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**MIONTUAIRISCÍ CRUINNITHE BHUISÉID COMHAIRLE CHONTAE
CHIARRAÍ, A THIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE, TRÁ LÍ, DÉ LUAN, 17 SAMHAIN 2014.**

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON MONDAY
17TH NOVEMBER 2014.**

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

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

APOLOGY/LEATHSCÉAL

L. Purtill

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Ms. M. Murrell, Chief Executive	Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance
Mr. M. McMahon, Dir. Job Creation	Mr. J.D. Flynn, Dir. of Corp. Services
Mr. O. Ring, Dir. Irish Water Oper.	Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Dir. Op., Health & Safety
Mr. J. Breen, Dir. Sust. Comm./Q of L	Mr. J. Kennelly, SE Irish Water
Ms. K. Moriarty, A/SEO Finance	Mr. P. O'Shea, A/SEO Finance
Mr. G. O'Brien, Meetings Admin.	Mr. M. O'Leary, SEO Env. Protection
Mr. M. O'Donoghue, SEO HR	Mr. P. Curry, SE NRDO
Mr. G. Riordan, SE Operations	Mr. P. Neary, SSE Operation
Mr. D. Doyle, SE Operations	Mr. T. O'Connor, County Librarian
Mr. M. Scannell SEO Comm Serv&E	Mr. P. Teahan, SEE Operations
Mr. J. McCarthy, AO Finance	Ms. K. Lynch, AO Finance
Mr. B. Looney, Head of IT	Ms. K. Curtin, AO Revenue
Mr. L. Brosnan, AO Planning	Ms. M. West, AO Operations
Ms. S. Sheridan, SSO Finance	Mr. P. O'Connor, SSO Finance
Ms. L. Breen, SSO Killarney MD	Mr. S. Dowling, Sen. Exec. Librarian

Ms. C. O'Connor-Galvin, SO Finance	Mr. R. Tangney, ASO Finance
Mr. P. Corkery, Press & Comm. Off.	Ms. B. Reidy, SSO Corp. Affairs
Mr. P. McCarthy, SO Fire Services	Ms. T. O'Carroll, AE Env. Serv.
Ms. A.M. Lynch, SSO Housing	Ms. K. Doody, SO Operations
Ms. G. Collins, ASO Operations	Mr. B. Doolan, A.S.O. Revenue
Mr. J.J. Canty, CO Finance	

The meeting commenced at 10.40 am.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. J. Brassil took the Chair.

Vote of congratulations

(a) Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen extended at vote of congratulations to Kenmare on winning a Pride of Place Award and he thanked Kerry County Council for nominating them in the population category 1,500 to 2,000.

(b) Cllr. B. O'Connell congratulated Castleisland Desmond's Ladies Football Team on winning the All Ireland Ladies Intermediate Football Final.

Cllr. T. Ferris said she was not satisfied to adopt the Budget when members only received the documentation the previous Thursday.

The Cathaoirleach said he could not pre-empt how the meeting would go.

Cllr. Ferris said she understood there would be public consultation on the Budget.

The Chief Executive said the statutory provisions have been fully complied with. The Budget is a three stage process (1) public consultation on the Local Property Tax, (2) the adoption of the General Municipal Allocations by the Municipal Districts and (3) the formal Budget Meeting. Members have 14 days from that day to adopt the Budget.

The Cathaoirleach said if the Budget was not adopted that day the Budget Meeting would reconvene the following Monday.

Ms. Murrell referred members to Page 1 of the Chief Executive's Report and said preparation of Draft Budget 2015 has been particularly difficult given the context of Local Government reform that has taken place over the previous 12 month period. 2014 has seen the abolition of the Town Councils, creation of four Municipal Districts, centralisation of services and replacement of the Local Government fund by a Local Property Tax allocation, together with a revised budget process. Fortunately, the responsible decision making of the previous Elected Councils to protect the Council Revenue streams and budget realistically has allowed this Council to navigate through the downturn over the previous number of years and maintain high standards of service and infrastructure to the county and its citizens. This Budget is therefore prepared in the context of a sound stable financial position which enables the county to give effect to Local Government reform leading economic development and community integration

across the county, ensuring a strong tourism focus, and to position the county to provide and maintain the highest possible standards of service to citizens and visitors to the County.

Presentation of the statutory Budget for adoption by members concludes the three stage Budget process for 2015. The first stage required the members to adopt a Local Property tax rate for 2015 at the Budget Strategy meeting of the 22nd September. The second stage of the Budget process required consideration of the Municipal District Allocation for 2015 at the Municipal District Budgetary Plan meetings in early October. Decisions taken at these meetings were made in the context of the overall Budget Strategy, are now concluded and reflected in the statutory tables as presented and represent the third and final stage of the Budget process to commence during the prescribed Budget period at the Annual Statutory Budget Meeting of 17th November.

Kerry County Council faces a particular challenge in this the third and final stage of the Budget process, as the variance between the Annual Rate of Valuation between that of the County and the lowest former Town Council rate is significant. At the Budget Strategy Meeting of 22nd September the Chief Executive made a proposal to members to harmonise rates to the Kerry County Council rate over a period of five years as this would provide a reasonable period for harmonisation to occur and provide certainty to business over this period. It was proposed by members that the Chief Executive would reassess and re-evaluate rates harmonisation across the county, given the particular difficulties which this period of harmonisation would have on those ratepayers with the greatest impact.

