provided for in the budget has been reduced.

Community & Enterprise Function (D06)**General Community & Enterprise Expenses (D0601)****€4,893,000**

This budget has increased to reflect contra LEADER funding. This allocation includes:-

- The staffing, support costs and office expenses of the Community Department.
- Supports the work of the Kerry LCDC and associated structures.
- Supports the Public Participation Network (PPN) and its operating structures.
- Provides for voluntary contributions to a number of groups - the Kerry Community Awards, Pride of Place, Comhairle na nÓg.

Building Control (D08)**Building Control Inspection & Enforcement Costs****€372,000**

2018 year to date show increased activity in this area.

Economic Development and Promotion (D09)**Economic Development and Promotion (D0905)****€1,626,000**

The role of the Economic Development Unit (EDU) is to promote economic development and create a positive environment for job creation. It provides services to incoming queries from external sources and focuses on longer term strategic economic goals. It provides a strong point of contact and linkage with business support agencies.

In the Draft Budget, provision has been made to give effect to the Economic and Community aspects of the Local Economic and Development Plan and support strategic economic projects. The provision also includes salaries for the Capital

Infrastructure Unit in respect of the Greenways Project and contributions and support to the Skellig CRI, Weave Project and the South West Action Plan for Jobs.

The Economic Development Unit has coordinated the submissions made to the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government in relation to the recently announced Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF) and Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) under the National Development Plan, Ireland 2040.

These funds are seen as critical for the development of projects in Kerry which have been identified as strategic objectives in the Local Economic & Development Plan, County Development Plan and Tourism Strategy.

The Economic Development Unit was tasked with co-ordinating and drafting the submissions to these funding streams, as the Council looks to develop key strategic sites in Tralee and Killarney such as the Island of Geese, Sara Lee Opportunity Site, Rock Road Carpark Development, Flesk Cycleway and the Áras Pádraig/Lewis Road Masterplan.

The remit of the Economic Development Unit is further detailed on Page 100 of the Chief Executive's Report. In addition, in the Local Economic & Community Plan the Council has given commitment to implementing regeneration measures across of the county. These measures could include: enhancement projects, application of development contribution schemes and a rates incentive scheme. During budget preparations, the variation of rates on vacant properties was considered as part of the stimulus to regenerate towns and villages across the county as raised by Members in previous meetings. This matter was analysed in full and while such a measure may present an opportunity to the Council in to the future, it is unlikely to contribute to economic stimulus given its application at Municipal District level.

Through the municipal development plans process the Planning Authority has identified streets that are in need of regeneration and appropriate business incentives due to the levels of vacancy and dereliction in these areas. The draft business incentive scheme will be brought to the Economic SPC in January 2019 for consideration and will be rolled out in Quarter 1 following the adoption of the various Municipal District plans. This builds on the previous concessions introduced in the adoption of the development contributions scheme late last year. Kerry County Council will continue to invest in town and village centres with the support of the town and village/rural and urban grants.

Local Enterprise Office (D0906)

€1,213,000

This unit is now firmly embedded in the wider economic function of the Council while continuing to deliver on the service level agreement with Enterprise Ireland in relation to grant and training support for micro business in the County. The unit has been strengthened by additional staff in order to provide a one-stop shop for supporting business in the County and to ensure that there is co-ordination of support to business across all services of the Council.

Pages 101 & 102 outline the key objectives and priorities for the Local Enterprise Office in 2019.

Heritage & Conservation Services & Archaeology

€341,000

Heritage & Conservation Services

The Council's Heritage Office works to promote awareness, interest, and pride in the abundant heritage assets to be found in the County. The County has 1,255 protected structures along with a wealth of vernacular heritage which plays a vital role in terms of tourism, landscape character, the local economy and sense of place.

Archaeology Department – Projects/Achievements 2018

Completion of works in 2018 on:

- Mid-Kerry Portal Tombs Project – Killaclohane II
- Cill Buaine Gable Shrine Conservation

An extensive work programme is outlined on Page 104 & 105 of the Chief Executive's Report for 2019.

Division E - Environmental Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 22-24 of the Budget Tables and Pages 106-128 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

The operations of this Section are diverse and specialised, ranging from technical laboratory analysis to management of bring-centres, as well as the clean-up of illegal dumping sites and educational campaigns. These all contribute to ensuring our County's environment is maintained to the highest standards. The provision of veterinary services, including the operation of the dog pound, is also managed through the Environment Section.

Civic Amenity Sites Operations (E0101)

€2,458,000

The budget allocation for 2019 provides for the North Kerry Landfill and five transfer stations, including: operation and maintenance of the facilities, transport of waste, and the disposal cost of waste to a private waste operator, as well as treatment of effluent off-site and administration costs. The costs of waste disposal are constantly under review; however, it is expected that costs will increase over the course of 2019. Application of the Polluter Pays Principle will require a revision of charges, referred to earlier.

The cost of operating recycling facilities are outlined on page 110 of the Chief Executive's Report.

The budget provision also provides for the aftercare cost of North Kerry Landfill, which includes the maintenance of the site, wages, leachate management/collection and disposal, landfill gas management, building maintenance, site management, security and ongoing EPA licence requirements.

Significant expenditure has been incurred during 2018 in complying with the Council's EPA waste licence requirements at the North Kerry landfill facility.

A necessary major electrical upgrade of the landfill was carried out during 2018 at a cost of €300,000. Funding of this work was provided for over a number of years from the Council's budget, with the remaining cost of this work included in the 2019 budget.

Leachate management continues to be an expensive cost for the North Kerry Landfill. Works carried out during the past number of years has reduced the volume of leachate on-site and the Council is currently examining options such as on-site treatment to further reduce costs in this area.

The DHPLG has initiated a process for the Certification of Historic Landfills (Old landfills which operated between 1977 and 1997) which requires that all Historic Landfills be certified by the EPA. Department funding has been provided to carry out Environmental Risk Assessments at historic landfill sites in Kerry. Consultants will shortly be appointed to carry out this work following completion of a tender process.

Recycling Facilities Operations (E0201)

€513,000

The Council operates recycling facilities at the 5 Civic Amenity Sites at Killarney, Milltown, Kenmare, Caherciveen and Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne. These facilities allow for the recycling of a broad range of waste including

glass bottles, cans, plastic bottles, paper, cardboard, dry recyclables, batteries, metals, waste electrical (WEEE), engine oil and textiles. In addition, Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne accepts green waste, flat glass and timber. The usage of these recycling facilities has resulted in an approximate 2,000 tonnes of recyclables being accepted in 2017. The facilities are very well used by residents and visitors alike.

Along with the ongoing maintenance costs, EPA and Health & Safety compliance at our civic amenity and bring bank sites requires an ongoing programme of upgrade works at these facilities.

Bring Centres Operations (E0202)

€380,000

The Environment Section maintains over 100 Bring Banks which are located at various locations around the County. Use of these recycling facilities by the public has resulted in over 3,533 tonnes of recyclables being accepted in 2017, a slight increase on the previous year's figures.

As a measure to counteract illegal and indiscriminate dumping of non-recyclable materials at these sites, the Council is working closely with 40 Community Groups to participate in our "Adopt a Bring Bank" scheme. This involves the local community helping to police the Bring Bank site to limit illegal dumping and help enhance the site. The Environment Section pays an annual contribution to the local community and provides a 240L wheelie bin and gives collection credit for their disposal.

In addition, a provision has been made to enhance and provide permanent security cameras to prevent illegal dumping.

In 2016, the Southern Regional Waste Management Office provided funds to standardise the signage and appearance of a number of bottle banks around the county. It is planned that all remaining Bring Sites will be upgraded over the next number of months.

The allocation provided covers the cost of servicing and maintaining these bring banks at the various locations throughout the County.

Provision of Waste Collection Service (E04)

Budget provision continues for the provision of a waste collection service in the former Killarney Town Council area.

Litter Management (E05)

Litter Warden Service (E0501)

€228,000

The Council employs 3 full-time county-wide Litter Wardens on a permanent basis. Known dumping and littering black spots around the County are monitored on a regular basis (including by means of covert camera surveillance where possible) in an effort to identify offenders and to act as a deterrent against unauthorised dumping.

Litter Control Initiatives (E0502)

€82,000

This figure provides for Litter Control Initiatives, incorporating the Council's Awareness Programmes which are promoted through local media outlets, national and secondary schools, Tidy Town Committees and Community groups. Provision is included to support the initiatives which will be implemented during the year.