In reassessing the initial proposal to Council the Chief Executive has taken account of the following factors: -

- Maintaining the provision of the highest level of services.
- The need to position the county over the lifetime of the Council to grow economically by availing of any funding opportunities and planning for capital investment to: -
 - Grow enterprise
 - Grow tourism
 - Fund community initiatives
- Ensure that funds are available to meet the future demands of the County cognisant of the cost of peripherality, our aging population profile and enable social inclusion supports.

In this context the Chief Executive proposed to members that the period of rates harmonisation be set at 8 years and that an annual rate of valuation of €79.25 would apply over this period, this reflects a decrease of 1.3% on the Kerry County Council rate, as previously proposed by the Chief Executive. This coupled with the fact that Kerry County Council has maintained its current rate over the past five year period represents a very significant commitment by Kerry County Council to economic and business growth in the County. The setting of a harmonised rate of €79.25 will generate over the eight year period an economic/enterprise/tourism development fund of at least €800,000 over the lifetime of this Council which, I propose be initiated in 2015 to enable the benefits of rates harmonisation to commence in 2015.

Local Authority Financing

Local Authority financing has radically changed in 2014, Irish Water has assumed responsibility for the delivery and funding of Water Services, the Local Property Tax has operated on a full year basis and the Non-Principal Private Residence Charge will be discontinued. The Local Property Tax allocation for 2015 reflects this change and for the first time we received an LPT allocation of €11,659,186. This amount represents 80% of the Revenue estimated LPT tax allocation for Kerry for 2015. Retention of an additional €615,000 over the Local Government Fund allocation for 2014 contributed directly to the establishment of a significant Municipal District allocation as adopted by the Municipal District members of €1.707m. This Municipal District Fund is reflected in the Statutory Budget Tables under 2015 Division B Roads and Transportation and Division D Development Management.

Irish Water

An Annual Service Plan for 2015 is currently being negotiated with Irish Water. In this regard it is worth noting that Irish Water has indicated that they will be seeking a reduction in the cost of the SLA in 2015 as well as a reduction in central management charge payments to this Council.

Current Financial Update & Looking Forward to 2015

It is anticipated at this stage of the year that this Council will achieve a balanced Budget for 2014. The expenditure outturn for 2014 represents an increase of 4 % on restated Adopted Budgets. This additional expenditure is as a direct result of storm damage earlier in the year, particularly affecting Tralee Town housing stock, roads and footpaths, coastal damage, beaches, piers, playgrounds, burial grounds and public conveniences. Additional funding from NPPR income of €1.2m in excess of budget has supported the storm damage funding and enabled stable financial management this year. It is also achieved through continuing implementation of strict budgetary and debtor controls. This strict budgetary and debtor control will continue into 2015, cognisant of the challenges facing us by the significant change outlined above.

The Draft Budget 2015 provides for expenditure of €123,854,077 is comparable to the 2014 restated Adopted Budgets. The Budget and outturn for 2014 represent a consolidated Kerry County Council position for the three former Town Councils and Kerry County Council, adjusted for inter authority transactions (e.g. County Demand and other inter authority charges) as per DOEHLG circulars and guidance. We have also standardised the costing of services across all divisions in 2015 and 2014 to reflect the newly consolidated council to enable year on year comparatives. As the Council is statutorily required to prepare a balanced budget, all expenditure provisions must match income projections. The proposed budget expenditure is fully funded as follows:-

• Grants and Subsidies	€26.284m
• Rates	€41.169m
• Local Property Tax Allocation	€11.659m
• Rents & Loan (incl RAS)	€10.985m
• Irish Water recoupment	€12.911m
• Parking Charges and Fines	€ 2.790m
• Transfer Station and Refuse Charges	€ 1.586m
• Other Recoupable Income	€ 3.068m
• Pension Related deduction	€ 2.700m
• Other Misc Income	€10.702m

Total	€123.854m
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The explanatory memorandum gives the background and full details of the various Budget figures.

Staffing

Despite overall reduction in staffing numbers over a number of years, payroll remains at 50% of overall Revenue Budget. The funding on an actual payment year basis of the gratuity/pension payments has become increasingly difficult each year and an increased provision is required for 2015 in that context. Provision is made in the payroll for adequate resourcing of the restructured organisation.

Commercial Rates, Harmonisation and Non Domestic Water Charges

The setting of a countywide single Annual Rate on Valuation at the Statutory meeting will enable the technical process of application of the Base Year Adjustment to commence. The base year adjustment in 2015 is the difference between the proposed rate of €79.25 and the rate in 2014 for the former Town Councils and Kerry County Council rate. An adjustment of the base year adjustment at each year of the harmonisation will result in a single Annual rate of Valuation at the end of the harmonisation period.

Cost Savings & Efficiencies

Members will be aware that each Local Authority, under the Haddington Road Agreement, has to deliver and report on real savings made each year. The latest report from the Kerry Local Authorities, covering the period 1st July 2013 to 31st December 2013, indicates savings (excluding Payroll) of €1.6m.

It is the intention of the Council that there will be an ongoing organisation focus on efficiencies within the newly restructured organisational structure. Cost savings have been achieved in a range of our purchases/contracts such as plant hire, cleaning contract, trade services, civil works, road making materials, telecommunications, advertising, energy, general goods and services, postage, general construction and trade services. It continues to be a priority to use internal staff to the greatest extent possible and make full use of the available skills so as to avoid engagement of external services as far as practicable. The Council will maximise procurement initiatives such as use of LA Quotes and Framework Agreements in order to achieve further savings and efficiencies. It is notable that this Council is established as the National Procurement Office to host procurement initiatives on a shared service basis on behalf of 33 other local authorities for 2014. Draft Budget 2015 reflects the additional income and expenditure arising from this initiative, the costs of this office are fully recouped.

The members have made various provisions from revenue to capital over a number of years. These provisions are ring fenced for specific areas of expenditure. Without these provisions balancing of Draft Budget 2015 would not be possible. Draft Budget 2015 is supported by these provisions to the value of €2m. This source of income is diminishing rapidly - buoyancy and efficiency in our locally sourced income will be critical in the short and long term.

In addition, Housing internal capital receipts of €1m are part funding overall Vacant Houses refurbishment expenditure of €1.16m in 2015 which is reflected in its entirety in the Revenue Account in 2015.

Revenue Budget 2015 – Main Service Features

- **Housing and Building**

A sum of €1,160,100 is included for the repair of vacant houses to be funded from internal capital housing receipts subject to the approval of DOECLG and the Energy Efficiency programme grant-aid. The Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) is still continuing to attract increased participation in Kerry and this is reflected in the budget figures. Ms. Murrell pointed out that Kerry County Council is now the 5th largest housing authority in the country with a significant housing stock.

The Draft Budget 2015 contains an allocation of €1.978m for the Housing Adaptation and Aids for the Elderly Grants Schemes subject to grant-aid of €1.582m (80%) from DOECLG. This requires a local contribution of €0.396m. In addition, there are the substantial costs of the implementation of the schemes which must be met from own resources locally.

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 our revenue budget. It is disappointing that the Department has advised that the Land Aggregation Scheme, announced in April 2010, has now ceased. On that basis, the Council consulted directly with the HFA in 2014 and negotiated a 5-year interest only payment option for matured land loans. The impact on the revenue Budget 2015 is €898,000 expenditure taking account of all factors in relation to this issue. I would hope that recent developments in social housing policy would enable use of these lands in the near future.

This Council is liable in 2015 for €352,890 approximately for the Local Property Tax in respect of liable properties.

- **Road Transport and Safety**

The Draft Budget 2015 figures for the Roads Grants Schemes are prepared on the National and Non-National road allocations from the NRA and DTTAS in 2014. The Roadwork's Programme when presented in early 2015 will reflect the prioritisation of work to be carried out having regard to the overall level of funding available. This year the own resource allocation for the non-national roads works maintenance programme is maintained. In addition, an own resource provision has been included for road design costs previously provided from NRA grant funding. The Councillors Specific Municipal District Operation Fund of €957,000 is being provided from own resources for discretionary works nominated by the Elected Members. Traditionally, this funding was used solely for minor improvement and maintenance works on local roads. A revised scheme will be developed through the operations SPC to allow for greater discretion in the expenditure of this fund.

- **Development Management**

The review of the County Development Plan is ongoing and a Chief Executives report on the submissions received relating to the amendments that went on public display will be presented to members at a meeting on the 17th December 2014, consideration of that report and adoption of the new County Development Plan is expected to occur by the end of January 2015.

The Draft Budget 2015 contains an allocation to continue the special project team known as the 'Housing Estates Unit' for the coming year. This team has made significant progress on inspecting housing estates either where they are unfinished or where works are needed and following up on remedial action, the draw-down of existing bonds will be considered in cases where deemed appropriate. The work here will continue to have short and long-term benefits.

Included under the Heading of General Development Promotion Work is the General Municipal Allocation of €750,000. As previously outlined to the Members at the Municipal Draft Budgetary Plan Meetings in October this Discretionary allocation is for the purpose of Amenity/Recreation/Community/Tourism/Economic Development Supports. It is intended that a Scheme will be developed and put in place in conjunction with the relevant Strategic Policy Committee which will provide guidance on the allocation of funding in this area.

- **Environmental Service**

The Budget Allocation for 2015 provides for the costs of operating the four 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. Following the closure of North Kerry Landfill in July 2014, provision is also made for ongoing maintenance costs associated with the Landfill including leachate removal and the requisite maintenance contracts in accordance with EPA requirements.

- **Library Services**

Kerry Libraries provide an invaluable and evolving service to the county and in 2015 estimate over 690,000 visits to its nine libraries and two mobile units. In recognition of their role in supporting communities a special effort is made in the Draft Budget to maintain and support the book fund of €270,000.

Capital Investment Plan

The Council will continue to invest in the infrastructure of the county although at a much reduced level than in recent years. The Council Programme for the three-year period 2015-2018 prepared in accordance with Section 135 of the Local Government Act, 2001, is set out in Schedule 1 at the end of the Budget Explanatory Memorandum and commented upon in the course of the details of each of the Division Budgets. The Capital Programme must have regard to the available resources. The sources of capital funding, government grants, borrowing capacity and development contributions, are significantly reduced on recent years.

The Chief Executive said the Budget presented is balanced and reasonable and she asked members to take a medium term view for the county. There was no increase in Kerry County Council rates for the past five years and she was proposing that rates would be harmonised over an eight year period. This will give a level of security and send out a message of confidence in and support for the business community. Ms. Murrell said she believes the Budget will provide the Council will sufficient funds to maintain existing standards and allow us to grow.