Environmental Awareness Services (E0503)

€144,000

There is an increasing demand on the Council's environmental protection programme, which aims to keep the public informed about the relevant environmental issues and how they can play a role in improving their local environmental quality. The following are some examples of the many environmental awareness raising activities undertaken in 2018 in this area:-

- The Spring Clean-Up of the County in 2018 saw over 5,500 volunteers take to the roads around the County on April 14.
- During 2018, the Council had an input in promoting environmental initiatives at a number of major high-profile festivals in Kerry such as the Rose of Tralee and Dingle Food Festival.
- There was increased provision of Signage and Dog Foul bag dispensers in Public areas around Kerry for Dog Owners who walk their dogs. This, along with various campaigns during the year was targeted at dog owners to make them aware of their responsibilities to licence and control their dogs and pick up their dog's waste.
- In 2018, a total of 51 schools renewed their flags on Water Conservation, Energy Conservation, Travel and Biodiversity and Global citizenship with the assistance of our Environmental Awareness Officer. The Council currently has 163 Green Flag Awards presented to both Primary and Secondary Schools and hope to increase this number during 2019.
- The Council was awarded the highest number of Blue Flags in the country for its beaches in 2018. A total of 13 beaches were awarded a Blue Flag, with Fenit Marina capturing a further Blue Flag, one of the few marinas in the country to do so.
- Along with the 14 Blue Flags, Kerry was also presented with 4 Green Coast awards in 2018 - Béal Bán, Littor, Ballinskelligs and Castlegregory. It is hoped that this number can be increased in 2019. The Council organises various environmental activities on each of the Blue Flag Beaches each year. These range from clean ups to marine workshops.
- Maintaining our 'Adopt a Road' programme. Each community group receives an annual grant of €500 along with bags, gloves, pickers, etc. and an arrangement is made to have the bagged litter collected.
- The Council continued to work closely with Tidy Town groups during 2018 through seminars and site visits by a number of experts dealing with various aspects of the national competition. The benefit of this co-operation between the Local Authority and Community Groups was seen when Listowel captured Ireland's Tidiest Town Award in September, the first time that the North Kerry town had captured the overall Tidy Town Award. In addition, Killarney, Tralee and Kenmare were awarded Gold Medals, while Knightstown, Portmagee and Sneem were awarded Bronze Medals.

Operation of Street Cleaning Service (E0601)

€2,211,000

This provision is for the operation of the street cleaning service in various towns throughout the County.

This amount is a significant provision from our own resources each year. However, as a tourist County it is acknowledged that factors such as exceptional weather conditions which happened during the summer, or local festivals can result in increased numbers of visitors to the County and some flexibility is provided in the allocation for such contingencies.

This is a valuable support service to the many volunteers involved in local Tidy Town groups and reflects the continuing improvement in the marks being achieved in the National Tidy Towns Competition.

Monitoring of Waste Regulations (inc. Private Landfills) (E0701)

€175,000

The allocation provides for continued activity in this work area.

Enforcement of Waste Regulations (E0702) **€78,000**

Waste Management Plan (E0801) **€42,000**

This budget allocation is a contribution in respect of the Southern Region Waste Management Plan.

Operation and Maintenance of Burial Grounds (E0901) **€916,000**

The main provisions of this allocation are general maintenance, wages costs, and contributions to community organisations. Provision of €154,087 is included for loan charges to fund the rollout of the Burial Ground Programme as brought to the Members by the Operations SPC. As referred to earlier, it is proposed to increase the cost of burial plot from €425 to €500 in 2019.

Community Organisations continue to undertake excellent maintenance works in a growing number of burial grounds throughout the County and the Council is highly appreciative of their support and assistance. This co-operation creates close working arrangements with such groups and strengthens the Council's relationships within communities.

The Council is currently working with 60 community groups in relation to burial grounds and in 2018, the Council made financial contributions to 40 such groups in recognition of their work. Such contributions are based on the submission of programmes of work which are subject to the approval of the Operations, Health and Safety Directorate. An increased provision is made in the 2019 Budget to continue to support such community groups and in recognition of their ongoing assistance.

There are currently 157 burial grounds in the County.

During 2018, progress has been made on the following developments: -

- The new Killarney Burial Ground in Knockeenduff, with adjoining car park, opened with capacity for 2,300 burial plots.
- Construction of a new burial ground in Clogher, Lixnaw commenced, initially facilitating 232 burial plots and with a capacity of 988 plots upon completion.
- Work started on the construction of a new lawn type cemetery in Rathass, Tralee and burials have already taken place in this new section of the burial ground. Works will continue in this burial ground in 2019.

In 2018, the Council carried out significant works at a number of burial grounds as part of an ongoing Burial Ground Improvement Programme.

Operation Costs Civil Defence (E1001) **€268,000**

The allocation in the Budget is in respect of salaries, equipment, travel, rent, energy and miscellaneous costs for Civil Defence. Page 118 outlines a number of key activities.

Derelict Sites (E1004) **€142,000**

The Council fully recognises the negative impact that derelict buildings have on the visual appearance of our towns and villages across the county. The Council has an active and ongoing programme with a view to addressing dereliction in our towns and villages. In addition, the Council work closely with community and voluntary groups, including Tidy Towns Groups at local level. The help and assistance provided by these groups is extremely important. All options are investigated in order to resolve issues.

Water Safety Operation (E1005)**€494,000**

The allocation includes payroll costs for lifeguards, travel, equipment, maintenance of lifeguard stations and other costs associated with this vital programme. The Council will continue to provide a Lifeguard Service in 2019 at all 14 Blue Flag beaches where the Blue Flag Criteria or a Water Safety Risk Assessment requires us to do so. Provision is also made in this allocation for a Water Safety Development Officer. Additional provision was made in 2018 to increase the number and supervisory structure of lifeguards on some beaches to meet the Blue Flag criteria. This will continue in 2019. A total of 41 lifeguards were employed on Kerry beaches in 2018 with a minimum of three lifeguards on all our Blue Flag Beaches.

Voluntary Rescue Services at Ballybunion, Ballinskelligs, Ballyheigue, Banna, Cashen, Derrynane and Killarney, together with Irish Water Safety and RNLI will again receive financial support from the Council in 2019.

Operation of Fire Service (E1101)

The estimated cost of providing an efficient and effective Fire and Emergency Service for the County for the year 2019 amounts to €4,848,000. The Council operates 10 fully equipped Fire Stations.

Kerry Fire Service responded to 752 incidents up to the end of September 2018. This represents an 8.83% increase on the same period in 2017. Road Traffic Collisions, Gorse Fires and Chimney Fires are the major incident types requiring fire brigade mobilisation.

The Fire Service has responded to 189 Gorse Fire incidents up to the end of September 2018. This represents an 8.62% increase over Gorse Fires incidents during to the same period in 2017. The Fire Service continued to upgrade its fleet during 2018.

Fire Services Training (E1103)**€665,000**

The Budget includes an increased allocation for Fire Services Training.

Fire Prevention and Education (E1202)**€204,855**

Kerry Fire Service continues to implement the Fire Service Change Programme which incorporates an education programme for Fire Prevention and Education of the public.

As part of this programme, the Fire Services Department, in co-operation with the Community Services & Engagement Department, arranges for the procurement, distribution and installation of smoke alarms in the homes of vulnerable members of the community throughout the County, free of charge. The purchase of these alarms is funded by the DHPLG under the Community Smoke Alarm Schemes.

The Primary Schools Fire Safety Programme is targeted at children between the ages of 8 and 9 and continues to be rolled out by Kerry Fire Service personnel.

Kerry County Fire Service also facilitates the organisation and delivery of 'Fire Safety in Hotels' programmes by means of periodic seminars.

Inspection/Monitoring of Commercial Facilities (E1203)**€74,200**

The Budget includes an allocation for the work of inspection/monitoring of commercial facilities.

Water Quality Management (E1301)**€708,000**

The Council carries out a broad range of activities in the area of Water Quality Management.

Operation of the Council Laboratory

The Draft Budget allocation for Laboratory costs is included in E0701 and E1301 above. In 2019, the laboratory will process at least 4,800 samples involving 57,000 tests.

Laboratory Accreditation

The programme of Laboratory Accreditation continues through 2018 and into 2019 to further develop this service.

Division F - Recreation and Amenity

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 25-26 of the Budget Tables and Pages 129-140 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Leisure Facilities Operations (F0101)

€359,000

The costs in this area relate to the Killarney Swimming Pool and Sports & Leisure Centre and include a reduced amount for the repayment of loan charges following a restructuring of the former Town Council loan associated with the development.

Contribution to External Bodies Leisure Facilities (F0103)

€60,000

This allocation is provided in respect of Ballybunion Swimming Pool and includes a contribution for financial support to Tralee Sports and Leisure Centre.

Operation of Library and Archival Service (F02)

Library Service Operations (F0201)

€2,504,600

This allocation provides for staff and administration costs. Kerry Library operates 9 full time branch libraries throughout the County. The Mobile Library service visits 96 communities throughout rural and urban Kerry and a dedicated Local History and Archives section operates from Library Headquarters.