Acknowledgements

Ms. Murrell expressed her appreciation to the Cathaoirleach, Cllr John Brassil to Cllr Seamus Cosaí Fitzgerald, the previous Mayor, the Members of the Council, the Corporate Policy Group, the Strategic Policy Committees and Tom Curran, County Manager for their support, co-operation and application during the previous year.

As Chief Executive she paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of all Council staff to the county over the 2014 period. This has been a year of significant change and has required an exceptional response highlighting the commitment of staff throughout all areas of Council operations.

Ms. Murrell thanked Angela McAllen, Head of Finance, and all the staff of the Finance Department for both their professionalism and work ethic in preparing Budget 2015.

In conclusion the Chief Executive recommended the Budget for adoption.

Ms. A. McAllen then addressed the meeting.

Ms. McAllen said she presented a balanced Budget for 2015 and the Chief Executive has covered many of the issues facing us in both the budget process and in balancing the Budget. Consideration of the overall budget strategy in September and Municipal plan meetings of October have enabled us to move forward to this stage of the process to enable the Budget 2015 process to come to a conclusion. As we move closer to 2015, as with any Budget/estimates process we have received confirmation and certainty on many aspects of both our income and our expenditure, this is to be expected in the nature of any estimates process, and in the absence of certainty we have made allocations based on either outturns for 2014 or best estimates at this stage of the year. This in the case of Roads and Housing grants would be our typical approach to the Budgets.

It has been a difficult and complex document to prepare given the requirement for an amalgamated and restructured position of the new Kerry County Council for both 2015 and retrospectively for 2014 also. The 2014 Budget and outturns represent a consolidated Kerry County Council position adjusted for inter authority transactions. As per circulars and guidance from the Department, we have standardised the costing of services across all Divisions for both 2014 and

2015 to enable year on year comparisons. You will see slight variances in some areas largely due to treatment of chargeability of salaries across the organisation.

The new General Municipal allocation of €1.7m is built into the overall expenditure levels of €123.8m, it is a realistic, pragmatic Budget which we feel positions us well to meet the anticipated upturn in the economy. We have come through the recession with a sound financial base thanks to prudent decisions by members over the years, we will continue to maintain our expenditure controls and strengthen our debt management to realise the efficiency benefits of centralisation of functions throughout the Divisions for both income and expenditure. We have built on identified efficiencies throughout the organisation and these have been critical to the delivery of a balanced Budget for 2015 and no doubt into the future.

Ms. McAllen said the statutory budget format is presented as prescribed by the DoECLG. The Council restructured during 2014 and an overview of each Directorate is given in Pages 9 – 16. The Budgets for each of these Directorates is reflected across the Divisions and indicated as we go through each Chapter. The expenditure proposed amounts to €123,854,077. As usual, the 2015 expenditure reflects an estimated provision for Road Grant related works as the Council has not received any notification of Road Grants from the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport and National Roads Authority for 2015 to date. The actual expenditure on the Road Works Grants Programmes will be based on the allocations to be notified later.

Ms. McAllen referred members to the graph on Page 20 which reflects the breakdown of expenditure. Payroll continues to be the largest component of expenditure at 50%. It should be noted though that of the €60m Budgeted for €10m of this figure is recouped. This graph also clearly illustrates the proportion of spend on non-discretionary expenditure such as payroll, loan charges, insurance, energy and elements of operational costs remain very high. It leaves us with very little scope for further reductions in expenditure and the maintenance of income streams for 2015 is critical. She then referred members to Page 21 of the Chief Executive's Report where details of revenue income by source are set out. 33% of our income comes from Rates with 24% coming from other local income. State grants account for 21% of our income with 11% from Irish Water and 9% from LPT.

Ms. McAllen referred members to Page 23 of the Chief Executive's report for details of State Sector Grants for Specified Purposes. An income of €26,283,723 is provided from this source and the figures included for 2015, except in a few provisions, are based on the initial allocation for Road Grants in 2014.

2. LOCAL PROPERTY TAX

€11,659,186

The Local Property Tax allocation for Kerry County Council for 2015 is **€11,659,186**. This amount reflects an additional €615,349 that Kerry County Council will receive when compared to Local Government Fund Allocations in 2014. Following consideration of the Budget Strategy in September 2014, members agreed to retain the Local Property Tax rate for 2015 for Kerry. Members at that meeting agreed to set aside €600,000 as part of the Municipal District Fund for the purposes of Recreational/Amenity/Community/Tourism/Economic Development Supports and has been incorporated into Budget 2015 as part of the General Municipal Allocation.

3. RATES ON COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

€41,169,213

Section 29 of the Local Government Reform Act (LGF) 2014 provides for the harmonisation of commercial rates between former town council rating authorities and the new restructured counties forming the new rating authorities. In order to ease the transition for ratepayers to a single county rate, while avoiding a negative impact on overall local authority revenue the period of harmonisation can take place over a maximum of ten years. An adjustment mechanism is provided to phase in increases and decreases to be known as the Base Year Adjustment. Ratepayers will receive a bill clearly indicating the new Annual Rate on Valuation with the amount payable by the individual ratepayer calculated by means of the Base Year Adjustment of a discount or levy. Ratepayers will not pay any more in 2015 than they did in 2014, as the Base Year Adjustment to be applied in 2015 will neutralise any increase/decrease in the Annual Rate on Valuation.

It is proposed that the period of harmonisation in the county will be set at 8 years and an annual rate on valuation of €79.25 will apply over this period. The setting of a harmonised rate of €79.25 will generate over the eight year period an economic/enterprise/tourism development fund of at least €800,000 over the lifetime of this Council.