The new Libraries National Strategy 2018 - 2022: Our Public Libraries 2022 Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities was launched on 14 June 2018 and gives a number of key targets.

Kerry Library has been proactive in the delivery of nationally supported programmes; each supplemented by the provision of quality book stock, strong opening hours and trained library staff.

Page 131 of the Chief Executive's Report provides details of the extensive work programme of the Library Service. It is of note that there was a number of key archives acquisitions in 2018.

Digitisation

The Irish Tourism Association's Topographical & General Survey of Kerry Parishes was digitised in-house during 2018. It is now available to view on the Local History & Archives section of the Kerry Library website.

Purchase of Books, CD's etc. (F0204)

€280,000

This Budget allocation has been maintained at €280,000. Kerry Library at all times seeks to achieve the best value for money, having regard to the available book fund.

Parks, Pitches and Open Spaces (F0301)

€1,462,100

The maintenance of amenity areas throughout the County, though funded under this programme, is carried out by the Operations Area staff.

Playgrounds (F0302)

€141,000

This allocation provides for inspection costs and equipment replacement as well as insurance costs for 31 playgrounds located throughout the County. The development

of new playgrounds in association with local communities will continue to progress in 2019.

Beaches (F0303)

€473,000

The cleaning and collection of litter on Blue Flag Beaches is a function that is carried out in each area by Operations Area staff. Support will be given to active community groups who assist in beach cleaning.

Community, Sport and Recreational Development (F04)

Community Grants (F0401)

€37,000

This allocation is in respect of a contribution towards Kerry ETB to support Kerry Life Education Ltd.'s health education and substance/alcohol abuse awareness programme across the entire County.

Recreation Development (F0404)

€159,000

Kerry Recreation and Sports Partnership (KRSP) is funded on an annual basis, primarily by Sport Ireland.

Administration of Arts Programme (F0501 & F0502)

€534,000

Objectives and Priorities are as set out in the Council's Arts Strategy 2016 – 2021. The Arts Office has an extensive range of activities including:

- Artist in Residence Programme (co-funded)
- Kerry Music Education Partnership
- Art for the Young at Heart
- Culture Night 2019 (co-funded)
- Sliabh Luachra Music Trail (co-funded)

Administration of Creative Ireland Kerry Programme

The Budget includes an additional allocation for the administration of the Creative Ireland Kerry Programme. The Arts Office administers communications, promotion of activity and payments around Creative Ireland Kerry across all projects, as well as Artist Bursaries & Awards, Arts Act Grant & Contributions to Voluntary Organisations.

Museums Operations (F0503)

€469,000

The Museum has an education and outreach programme that runs throughout the year and involves both Kerry and Munster schools. The audience base comprises of national and international visitors as well as the local community. It has a number of well-developed marketing channels and actively contributes to a number of marketing networks, both locally and nationally. The Museum has a very active education programme.

Division G - Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 27-28 of the Budget Tables and Pages 141-144 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Maintenance of Land Drainage Areas (G0101)

€100,000

This allocation is required to ensure continued drainage of the 3 key tidal areas maintained by the Council – Akeragh, Banna and Lough Gill.

Operation of Piers (G0201)

€306,000

The Council has responsibility for the operation of 59 piers and slipways located around the County. The allocation has increased slightly and covers the cost of routine

maintenance works and energy costs associated with the operation of the piers, provision of tourist moorings and aids to navigation, pontoon maintenance and pay costs for the Harbour Constables, as well as communication costs associated with this programme.

This allocation also part-funds projects approved by the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine for repairs and improvement works under the Fishery Harbours and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme. In 2018, the Council co-funded repair works in Ballinskelligs, Dromatoor and Tarbert.

Operations of Harbours (G0203)

€957,000

The continuing development of Fenit Harbour is of strategic importance to the economic growth in the County. A licence application has been submitted to the EPA for a multi-annual dredging licence. This is necessary to ensure an adequate channel depth leading into the Harbour for the safe berthing of large ships required by the largest user of the port.

Planned Protection of Coastal Regions (G0302)

€228,000

This funding is provided to cover the requirements that arise for coastal protection works around the Kerry coastline. The Council is required to cover a percentage of the costs of any scheme co-funded by the State. Any decision in relation to further coastal works, in the future, will be dependent on prior approval from central government.

Continual study of the Kerry coastline, and the potential impact of erosion on the coast and infrastructure, has seen a sum provided for in 2019 to fund existing commitments and to leverage grant aid for coastal protection works and further studies. In 2018, the OPW approved funding towards minor flood mitigation works and coastal protection schemes at Rossbeigh, Kilfenora, Fenit, North Kerry Way National Trail Seawall and for studies at Ballyheigue/Banna/Carrahan, Dingle Bay East Castlemaine Harbour and Brandon Bay Maharees.

Applications have been submitted by the Council to the OPW for minor flood mitigation works and coastal protection measures at Flesk River, Ballyheigue and at St. Finian's Bay, and these are currently being assessed by the OPW.

Provision of Veterinary Service (G0401)

€203,100

This provides for the provision of veterinary services, which includes the management and administration of the Service Contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), dog and horse control, control of animal diseases and other miscellaneous matters.

Operation of Dog Warden Service (G0404)

€180,000

The allocation provides for four Dog Wardens and one Pound Keeper, together with the cost of operating the Council Dog Pound and Shelter in Tralee. Under Dog Control regulations, the Council is continually involved in the monitoring of Dog Licences and dealing with complaints from members of the public in relation to Control of Dogs.

Division H - Miscellaneous Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 29-31 of the Budget Tables and Pages 145-153 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Refunds and Irrecoverable Rates (H0303)

€7,000,000

The allocation provided is in respect of irrecoverable rates in cases of vacant/disused properties, or in relation to settlements negotiated with ratepayers. The provision in this area also includes settlements agreed by the Council in respect of part-occupied premises and write-off of rates in respect of disused or derelict buildings. In relation to

properties awaiting a revision of valuation, the Council has no option but to continue to assess rates on these properties as the valuation will continue to remain effective pending a decision by the Commissioner of Valuation.

The Council will continue to make every effort to pursue all collectable rates and outstanding arrears in 2019. The overall provision in this area for 2019 has again been substantially reduced, following previous reductions in the last number of years in this area. The reduction is due to continued reductions in the number of settlements with property owners and reductions in the size of the settlements. In addition, there is a continuing emphasis on the management and collection of outstanding arrears and the revision of valuations on these properties.

Rates on Vacant Properties

Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provided for a change to rating law in relation to the refund of rates on properties which are Vacant/To Let or vacant due to refurbishment. It gives the power to the Members of Local Authorities to vary the level of rates refunds that apply in individual Local Electoral Areas/Municipal District Areas within the authority’s overall administrative area. The new reserved function commenced with effect from June 1st 2014. Regulations provide that any decision to alter the rate of refund be taken at the annual budget meeting and that the rate of refund decided be in respect of Local Electoral Areas/Municipal Districts. It is necessary for the Council to take such a decision at each relevant budget meeting. The absence of a decision to vary the refund means that the existing legislative provisions regarding the rate of refund applies i.e. providing a full rates credit or refund in respect of properties where the bona-fide ability of the landlords to obtain a suitable tenant, at a reasonable rent, is proven, or the property is vacant due to the execution of repairs/alterations. All landlords must fully satisfy the Council with regard to these requirements prior to any credit/refund.

The Members will be aware that this Council has carried out analysis that outlines that this source of revenue would provide a very low collection rate and would disproportionately impact areas outside of the main County Towns. The legislation refers only to Municipal Districts and does not provide the ability to vary the rate of refund within Municipal Districts in order to apply only to the larger towns. In light of this and the potential impact outside of the larger towns it would be considered that any financial provision in this area would not be prudent and given that the matter is being examined at national level, is recommended that the position remains the same.

Register of Electors Costs (H0401) **€169,100**

Local Election Costs (H0402) **€40,000**

Coroner Fees and Expenses (H0501) **€308,000**

In the Value for Money Report on the Coroner Service in Local Authorities published in February 2018 it recommended that a definitive decision should be made as to the future organisation of the Coroner Service in the context of the comprehensive reform planned by the Department of Justice and Equality.

Casual Trading Areas (H0702) **€18,000**

There is an extensive work programme county wide in this area.

Local Representation/Civic Leadership (H09) **€2,948,100**

This allocation includes Representational Payments/Allowances/Expenses/Retirement Gratuities.

General Municipal Allocation (H0909)**€1,707,000**

The amount provided in this Budget has been retained at €1.707m for 2019. This comprises of a Community Support Fund of €750,000 allocated across the 4 Municipal Districts and adopted by the members of each Municipal District at meetings held on 22 October 2018. It includes €270,000 matching funding in respect of the Strategic Development Fund. 2018 is the fourth year of operation of the Community Support Fund. A total of €6,696,701 grant funding has been provided to 389 projects from 2016 to date. The balance of €957,000 is in respect of the Members Allocations.

Motor Taxation Operation (H1001)**€835,300**

In 2018, Kerry Motor Tax Office will process over 55,000 transactions with an estimated value of €9 million. Approximately 77% of these transactions will be dealt with over the counter, with 23% processed by post. In addition, over 160,000 transactions will be done on-line.

Agency and Recoupable Services (H1101)**€3,185,439**

Included in this Budget are the general expenses of courthouses/recoupments.

The Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC)

The cost of €2.172m for this office, which is based in Killarney, is fully recouped from the Local Government Sector in 2019.

Central Management Charges

Ms. McAllen referred members to Page 33 of the Budget Tables and Pages 154-164 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Maintenance & Upkeep of Corporate Buildings (J0101)**€2,008,680**

This Budget includes caretaking, security and maintenance costs for the Aras an Chontae Campus and other corporate offices around the County, including: the Castleisland Area Services Centre which accommodates Castleisland Library, the Area Office and the Water Services Department, the file storage facility located at Monavalley, the Area Services Centre in Killorglin, the Town Hall at Princes Quay, Tralee, the Town Hall in Killarney, the Town Hall Building in Listowel, the Ashe Memorial Hall, Tralee and rented office accommodation. Existing rents are kept under regular review and more preferential rates are negotiated where possible. The Facilities Management Unit works to maximise costs and efficiencies in all contracts relating to buildings.

General Corporate Services (J02)**Corporate General Policy (J0201) (J0202) (J0203)****€2,484,100**

This Budget allocation includes a Contribution to Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).

This unit deals with:

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Freedom of Information
- Media and Communications
- Insurances/Risk Management
- Oifig na Gaeilge
- Audit Services
- Communications Costs

Information and Communication Technology (J03)

As with all business sectors, the Council has increasingly invested in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Information Systems (IS) to provide and manage Council services throughout the organisation. In 2019, the Council will continue to develop its information security resilience and recovery capabilities in light of growing cyber security risks, and to implement a new telephony system for the entire Council operation.

Maintenance of Networks and PC's (J0301)

€1,425,727

Provision has been made to supporting over 900 computers and users across the organisation in over 50 locations, and over 200 printers, as well as the server and storage infrastructure which is critical for Council services and data storage. The cost of providing Internet services is also included in this sub-service. The development of a new intranet will be a priority activity in 2019 as well as adding more digital services to the Council website.

Print/Post Room Services (J0401)

€39,560

Human Resources Administration (J0501)

€2,092,659

Health & Safety and Staff Welfare (J0502)

€292,135

Payroll Administration (J0503)

€370,606

Financial & Management Accounting (J0601, J0602 & J0603)

€2,143,500

This provision relates to the salaries and associated office administration costs of the Finance function, comprising of Budgetary, Financial and Treasury Management, Financial Control and Management, Payroll and Accounts Payable. Page 62 outlines the extensive work programme for 2019.

Pensions and Lump Sum Costs (J07)

€7,950,450

This sum covers the pensions of former staff of all departments, which are now shared out across all Services in accordance with a National Unit share-out parameter. This cost is increasing and will only increase in the future.

Area Offices Costs (J0801)

€407,340

Ms. McAllen said that concluded her presentation of the Revenue Budget for 2019.

The Cathaoirleach and all members complimented the Chief Executive and Head of Finance on their presentations and staff for compiling the Report.

Cllr. S. Locke acknowledged the amount of work being done to provide services across the county. He asked that the proposed increase on the burial plot fee would not be implemented. He asked that back boilers would be used as heating systems in Kerry County Council houses as many tenants cannot afford a dual heating system, which requires oil. He welcomed the allocation to Blennerville Windmill in Tralee as this amenity is in need of support as a tourism attraction. He welcomed the allocation towards water safety initiatives, which is vital. He asked that any extra funding available would be allocated to the Tralee Sports Complex, which needs investment in equipment.

Cllr. J.F. Flynn PROPOSED that the 12 hardship cases identified under the Local Improvement Scheme would be prioritised for 2019. He referred to the length of time taken to build houses, in particular expressing concern that the Ardmoniel Heights development in Killorglin has been ongoing since 2009 and despite having Part 8 approval, it was sent back for redesign in 2015. In relation to homeless emergency

accommodation, he said a new system must be considered to address this, as the temporary use of housing stock for periods of 6 months is not working. In the majority of cases in his area, there has been serious anti-social behaviour issues with the tenants of those houses. He referred to the turnaround time of 28.5 weeks for vacant properties and asked if this time is calculated from the date the keys are handed back or when the house has become vacant. He added that in many cases keys have not been handed back for 2 months. He called for a serious commitment to halving this turnaround time, as without this commitment he would find it hard to support the proposed budget.

Cllr. J. Moloney welcomed the monies allocated for greenway projects in the county, the update on progress with the N69 Listowel Bypass and the allocation of funding for staff for Listowel Library. He referred to the maintenance budget for the Operations Department, 80% of which was spent by May 2018 in the Listowel Municipal District. He said the current period of bad weather is affecting the roads that were already patched and asked for any available funding to be made available to the Listowel maintenance budget.

Cllr. A. Thornton welcomed the inclusion of the Dale Road and monies for coastal protection works in the budget. She asked for any available funding to be made available to the Listowel maintenance budget. She asked if the Drainage Programme can be extended and if Bridge Maintenance monies are being provided from own resources. She welcomed the increase in funding for management and maintenance of car parks along with the increase in Transport Infrastructure Ireland funding.

Cllr. T. Ferris said she did not support the increase in the burial plot fee. She noted the car parking guidelines will be revised. She said how the figures on collections are presented depends on social groupings, e.g. 93% outturn for 2018 from housing rents is quoted in the budget book. She asked how many rate payers are up to date, how many of those who are subject to fees from the Planning Department are paid in full and how many car parking fees are paid in full. She said in relation to the core things the Local Authority should be doing there is no forward planning, only reacting. In relation to requests for additional staff being delayed she said this will affect issues such as housing maintenance where there are difficulties in securing private contractors for maintenance works adding that she believes there are savings to be made by increasing staff levels. In response to the statement in the budget book that reliance on income from capital receipts to balance Budgets in the coming years is not prudent, she said she would expect the new Tenant Purchase Scheme would result in an increase in ICRs, which could be used for maintenance of housing stock. She asked for clarification on what funds were carried over from Tralee Town Council to be used for specific projects in Tralee Municipal District. She asked why provision is not being made for specific projects in Tralee, e.g. the skateboard park. She asked for clarification on once off compensation payments. She asked if the vacancy of Coroner was publicly advertised and why the Local Authority has to meet the costs of the Coroner. She complimented the staff of the Housing Department for their work with the homeless. She asked why provision was not made in the budget for the introduction of a Choice Based Letting (CBL) technology system for housing. She PROPOSED that monies be allocated towards providing technology for a Choice Based Letting system. She asked why monies were not drawn down under the Traveller Accommodation Programme. She acknowledged that management are reviewing lands in Kerry County Council's ownership that can be developed, however, asked for details of lands, as she had previously requested. She asked how much is outstanding in planning bonds. She asked for a report on the implications of the An

Bord Pleanála decision on a planning appeal for a North Kerry solar farm wherein they reduced the levies that Kerry County Council had levied on planning permission for that development. She said there is no change in the Heritage Office budget and asked if a Heritage Officer will be recruited. She said she did not support the adoption of the Municipal District budget and it would, therefore, be hypocritical of her to support this budget.

Cllr. Ferris conveyed apologies for Cllr. Daly who is unable to attend the morning session of the budget meeting and he had asked her to raise the following: costs due to the rates harmonisation, progress of the River Walk Tralee and the Dale road.

Cllr. R. Beasley said the housing crisis will remain until such time as the housing construction programme is fully operational again. He asked if there are specific dates in 2019 for the commencement of the housing development in Ballybunion. In relation to roads maintenance, he said extra funding should be sought for Listowel Municipal District due to the bog foundation on which the roads are built. The 2018 budget has already been spent which is of great concern given the recent rainfall which has exacerbated the potholes and if not address the roads will be beyond repair. The Roads Programme for the next 5 years had identified fifty roads for investment; however, due to the foundation of the roads in Listowel Municipal District even this investment will not solve the roads problem. He asked that consideration be given to increasing the amount of funding available for the Roads Programme. In relation to the Dale Road, he said he understood the monies provided in the budget are for an assessment of the road. He said he hopes monies have been provided to fund Phase 2 works on this road. He asked that the increase on the burial plot fee would be reconsidered or reviewed on an individual basis. He acknowledged the good work that has been done on street cleaning and called for extra beach cleaning to be carried out. Dog fouling continues to be an issue. He asked that flood risk assessments be carried out in the Cashen and Ballylongford to remediate flooding problems in these areas. He welcomed the allocation of funding for staff for Listowel Library. He paid tribute to the County Librarian on the maintenance of the libraries and the collection of books available. In relation to the provision of funding for greenways, he asked if it is enough to meet the investment required in these projects.