Commercial Rates, with diminishing alternative income streams, are now more than ever an extremely important local income, accounting for 33% of the funds required to deliver all of the Council's Revenue Services in 2015. As outlined above, ratepayers will experience no change in the amount payable for rates in 2015. It is realised that maximising the collection of rates is vital to service delivery by the Council. However, it is also understood that rates pose a significant business expense in the current climate. The budgeted figure for rates for 2015 shows an increase on 2014, while at the same time, the budgeted figure for irrecoverable rates has also been decreased. This emphasises the Council's commitment to increase collection levels, while at the same time reducing arrears outstanding.

The Council, while making all efforts to optimise collections, will continue to review the position of businesses experiencing difficulties, owing to the current economic climate, where supporting documentation indicates a serious downturn in activities and turnover for a period of time, on an individual case by case basis. 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 unification of the Town Councils will have a major impact on this area with the management and collection of many new and substantial rate accounts to be dealt with.

No revision of valuations has been received to date in 2014 from the Commissioner of Valuations. This impacts on additional income from this area being available to the Council. This distinct lack of buoyancy is a major concern for the local authority. We will continue to pursue this critical matter in 2015.

4. IRISH WATER €12,911,084

Income reflected here represents the recoupment of Water Services related payroll, goods & services and net Central Management Charges recoupable from Irish Water under relevant expenditure headings in the Water Services Division budget for 2015, as outlined in the Water Services chapter in this document.

5. OTHER LOCAL INCOME -INCLUDING PRINCIPAL LOCAL SERVICE CHARGES

The income includes:-

5.1 Housing Rents - A0101

€8,750,000

5.2 Housing Loan Repayments - A0801

€620,000

This figure represents interest payments on house loans due by customers to the Council. The focus on improved debt management will continue to be a priority in this area over the coming year and the monitoring of accounts will be essential given the current climate. It is the policy of the Council to identify as quickly as possible accounts which are falling into arrears through a policy of early intervention, and to putting in place effective measures to deal with arrears, before they accumulate to significant levels.

5.3 Charges on Non-Principal Private Residences (N.P.P.R.) - H1102

€450,000

The annual €200 charge on Non-Principal Private Residences, which was introduced in 2009, was discontinued in 2013. In the 5 years since the introduction of this charge, a total of €20.3m has been collected countywide in respect of NPPR properties in Kerry. There is at present 19,700 properties registered in Kerry. The Council has over the last number of years been actively pursuing unpaid charges in this area. Defaulters have been identified by cross-checking various National databases and by carrying out inspections.

**5.6 Fire Safety Certificates, Disability Access Certificates
and Inspection Fees - D0801**

€203,000

5.11 Parking Fines and Charges

€2,790,925

Parking revenue is a critical source of local income for the Council. It is proposed to maintain existing parking charges and schemes as existed in 2014 across the county.

Ms. McAllen said that concluded the overview of our income and she would proceed to the Chapter on Housing and Building.

Housing and Building

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 28 to 40 of the Chief Executive's Report and Pages 11 to 13 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division.

Having regard to the steady decline in exchequer capital funding over the past number of years, resulting in a significant reduction in the construction and acquisition of new units, social housing need has been increasingly met utilising alternative social housing options i.e. the Rental Accommodation Scheme & the Social Housing Leasing Scheme. Significant resources have been deployed by the Council in sourcing suitable properties from private landlords for this purpose. There are currently 853 households who are having their social housing needs met utilising these options. The filling of casual vacancies from within our own local authority housing developments and voluntary housing developments also continues to be a significant element in meeting social housing need within the county.

DOECLG Capital Funding

During 2014, the following funding was received in respect of Social Housing:

A sum of €807,024 funding was secured from the DOECLG to carry out significant repairs to 45 long term vacant properties throughout the county, which will allow them to be re-let to suitably qualified tenants. This is in addition to the ongoing routine pre-letting repairs arising as a result of casual vacancies.

DOECLG funding of €684,692 was secured for attic and wall insulation to our housing stock under the energy efficiency programme.

A sum of €333,364 was also secured recently for adaptation to Council dwellings to meet disability requirements.

Under a 2 year special Job Stimulus funding has been secured for the construction of 8 dwellings at Park, Killarney as well as 5 other dwellings throughout the county. A further 3 dwellings are already under construction and funded under the 2014 Social Housing Investment Programme.

Following a submission, the DOECLG has advised that it would make a provision of €900,000 to fund the acquisition of dwellings to meet the needs of people with a disability in the county.

Following the recent National Budget, it is likely that increased capital funding will become available for local authority housing construction and acquisitions over the next number of years in locations where lands are available for development and social housing demand can be demonstrated. The Council will ensure that these opportunities will be maximised to the fullest extent possible to avail of an increase in the supply of social housing provision.

Tenant Purchase Scheme

There is no Tenant Purchase Scheme currently active since the expiry of the 1995 Scheme. Part 3 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 provides for a new tenant purchase scheme for local authority tenants. The commencement by Ministerial Order of Part 3 of this Act and also the making of the necessary regulations are awaited. No indication regarding commencement has, as yet, been received in this regard.