Cllr. J. Finucane said this budget is a holding budget to cover immediate requirements and it is regrettable that additional funding is not available for a more development-based budget. There is an ongoing issue regarding public service pensions. A provision of €8m has been made in our budget for Pensions & Lump Sums. He called on Kerry County Council to write to the Minister for Finance and insist that a state pension public service fund would be put in place for public service workers. He expressed concern that a number of enterprise units that were developed remain unoccupied, adding that the state bodies have an onus to work in conjunction with the Local Authority and so far, they have failed to do so. He said the county has had a successful tourism season and the need to invest further in tourism is essential. Flagship projects must be progressed. The Lee Valley site on the Dingle road needs development along with a project for the Ashe Hall. It would be great to have a Development Fund in place to provide for such projects. He said an Emergency Fund to deal with the outcome of severe weather events must be provided for. He PROPOSED the adoption of the budget as presented.

Cllr. P. McCarthy SECONDED this proposal.

Cllr. J. Healy-Rae asked for clarification on the costs associated with the North Kerry Landfill. He asked that the cost of disposing of waste from the transfer stations be reviewed, adding that he considered it a mistake that the North Kerry Landfill was closed. He asked that the Kenmare By-Pass would be completed and car parking spaces provided in Kenmare. He called for the upgrading of Kenmare Waste Water Treatment Plant as planning permission is being granted subject to that upgrade. He asked for infill public lighting to be provided where necessary. He referred to the 'other income' amount of €36.05m and asked for clarification on the source of that income. He welcomed the position taken regarding rates on vacant buildings and asked if it is a new requirement that the property owner must provide Kerry County Council with relevant documentation regarding efforts made to let the property. He called for each Municipal District to undertake work on opening inlets, drains and water tables over the winter months to prevent water build up on roads. He objected to the proposed increase on burial ground fees. He asked for an update on the Burial Grounds Programme, i.e. where is it proposed to buy lands for burial grounds. He referred to hedge cutting and said it is posing a problem for tourists. He asked that the proposed changes in dealing with hedge cutting be outlined to the Elected Members.

Cllr. M. Kennelly said the biggest issues facing Kerry County Council in 2019 are roads and housing. Many roads have not been included in the Roads Programme 2019-2021. The current maintenance budget is not sufficient to maintain the county's road network, particularly taking into consideration the extreme weather being experienced in recent years. He referred to the Listowel-Cooleen Cross-Mountcoal road, which was almost impassable this morning following heavy rain at the weekend. He called for work on the Dale Road to progress. He referred to the 28-week turnaround time for Kerry County Council's vacant houses and said it is taking longer to turnaround vacant houses in North Kerry, acknowledging that there is a difficulty in getting contractors. He noted that the Budget does not include a reference to taking on apprentices. He welcomed the provision for housing grants as these grants make a great difference to the families involved. He referred to the issue of Japanese knotweed, which is delaying progress with the development of seven no. 1 bed units in Listowel and asked for this to be addressed. He asked for an update on a proposed 17-unit public/private development. He asked for confirmation that funding is available for the North Kerry Greenway to progress. He asked that any extra funding that is available would be allocated towards maintaining roads in the Listowel Municipal District.

Cllr. D. Grady noted that one-third of Kerry County Council's income is from commercial rates. He expressed concern that the Municipal Districts have budgeted for Municipal District areas that may no longer form a part of an Elected Member's area from May 2019. He acknowledged the work of volunteers with Tidy Towns groups. He asked for a breakdown of rates per Municipal District area and said monies that were transferred from Killarney Town Council to Kerry County Council in 2014 should be available for developments in Killarney. He referred to the Sara Lee site in Killarney and said he had previously proposed that this site be used for housing. While welcoming the improvement in the provision of housing over the last 12 months he said further housing is required. He acknowledged progress with addressing homelessness via the Clúid development of Armagh House in Killarney. He asked for an update regarding asylum seekers. He called for additional car parking to be provided in Killarney. He asked for an update on the landfill at Durrine, Killarney. He also asked for an update on the purchase of a jeep for use by the Civil Defence during severe weather.

Cllr. M. O'Shea welcomed the completion of works on the N86 and the ongoing works on the N70 route, which is due for completion in March 2019. He called for an increase in staff for the capital construction programme in order to deliver programmes, e.g. housing developments at Ardmoniel, Killorglin and Milltown. He welcomed the purchase of houses in Milltown during 2018. He asked that assistance be provided to residents of estates to be taken in charge, particularly where there are leased properties in such estates. He complimented the staff of the Tourism Unit for facilitating events throughout the county and in particular the Kerry Fleadh Cheoil that was held in Milltown. He called for progress to be made with the IDA in securing a tenant for the facility at Dromtacker, Tralee. Affordable sites were mentioned in the national budget, but there is no reference to same in Kerry County Council's budget. Many people are in an income bracket where they cannot qualify for social housing and cannot qualify for a mortgage. He expressed concern that the National Planning Framework document refers to 'forbidding one off rural houses from 2020, and said it would cause mayhem to introduce this.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty expressed concern that retired outdoor staff are not being replaced, particularly as this is a tourism county and maintenance of the towns is so important. He acknowledged the work of volunteers that help with tidy towns groups. He said while more apprentices must be employed by Kerry County Council, it is also important to employ private contractors, as they are ratepayers in the county. He referred to the North Kerry Landfill and said it is a huge drain on financial resources. He asked for an update on the expressions of interest that were sought and if there was a possibility of reducing costs as this facility should be an asset rather than a liability. He said the county sees little from the LPT monies collected on behalf of central Government. He said there should be a velocity patcher located full time in Killarney Municipal District as it has 1,000 km of road, the majority of which are in poor quality and there would be a cost saving by keeping roads at a better standard consistently. He asked if the Rose of Tralee is included in the 2018 expenditure of €75,250 for festivals and events. He supported Cllr. Finucane's proposal for the establishment of a Pension Public Service Fund. He complimented the work done in the housing grants section adding that it can have a life changing effect on the applicants. He asked for clarification on loan charges for capital development works at the North Kerry Landfill.

Suspension of Standing Orders

The Cathaoirleach indicated it was 1.30pm and it would be necessary to suspend Standing Orders.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. B. Cronin, SECONDED by Cllr. J. Finucane it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue.

Cllr. D. Quigg thanked Mr. M. O'Donoghue, South & West Municipal District Manager and his team for taking the initiative to secure funding streams for projects, e.g. the walkway in Killorglin and the right-of-way at Caragh Lake, which will be used by many people in the area. He asked that management follow up with the Killarney Leisure Centre regarding the use of the facilities by schools for swimming lessons during school hours. He called for discussions to start on the Killorglin to Glenbeigh Greenway ahead of the outcome of the planning application on South Kerry Greenway to An Bord Pleanála. He SECONDED Cllr. Flynn's proposal that the 12 hardship cases identified under the Local Improvement Scheme would be prioritised for 2019. He welcomed funding in 2018 for K-Fest, an event that is very successful and growing each year, and asked for that funding support to be continued. He referred to the Killorglin By-Pass and said it is vital that the process to get this on a Capital Programme

starts in order to achieve development plans for the town and to address traffic management. He asked for clarification on the budget for the Irish Office and asked for an update on the Broadband Programme.

Cllr. J. Sheahan said traffic congestion is an issue in Killarney which must be addressed, suggesting that consideration be given to providing a multi-storey car park at Lewis Road, and welcoming proposals for the provision of additional car parking spaces in the town. He welcomed the provision of the new Burial Ground at Knockeenduff and the extension to Kilcummin Burial Ground. He supported the budget provision for the library service, adding that it is important for young children to have access to this facility throughout their education. He said illegal dumping is still an issue that must be addressed. He asked that additional resources would be given to hedge cutting maintenance as landowners are ignoring notices issued.

Cllr. N. Kelleher said restrictions on the number of staff employed by Kerry County Council is a problem for the delivery of services. In addition to procuring private contractors, who are not always immediately available, Kerry County Council should be employing trades people to overcome obstacles in the delivery of services. He asked when Kerry County Council will advertise for the recruitment of General Operatives. He asked how many housing loans were refused. He said the Roads Budget is increasing, the amount of maintenance to be done is increasing and the demands on the Councillors Allocation are increasing, and called for an increase on this allocation. He asked that the Broadband Officer would work with local action groups on securing funding for smaller communities through Pobal funding streams. He said he would like to see an annual budget provision for the development of new Burial Grounds and a commitment to provide Columbarium Walls in Burial Grounds. He asked for clarification of the irrecoverable charges in the operation of the fire service and a breakdown of the larger income figures. He asked for an update on the commitment given last year regarding provision for the Killarney Fire Station. He asked why Central Management Charges have increased on 2018. He asked for the Public Service Pensions figure for 2018 and supported Cllr. Finucane's proposal for the establishment of a national Public Service Fund. He asked for clarification regarding the source of funding for the Homeless Centre and SECONDED Cllr. T. Ferris's proposal regarding the introduction of a Choice Based Letting system. He referred to page 13 of the Explanatory Tables and asked for clarification on the figures for Local Authority Contributions and Other Income for 2019 that have increased significantly over the 2018 budget. He referred to the NPPR and asked for figures for 2018 and 2019 on how much is outstanding on payment plans put in place and from one off payments. He asked for an update on advertising the tender for the replacement of the second mobile library. He referred to the 3-year provision made for re-roofing of County Buildings and asked what the extent of the problem with the roof is. With regard to budgeting for the Municipal Districts, he said Elected Members serve all of Kerry and should do the right thing for the county with the budget.

Cllr. B. Cronin said the Housing Adaptation Grants is one of the core services this Local Authority has provided very successfully and it makes a huge difference to families across the county, making homes accessible and allowing people to stay in the comfort of their own home. He referred to the turnaround time for vacant properties and said the length of turnaround needs to be addressed in order to make houses available for people on the housing waiting list. He asked for an update on the acquisition of lands at St. Finan's in Killarney. He asked for an update on the assessment of Listry Bridge. He referred to the provision of car parking in Killarney and expressed frustration at the delay in developing a programme for accessible and centrally located parking along

with the delay in commencing works at Rock Road when a Part 8 is in place for that development. He said the lack of car parking spaces is leading to traffic congestion in the town and he supported the need for a multi-storey car park in the town centre. He said he has asked previously, and is again asking, for a slip road to be provided from Mission Road into the lower end of the New Street car park in order that this area would be more accessible and utilised. He asked that proposed alterations at High Street and Main Street would not negatively affect on-street parking, as the ratepayers want car parking available in the town. He asked when the priority scheme will be available for the Local Improvement Scheme. He supported Cllr. Culloty's request to have a Durapatcher located full-time in the Killarney Municipal District. He supported Cllr. Grady's request that monies from Killarney Town Council be spent on Killarney projects and asked how much is available and how can these monies be accessed. He welcomed the new Burial Ground in Knockeenduff and the extension of the old Burial Ground at Kilcummin, and said he understood the need to apply an increase to the Burial Ground fees. He expressed concern that illegal dumping remains an issue in the county and complimented the staff of the Environment Department on their work in this area. With regard to LPT, he said he wants people living in rural areas to benefit from the proceeds of the LPT. He said one area he highlighted which needed hedge cutting has been remedied; however, it continues to be required in many other areas. He asked that the landowner in that case would be pursued for the relevant costs of the hedge cutting and queried how many landowners have been pursued for the cost of hedge cutting over the last 4-5 years. He referred to the opening of Lough Guitane Waste Water Treatment Plant, a €30m investment and a project that won the National Engineering Project of the Year, and he complimented all involved. He suggested that the treatment plant be made available to schools as an educational school tour destination.

Cllr. J. Lucid welcomed the proposal to build 105 units in 2018 and 300 units in 2019. He said if there is to be any impact seen in dealing with the current housing crisis even more social and affordable housing must be built. The lack of supply in the market is the single source of the housing problem, particularly with around 4,000 applicants on a growing waiting list. This lack of supply must be tackled by Central Government making proper funding available to County Councils to drive a house building programme which must be tailored to meet the needs of the waiting lists. Schemes such as HAP, Repair & Lease and Rebuilding Ireland House Loan have not and will not solve the problem. The current situation is forcing house prices and rent costs through the roof. People are now spending a large portion of their income to meet rising rents and this is creating unacceptable poverty and hardship. In relation to Roads, he said the continuation of the Local Improvement scheme in 2018 is welcome and must be continued in 2019 and thereafter. Many private roads are in a very poor condition and will take years of investment in the county. The fact that only 4% (40km) of the 1,000km of road in North Kerry are classified as National roads puts the area at a terrible disadvantage. Because of this, the proportion of road maintenance being carried out by the Municipal District is out of sync with other districts. This is stretching the budget to the limit and places massive pressure on the staff resources. Bad weather in November 2017 did an estimated €750k worth of damage to the road infrastructure in North Kerry and it was an absolute disgrace that no additional funding was made available by the Department to fund the repairs. Instead, the annual maintenance budget had to be used to try to deal with the problems and there are still repairs outstanding. Roads along the Wild Atlantic Way must be maintained at the highest possible level to help with tourism. The Minister must address the Dale Road in 2019, this route from Tralee to Ballybunion and the section at Rathscannell is in an unacceptable state and it is not helping tourism in Ballybunion. Residents and road

users in the area have endured this situation for many years now. He welcomed funding as part of the 2019 Roads Restoration Programme to raise the level of the R551 between Buncurrig and Ballymaquinn, the bog road. This work, in conjunction with the repair and replacement of sluice gates at Ardkeragh, will help to alleviate the flooding issues there. He acknowledged that the study of flooding in this area will form part of the Coastal Erosion study in 2019. He welcomed the fact that the whole Ardkeragh area will now be maintained in the Listowel Municipal Area which will streamline all maintenance going forward, rather than the unsatisfactory situation prior to this where two Municipal areas had responsibility for the area. He called for completion of the purchase of two Durapatchers as early as possible in 2019 as they will provide a better outcome for road maintenance given that experience tells us that repairs are of better quality, will last much longer (one repair per year as opposed to up 4 or 5 repairs a year for the same place) and in the long run the machines will pay their way financially. He welcomed the provision of funding for a Coastal Erosion Study to review and make recommendations for the area from Kerryhead to the Maharees. This independent study is required to show how serious the problem is in this area and support applications to secure OPW funding and European structural funding. Liaison with the European Commission on this matter would be helpful as they have experience of ongoing Coastal Erosion projects and have devised engineering models that forecast the impact of climate change and a rise in the sea level on coastal erosion, which is information necessary to plan for the future. He said the range and level of services that Kerry County Council provides and has responsibility for is vast, while the amount of money and the resources available are limited. As the budget provides the best means and the structure to manage the money, to ensure that it is spent prudently and that best value for money is achieved, he said he supports the budget presented.

Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen asked that Kenmare be included in an application under the Wi-Fi for EU Scheme. He referred to the income from commercial rates and said ratepayers would like to see further investment in car parking and footpaths. He welcomed the works to be done under the Local Improvement Scheme. He said he would like to see an increase provided for in the Councillors' Allocations. He thanked the staff of the Taking Estates in Charge unit for assistance to residents associations and Elected Members. He asked that the plans for the development of the Kenmare Waste Water Treatment Plant be progressed and funding for same sought from Irish Water. He complimented the work of the Economic Development Unit and asked that focus be put on smaller towns and villages. He asked that additional monies be allocated for local festivals. In relation to Burial Grounds, he asked that Columbarium Walls be provided in as many Burial Grounds as possible.

Cllr. T. Barry said that because of the amount of road network in North Kerry additional funding is required for the road maintenance budget in Listowel Municipal District. In relation to housing he said the provision of community centres in estates is very important, however, insurance is an issue and because of this, many of these centres are not being used. He welcomed the 'Adopt a Bank' Scheme and the installation of permanent security cameras to deter illegal dumping. He said he could not support the increase in Burial Ground fees. He welcomed the provision of funding for the Community Support Fund, as it is a vital and positive contribution for communities. He said there is a need for addition staff to be recruited, particularly to carry out housing repairs.

Cllr. B. O'Connell suggested that Tenancy Agreements for Local Authority tenants would include a clause whereby in addition to their weekly rent the tenant would pay an amount of money for their refuse collection. Kerry County Council could then work

with the waste disposal service providers regarding refuse collection for these tenants and Kerry County Council pass on the payments from tenants. As a tourism county, this could be done as a pilot project and could be replicated throughout the country.