Maintenance of LA units (A0101)

€3,418,000

A provision of €3.418m for the maintenance of 4.036 local authority housing units across the county is made up of two figures €2.258m for maintenance improvement of housing units and €1.16m for repairs to vacant dwellings. The increased allocation of €500,000 over 2014 is due to the fact that vacant house expenditure was dealt with through the capital account in the Town Councils and therefore not previously reflected in the Revenue account.

For 2015 we have allocated €1.15m for the repair of vacant houses prior to re-let. This is funded from internal capital receipts and this allocation also provides on going energy efficiency works and the Housing Department was successful in securing €800,000 for significant pre-let repairs to 45 houses which would not have been possible without this funding. Overall this service has seen an increase of €630,000.

Assessment of Housing Needs, Allocations & Transfer (A0201) €696,000

Assessment of Housing Need

This allocation is in respect of the administrative cost involved in the employment of investigation officers and of backup administrative 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.

The functional area of Kerry County Council, for the purpose of determining and meeting a social housing need, now extends to the whole county and a Centralised Assessment Unit has been established for this purpose. This unit, will in time, streamline the process of assessment and deliver additional resource efficiencies.

During the period January to September, 2014, 137 households were accommodated in the county through the direct provision of local authority housing. A total 668 new applications were received for social housing support in this period of which 372 have been assessed and qualified for social housing support, 228 applications are in the process of being assessed and 68 applications were closed.

Debt Management and Rent Assessment (A0301) **€914,000**
(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

This allocation covers costs associated with the collection of rent and tenant purchase annuities. The Council continues to work with tenants to assist them in paying their rent and offer a variety of payment methods including Household Budget, Bill Pay, Standing Order, Direct Debit, Cash.

The Council operates a Rent Arrears Management Policy in a pro-active manner to assist tenants with difficulties. As part of this policy, we identify as quickly as possible accounts which are falling into arrears, and through early intervention, we work with the tenant and put in place effective measures to address the situation before significant levels of arrears accumulate. The management of rent and loan arrears is the responsibility of our team of Staff Officers - Revenue Collection with the assistance of a dedicated arrears team.

In cases, where unfortunately arrears do escalate, we will make every effort to negotiate an agreement with tenants before legal proceedings are issued. As a result, the numbers of legal proceedings have been kept at a minimum in 2014. The Council continues to work very closely with the Kerry Money Advice and Budgeting Service (KMABS) in this area.

Excluding the Rental Accommodation Scheme and leasing arrangements, the Council now manages 3,927 active tenancies. The average weekly rent is €43 approximately and is calculated in accordance with our Differential Rent Assessment Scheme, which is based on household income.

The DOECLG have advised that the necessary regulations and guidance relating to the introduction of a new rent scheme under Section 31 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 are due shortly.

Housing Estate Management

& Tenancy Management (A0401 & A402)

€326,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

This allocation is for the employment of staff dealing with issues relating to Tenancy Liaison, Tenancy Compliance, Tenancy Enforcement and Community Liaison. Within this allocation, there is provision to support community participation in estate management. Considering our expanded remit with regard to the urban area of Tralee, the success of the Tralee Community Allotment Projects including Rahoonane / Shanakill, Moyderwell and Marian Park allotments should be highlighted. At present there are 84 individual allotment plots and 13 community group allotment plots in this project.

Homeless Grants/Other Bodies (A0501)

€682,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Ms. McAllen pointed out that the sum of €682,000 is mainly recouped.

RAS Operations (A0701)

€5,947,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

The Scheme remains one of the principal mechanisms available to local authorities to provide suitable quality accommodation for those in need of housing. RAS has and continues to be a successful programme, which has achieved considerable output levels to date and delivered quality housing to a large number of households.

It is anticipated that funding will be made available from the DOECLG to continue to operate the scheme in 2015 in respect of the associated costs of ongoing payments to landlords in respect of existing and new RAS tenants. It is anticipated that the scheme will continue to be cost neutral in the 2015 Budget.

Kerry County Council remains one of the highest performing local authorities in the provision of RAS accommodation having regard to the number of eligible households in the county (i.e. in receipt of rent supplement for 18 months or longer).

The following is a summary of activity in this area:

- Total Active Tenancies 795 (incl. 94 Voluntary)
- New tenancies to date in 2014 84

Social Housing Leasing Initiative

Long Term Leasing / Availability Agreements (A0702)

€471,001

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

There are two options for property owners who are considering making their properties available for leasing to the Council (1) Long-term Lease Arrangements (10 – 20 years) and (2) Availability Arrangements (typically 1 – 5 Years). Increasingly, the latter option is being pursued as responsibility for maintenance normally rests with the landlord in these cases and landlords are also more willing to enter into these shorter term arrangements with the Council. Activity under the Leasing Initiative to date is as follows:

Long-Term Leasing	
Leased Properties	18
Leases under negotiation	4
Availability Agreements	
Leased Properties	40
Leases under negotiation	4

Loan Interest and Other Charges (A0801)

€1,494,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Mortgage Loans

This sum of €595,500 covers the repayment to the Office of Public Works and the Housing Finance Agency of the interest only on loans raised by the Council to fund various housing loan schemes.

Land Purchase Service Costs

The construction of new social housing is linked to Government Policy. This Council has an extensive portfolio of available land for the construction of housing. The DOECLG advised in December 2013 that the Land Aggregation Scheme, announced in April 2010, had ceased. On that basis, this Council has consulted directly with the HFA and negotiated a 5-year interest only payment option, commencing in 2014, for matured land loans. The impact on the revenue Budget for 2015 is €898,500, of which, €342,600 of this relates to loan costs for land located in the Tralee Town Council area. A sum of €367,000 is being brought into Revenue from Capital to support this cost.