The Cathaoirleach asked for an update on the appraisal project for the Tralee Northern Relief Road. She said hedge cutting must become a priority for the Local Authority. She called for more activity in the LED replacement scheme for public lighting. She welcomed the recruitment of additional outdoor staff. She acknowledged the provision of funding for the Library Service, which is of great value to many communities. She said the Arts Office is extremely supportive of the creative and literary talent in the county and is an area that should be supported and showcased as much as possible. She asked if the slogan/logo for tourism has been adopted. She noted that the Rose of Tralee Festival will be celebrating its 60th year in 2019. She welcomed the excellent work on the Tralee Wetlands and work being done by Comhairle na nÓg.

The Chief Executive said a balanced budget has been presented to the Elected Members; however, it was not an easy task. Many areas have been stripped back and the appointment of some indoor staff has been stalled. It presents difficulties for budget holders throughout the year. However, Kerry County Council has a strong ethos of budget management and services must be delivered in 2019. She responded to queries from Elected Members as follows:

- In relation to staffing, this budget is not affecting the recruitment of outdoor staff; the recruitment of General Operatives will be advertised in the coming weeks. With regard to housing and apprenticeships, there is not a lot of capacity in the market, however, it is hoped some apprenticeships will be filled. There is a balance required between contractors and in house staff for housing repairs.
- Regarding the turnaround time of 28 weeks for voids, this time includes long-term vacancies, which can take much longer to turnaround. In repairing a property, a long-term view must be taken to protect our stock. The voids process has been reviewed and there are improvements in the turnaround time. There is still an amount of work to be done, but not all houses are in the same bracket.
- With regard to the Housing Programme, 482 construction units are to be delivered over the 2017-2019 Housing Capital Programme. This is a strong capital programme. On commencement of the programme, the Capital Unit team was put in place. The Department has set targets and they are being achieved.
- In relation to the Drainage Programme, there was a change in the way the funding was allocated, with Kerry being allocated €470,000. It is hoped this can be extended by way of own resources.
- Regarding Roads Maintenance Budgets, a plan was agreed with members at Municipal District level. Management must manage budgets, if there is a change with a budget, management will bring this to the attention of Elected Members.
- An additional allocation of €800,000 was received for roads; however, this is to meet expenditure for works on roads damaged during recent severe weather events.
- In relation to burial ground fees, the Burial Ground Programme is in place which has identified that there is a lot of work to do in existing burial grounds. The fee of €500 does not cover the full cost of a burial plot.

- The monies used from Internal Capital Receipts (ICRs) in the 2019 Budget is a once off as these monies, which are raised through the sale of houses, must therefore be allocated year on year as it is not a sustainable source of funding.
- The North Kerry Landfill has had a lot of investment for its aftercare and there are significant costs associated with that. In order to make economic use of the facility, Expressions of Interest have been sought, with this process underway at present.
- Representations have been made to Irish Water in relation to the extension of the Wastewater Treatment Plant at Kenmare, which is a priority project.
- A Car Parking Strategy will be developed for the county taking into account traffic movement and management in towns and villages and the tourism impact.
- In relation to the IDA she said there has been significant work and focus by the IDA recently and they have made many visits to the county. With regard to the IDA building in Dromtacker, Tralee, it is hoped there will be a positive outcome.
- Kerry County Council has a Broadband Officer (funded 50% by Kerry County Council and 50% by the Department) who is doing great work and who will be working with LEADER groups regarding funding and providing broadband in smaller communities.
- Killarney Fire Station is to go to tender in early 2019.
- The Polluter Pays Principle is driving the increase in the waste disposal costs at the transfer stations. There is a need for increased enforcement regarding illegal dumping.
- In relation to Development Contributions brought from the former Town Councils, the Capital Plan is €305m for 2019-2021, with a substantial local contribution required. It must also be noted that Kerry County Council took on significant liabilities from the Town Councils.
- The Community Support Fund provides support to festivals throughout the county.
- With regard to hedge cutting, the requests of the Members have been taken on board. The Director of Operations has introduced a new procedure in relation to hedge cutting by devolving more power at Municipal District level. Landowners will be pursued in order to recoup costs for hedge cutting done by Kerry County Council.
- Capital Appraisals have been done for Listry Bridge, the Dale Road and the River Walk in Tralee, however, Kerry County Council has no influence over the time in which the Department will revert. The Capital Programme is an estimate of what programmes will go ahead in 2019-2021 and is dependent on capital grant funding.

Mr. M. O'Donoghue, Director of Service, responded to queries from Elected Members as follows:

- The introduction of an I.T. based Choice Based Letting (CBL) system carries considerable financial requirements. Kerry County Council is moving ahead with manual processing of CBL over the next few weeks and a report will be presented to the January 2019 meeting of the Quality of Life SPC.
- The drawdown of Traveller Accommodation funding was not required as an alternative solution was put in place to accommodate a particular traveller family.
- The progression of 38 units in Listowel is dependent on the Developer; Departmental approval has been received.

- A contractor is on site in Listowel, at the development site for seven no. 1 bed units, to deal with Japanese Knotweed.
- Kerry is scheduled to facilitate additional asylum seekers.
- 25 no. housing loans have been refused to date in 2018.
- In relation to transitional housing, there were issues with 1/2 cases and as a generalisation he rejected comments made by Cllr. Flynn.
- With regard to the provision of wood burning solid fuels in Council stock, housing design plans are moving away from this in new builds. Work is ongoing nationally regarding a design template for social housing with the outcome of this work imminent.
- In relation to the Coroner, a temporary arrangement is in place with the Department of Justice. There is an ongoing review which precludes advertisement of this position.
- Land details will be provided within a fortnight and scheduled to come back to the Members. It is to be signed off by Senior Engineers and circulated to the Elected Members.
- With regard to St. Finan's, there is ongoing engagement with the HSE. They are not willing to provide a lot for housing lands. Further engagement is planned.

Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Director of Service, responded to queries from Elected Members as follows:

- Funding for roads is dependent on grants. A report with scheduled plans will be presented at Municipal District level.
- With regard to funding for winter months, the increased funding received during the year because of damage done during Storm Emma is a contra-item to cover monies already spent on repairs. Any monies spent on repairs following extreme weather events will be claimed from Transport Infrastructure Ireland.
- Tenders have been received and assessed for the Durapatcher and an order has been placed for 2 no. Durapatchers. There is a lead in time on their delivery.
- Project Appraisals have been completed for Listry Bridge, the Dale Road and Tralee Northern Relief Road. An announcement on those appraisals is not expected until Road Grants are announced at year end. Appraisals are underway on other projects including the Clash-Ballymullen Road.

Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance, responded to queries from Elected Members as follows:

- Tralee Sports Complex has been successful in its application for funding under the Sports Capital Grant, which is a valuable source of funding.
- In relation to Listowel Library, additional staff have been recruited and the library is now open during lunch hours.
- Comparatives for 2018 include funding.
- The housing rent collection rate is at 93% and is consistent with the 2017 year-end figure. Housing rents are invoiced on a weekly basis.

- The rates collection rate is at 82.5%, which is also consistent with the 2017 year-end figure. As rates are issued in two moieties, it is difficult to compare collection rates at this stage of the year.
- 75% of rates customers were fully paid up by year-end 2017, with a small number of customers on payment plans. The Local Government Auditor focuses on this area each year.
- Car parking charges are cash collected, therefore, are fully up to date.
- Planning fees are paid per application, therefore, are fully up to date.
- The use of ICRs is unsustainable as these monies are funded from the sale of properties and any expenditure is subject to the approval of the Department.
- In relation to monies outstanding in Bonds, this information was circulated in response to a Notice of Motion at the September 2018 Council Meeting. 86 claims have been made with over €7m claims outstanding as at the end of September.
- Regarding the landfill, the cost of the landfill has reduced with less staff required at the landfill, and leachate removal costs have reduced. Day to day running costs remain to be funded, e.g. plant hire and material to cover the landfill. A presence must be maintained at the landfill in order to maintain an EPA licence and ongoing liability for the next 25 years. The EPA inspect the landfill each year.
- Detail of the Other Local Income of €36m are set out on pages 43-45 of the Chief Executive's Report.
- An emergency vehicle for the Civil Defence team will be operational in 2 weeks.
- LPT income is projected at €14.7m for 2018. 20% of LPT collected is returned to central Government for the equalisation fund. For 2017 and 2018, Kerry County Council LPT baseline changed and factored in PRD increase, which brought the baseline up to €13.7m. Because of the change to the baseline, a smaller portion is being returned to the equalisation fund. Kerry County Council does get an allocation from the equalisation fund.
- Electrical works at a cost of €300,000 are required in the North Kerry Landfill. These are essential safety works, which included upgrading of pumps with the result that savings, will be made as the pumps are working more efficiently.
- With regard to loan charges of €291,000, they are for loans to develop the landfill. One loan expired in 2017 and others will expire over time. There is a provision in the budget for cell development loan charges.
- The budget for the Irish Office is €136,000.
- There is a Broadband Officer in place and this position is 50% funded by the Department.
- Provision has been made in the Burial Ground Programme for Columbarium Walls.
- The Killarney Fire Station extension is going to tender and is included in the Capital Programme.
- Loan charges for Killarney Swimming Pool, which were transferred from the former Killarney Town Council, are being restructured.
- The format in which the budget is presented is prescribed by statute. Any changes made by the Department are applied accordingly to Kerry County Council's budget.

- The allocation of funding for the homeless service is dealt with on a regional basis and is administered by Cork City Council. 90% of overall costs is recouped.
- URDF and RRDF Grant Funding covers large towns, and town and villages, throughout the county.

Cllr. J.F. Flynn referred to the 28-week turnaround time for voids and acknowledged that it has reduced on the previous year. However, he said he still considered it to be too long a turnaround time, he asked what is causing a turnaround time of 28 weeks and that a target of 20 weeks be set. In addition, before voting on the budget, he asked for a commitment from management that this matter be reviewed over the coming year. In relation to transitional housing, he said in his experience there are serious problems that must be acknowledged and dealt with in liaison with the Gardaí.

Cllr. M. Kennelly reiterated the request for any additional funding that becomes available to be allocated to the Listowel Municipal District maintenance budget.

Cllr. T. Ferris expressed her disappointment with the delay in putting Choice Based Letting (CBL) in place. The Minister for Housing has indicated that CBL is to be in place by 2020. Issues that have arisen in putting this system in place have been dealt with by other Local Authorities. She asked that Kerry County Council proceed with the introduction of an I.T. based CBL system as it would deal with delays in letting houses. In relation to Car Parking By-Laws, she said this Council is in its final few months and they are still awaited. She expressed incredulity that a project could not be identified in order to draw down Traveller Accommodation funding. She said the amount of funds transferred from Tralee Town Council to Kerry County Council has not been provided. She asked that the report on the implications of the An Bord Pleanála decision on a planning appeal for a North Kerry solar farm wherein they reduced the levies that Kerry County Council had levied on planning permission for that development be presented at the next meeting of Council. She asked why the Heritage Office funding remain the same. She asked if the Capital Programme has a provision for the Skate Park in Tralee. She expressed dissatisfaction with the response from the Chief Executive regarding staffing. She acknowledged that the Council has been pro-active regarding economic development in the county, adding that facilities must be made available in the county to attract employers and workers. The longer the social housing crisis continues the less attractive it is for investors as they want somewhere for their employees to live. This is also the case in relation to the condition of the county's roads and infrastructure, which will lead to economic development. She said the county is reactionary and not planning for the future.

Cllr. J. Finucane said finance is required to fund any future planning and development.

The Chief Executive referred to Cllr. Flynn's request for a commitment on the turnaround time for voids, setting out that the figure for 2015 was 42.7 week, 2016 was 38.89 weeks and 2017 was 28.45 weeks. This is an indication of a strong commitment and focus on reducing the turnaround time for voids. The turnaround time is an average figure and a difficult case can raise the average. The national average turnaround time for voids is 28.9 weeks.

In relation to the Heritage Office budget, she said the monies must be ring fenced to carry out the heritage functions. Taking the Planning budget with the Heritage Officer budget together there is a decrease in this area.

With regard to staffing, where grant funding is available staff will be recruited, e.g. the position of General Operative will be advertised shortly, which will support the

housing and roads programmes. In relation to indoor staff, there are a number of positions that will be filled within the available budget.

Mr. M. O'Donoghue, Director of Service, said a house can remain vacant, for a number of reasons for a significant period, and when brought back into productive use the full period of vacancy is counted for the turnaround time. There is also a requirement on the Local Authority to go through procurement and retain a Quantity Surveyor to prepare a Bill of Quantities. Since planning was secured for the development in Killorglin, there has been no Capital Programme in place. Some redesign was required for this development and it is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

In relation to Choice Based Letting, the primary concern relates to engagement from tenants. In the first year, it was introduced in a neighbouring county less than 60% of tenants engaged with the system. A number of manual CBLs are being processed which will inform the use of the system going forward.

12.11.18.03 Adoption of the Council's Budget for the Local Financial Year ending 31st December 2019

Cllr. J. Finucane PROPOSED that we the members of Kerry County Council hereby resolve that pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 and the Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations, the Draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2019 as presented by the Chief Executive and as set out in Tables A, B and C be and is hereby adopted.

Cllr. P. McCarthy SECONDED this proposal.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Connor-Scarteen, Cronin, Culloty, Finucane, Flynn, Grady, J. Healy-Rae, Kelleher, Kennelly, Lucid, D. McCarthy, P. McCarthy, McEllistrim, Moloney, O'Connell, O'Shea, Sheahan, Spring, Thornton, Foley **(20)**

Against: Cllrs. Barry, Beasley, Daly, Ferris, Quigg **(5)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

Absent: Cllrs. Cahill, Fitzgerald, Gleeson, M. Healy-Rae, Locke, Moriarty, O'Brien, Purtill **(8)**

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal CARRIED and the Council so resolving.

12.11.18.04 Determination of the Annual Rate on Valuation for the Local Financial Year ending 31st December 2019

Cllr. J. Finucane PROPOSED that we the members of Kerry County Council hereby resolve that pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 and the Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations, and in accordance with the Local Authority Budget for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2019, as adopted, the annual rate on valuation

as set out in Table A hereunder be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the said Financial Year having regard to the Base Year Adjustment determined in accordance with Section 29 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The Annual Rate to be levied shall be €79.25.

Cllr. B. O'Connell SECONDED this proposal.

TABLE A - CALCULATION OF ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION

Summary by Service Division		Expenditure	Income	Budget Net Expenditure 2019		Estimated Net Expenditure Outturn 2018	
		€	€	€	%	€	%
		Gross Revenue Expenditure & Income					
Housing and Building		29,260,901	28,624,008	636,893	1.2%	444,008	0.8%
Road Transport & Safety		36,822,354	23,444,554	13,377,800	24.2%	12,805,452	23.0%
Water Services		15,251,751	14,188,560	1,063,191	1.9%	1,087,942	2.0%
Development Management		15,549,605	7,425,510	8,124,095	14.8%	8,492,248	15.2%
Environmental Services		18,177,191	4,349,863	13,827,328	25.1%	14,008,536	25.1%
Recreation and Amenity		8,380,630	745,589	7,635,041	13.9%	7,635,754	13.7%
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare		2,849,465	1,930,242	919,223	1.7%	726,917	1.3%
Miscellaneous Services		17,667,623	8,181,545	9,486,078	17.2%	10,504,295	18.9%
		143,959,520	88,889,871	55,069,649	100.0%	55,705,152	100%
Provision for Debit Balance							
Adjusted Gross Expenditure & Income	(A)	143,959,520	88,889,871	55,069,649		55,705,152	
Financed by Other Income/Credit Balances							
Provision for Credit Balance							
Local Property Tax			13,776,761	13,776,761			
Sub - Total	(B)			13,776,761		55,705,152	
Net Amount of Rates to be Levied	(A-B)			41,292,888			
Value of Base Year Adjustment				274,926			
Amount of Rates to be Levied (Gross of BYA)	(D)			41,567,814			
Net Effective Valuation	(E)			524,515			
General Annual Rate on Valuation	D/E			79.25			

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Connor-Scarteen, Cronin, Culloty, Finucane, Flynn, Grady, J. Healy-Rae, Kelleher, Kennelly, Lucid, D. McCarthy, P. McCarthy, McEllistrim, Moloney, O'Connell, O'Shea, Sheahan, Spring, Thornton, Foley **(20)**

Against: Cllrs. Barry, Beasley, Daly, Ferris, Quigg **(5)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

Absent: Cllrs. Cahill, Fitzgerald, Gleeson, M. Healy-Rae, Locke, Moriarty, O'Brien, Purtill **(8)**

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal CARRIED and the Council so resolving.

12.11.18.05 Report on the Capital Programme 2019–2021

Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen PROPOSED that the Chief Executive's Report on the Capital Programme 2019-2021 as incorporated into the Report on the Budget be noted.

Cllr. J. Moloney SECONDED this proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

12.11.18.06 Approval of additional Expenditure for 2018

Cllr. D. Grady PROPOSED that we the members of Kerry County Council resolve that the additional expenditure for 2018 as set out in the Column titled "Estimated Outturn 2018" on Table F in the Local Authority Budget, as circulated, be and is hereby approved.

Cllr. D. McCarthy SECONDED this proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

The meeting concluded at 3.15pm.

Liam Quinlan
Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council