Ms. McAllen said provision is made in the Budget based on best estimate on likely grant funding for Housing Support Grants. This allocation of €1.978m attracts an own resource allocation of €395,600.

Overall, however, the Council is cognisant of 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.

The Cathaoirleach said Cllrs. B. Cronin and J.J. Culloty sent their apologies as they are attending a funeral and will attend the meeting later.

Cllr. N. Kelleher said a rate of €79.25 would mean an increase of 12.5% for the Municipal District of Killarney while rates in Cork are 6% lower than Kerry. A large part of the burden of providing services in Kerry is borne by businesses. Kerry has the highest rate in the country and we are a coastal county with a low rate base. Efforts must be made to reduce rates. Kerry County Council pays €70,500 for LPT for our housing stock and this is then given to other local authorities. Local authorities are funded from the Local Government Fund and not by LPT and he asked what the income from LPT is used for. The Council must incentivise businesses to pay rates early by giving a discount where a business pays once the bill issues. Cllr. Kelleher accepted that this may not be possible in 2015 but he PROPOSED that it would be considered for 2016. Property prices are increasing therefore there will be an increase in LPT. He acknowledged the funding provided in the Budget for capital works and said the Council must give something back to businesses who are creating employment. It was mentioned that the Council charge of €1.10 per cu m for water could increase to €2.40 which is the proposed charge by Irish Water. If this is the case it will be an increase in excess of 100% and it could result in the closure of many guesthouses and hotels. Cllr. Kelleher called on the Government to introduce the new Tenant Purchase Scheme as soon as possible. He asked that a letter to this effect would issue to the Minister immediately. He referred to the Housing Adaptation Scheme and said there is insufficient funding for the level of interest in this Scheme and he called for a greater allocation in 2015. It is cheaper to keep people at home than to have them in nursing homes.

Cllr. M. Gleeson thanked the Chief Executive, Ms. McAllen and the Finance Department for their excellent presentations. He said for family reasons he could not remain at the meeting. He welcomed the provision of €800,000 for tourism which is the backbone of the county. Housing is in crisis for the past 10 years with thousands waiting to be housed. If the Government is serious about boosting the economy they should fund a buildings programme which would enhance the entire country. For the past seven Municipal District Meetings he has called for the introduction of the new Tenant Purchase Scheme. If we believe in communities we must have estates where people feel ownership. The only way this can be achieved is if tenants are allowed to purchase their homes. Cllr. Gleeson said he appreciated management's efforts to allow the harmonisation of rates over eight years. Initially it was said it would be over four or five years and this would have been disastrous for Killarney. His preferred option would have been to harmonise rates over 10 years. Failing that if it must

be over eight years the Council must be very understanding for businesses who have been through seven or eight very difficult years even though they have now had a good 18 months. Cllr. Gleeson emphasised the importance of estate management and said the vast majority of tenants are law abiding and are committed to their community. However when a small minority cause problems the majority must be protected. Cllr. Gleeson then read a letter he received from an insurance agent into the record of the meeting:

"A large number of our clients are having serious issues taxing their commercial vehicles with Kerry County Council.

The tax office are requesting the owners of vehicles to delete any named drivers if not employees. Most commercial motor policies include social, domestic and pleasure use so it would appear the tax office don't really understand what they are requesting. They are refusing to tax unless this is done.

In reality the clients delete 'Mary', go to Tralee to tax the vehicle, come back and add 'Mary' back.

I believe this is only happening in Kerry and if this is true then someone in charge needs to be addressed on it.

This is cumbersome but the harsh reality is someone will forget to add 'Mary' back on the policy. Mary will drive, have an accident and not be insured. All due to a motor tax issue. The tax office have nothing whatsoever to do with who is insured on a motor policy, and if Mickey mouse is insured to drive then it still has nothing to do with the tax office.

And of course there is no issue with open driving so they cannot discriminate against the names driving policy." Cllr. Gleeson requested clarification on this issue.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae complimented the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance on their excellent presentations. He expressed his disappointment at the proposed rate of €79.25 and said he hoped, particularly for businesses in Killarney, that it would be less. Income from rates in Killarney is €12m while it is just €29m for the remainder of the county. He felt the rate should have been set at €76 or €76.50 which would be fairer. Cllr. Healy-Rae asked for a commitment that the income collected from rates in Killarney would be spent on services for Killarney as it was down through the years. We must protect the product 'Killarney' which is the main tourism driver in the county. If tourism industry in Killarney decreases it will affect the entire county in particular South Kerry. The tax base should be more evenly distributed. At present the larger the premises the higher the rates yet someone with smaller premises can have greater profits. Cllr. Healy-Rae said rates should be calculated based on income. He asked that a letter would issue to the Valuations Office asking that the revaluation of properties in Kerry would commence in the near future otherwise some hotels will not be able to stay in business.

In relation to housing Cllr. Healy-Rae said in the past he and Cllr. J. Healy-Rae proposed that land would not be submitted for inclusion in the Land Aggregation Scheme and he was glad that Scheme did not proceed. The Council now has land in Rathmore and Kenmare and he asked that an application would be submitted to the Department for funding for a building programme in these towns together with Killarney where there is a large waiting list. Cllr. Healy-Rae referred to the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme and he complimented the Housing Department on their excellent work in this area. These grants mean so much to the elderly as they are comfortable in their own homes. He asked that an increase in funding for this Scheme would be sought from the Department. He deplored the fact that there is no Tenant Purchase Scheme and said if houses are sold there will be more funding for repairs. Cllr. Healy-Rae asked what the cost of moving offices is and where is the funding coming from. He felt these moves were not necessary and are not beneficial to members or the public. Cllr. Healy-Rae objected to the re-location of the Motor Tax Office to Princes Quay as there is no free parking there. It was very convenient when it was located in the County Buildings complex. At present in Killarney all the engineering and supervisory staff are located in the Town Hall which is out dated. They must come in and out of the offices a few times a day and there is a shortage of parking. It is difficult for people from East Kerry to get parking in the town centre and it was much more convenient when the engineers were located in the 'Reeks'. He asked when the embargo on staff recruitment will be lifted and he called on the Government to allow staff to be recruited immediately.

Cllr. B. O'Connell expressed concern at the spending of €6m per annum on the RAS Scheme. There is an anomaly where the Council rents private houses under this Scheme. In the Cahereen Heights Estate, Castleisland the developer went out of business and there is a serious situation in relation to the sewerage system. This developer owns houses in the estate and Kerry County Council rented them under the RAS Scheme. A management company was formed and they must collect money from each household monthly but the developer refused to pay. The Council must now help these residents. He asked what the duration of RAS contracts is and said these are faceless absentee landlords and we as a local authority are assisting them leaving the residents to sort out the problems. He understood this problem is not of the Council's making but if these houses in Cahereen Heights are offered for rent under the RAS Scheme again the Council should refuse to rent them.

Cllr. P. Daly thanked the Chief Executive and Head of Finance for their presentations. He welcomed the provision of €1.6m for the repair of vacant properties. The RAS Scheme is of real benefit to landlords. The harmonisation of rates should take place over the lifetime of the current Council. He accepted that hoteliers want it over 10 years but said they also want their profits. The 9% VAT rate was retained for the hospitality sector yet 76% of restaurants kept their prices the same or increased them. Following the introduction of the 9% VAT rate there is 40% more staff now on the minimum wage and he questioned the kind of jobs being created. Cllr. Daly PROPOSED that the harmonisation of rates

would take place over the lifetime of the current Council and it should be done in a fair and reasonable manner. This issue divides businesses in Kerry. In Killarney rate payers pay a rate of €71 while rate payers in other parts of the county pay €79. He pointed out there was not an eight year harmonisation for wage cuts to public servants or for LPT, Water Charges etc.

Cllr. T. Ferris **SECONDED** this proposal and said it is unfair to tie the hands of a future Council as they need to be able to respond to changes in our economy. Harmonisation should take place over a five year period at a break even rate. It was mentioned that Irish Water want to renegotiate the service level agreement for 2015 therefore it would be irresponsible of members to adopt a Budget when the service level agreement for 2015 with Irish Water has not be finalised. The proposed revenue expenditure for 2015 is €123m which is comparable with 2014 and she asked where savings were achieved. The Minister said savings would be achieved as a result of the amalgamation of the Town Councils but this is not evident when the expenditure for 2015 is the same as for the four local authorities in 2014. Cllr. Ferris asked how much is in the reserve funds. Kerry County Council now has 4,036 dwellings with 3,927 active tenancies. €800,000 is provided for the repair of 45 dwellings and that leaves 64 vacant units. It costs approx. €18,000 to repair a vacant dwelling and she asked if funding could be provided from the reserve for this purpose. On behalf of the Sinn Féin Part she **PROPOSED** that €1m would be allocated from the reserve fund to purchase up to 20 housing units and rather than paying rent to private landlords at least the Council would have an asset. These units would yield an annual rental income of €50,000 which could then be used to purchase another housing unit. Provision of an additional €0.5m is made for the maintenance of our housing stock and she asked how many units would be improved. Cllr. Ferris referred to the new Rent Scheme which will issue shortly and said the commencement date for the charging of rents is proposed for 1st July, 2015. Under the Scheme a transitional period will exist until the 1st July, 2017 to facilitate the full charging of rents under the new method. This suggests there will be an increase in local authority rents and she objected to this. If rents increase there will be a substantial increase in the collection costs and service support costs. In conclusion Cllr. Ferris asked if any of the service support costs are paid to external consultants.

Cllr. J. Moloney complimented management on the Chief Executive's Report and he **SECONDED** Cllr. Kelleher's proposal that an incentive would be introduced for those who pay their rates early. It is proposed to increase rates for Listowel and he felt this was sending out the wrong message. People who were diligent over the past five years will now suffer again. Cllr. Moloney said he would like to see harmonisation over a longer period. As a good will gesture for businesses the Council should introduce some initiative such as free parking to compensate businesses for the rate increase. There is a lot of vacant premises in every town in the county and while we say we want to grow the economy in Kerry we should do all we can to allow indigenous businesses to remain open.

Cllr. P. McCarthy complimented the Chief Executive, the Head of Finance and all staff for preparing a balanced Budget and he understood this was very difficult. When considering the proposed rate increase it is important to consider the entire county and regard must be had to the large number of customers that businesses in Killarney have. Small rural pubs are paying higher rates than a pub in Killarney. Cllr. McCarthy said rates collected in Killarney cannot be kept in Killarney and there must be harmonisation of funding for the entire county. This is a reasonable and fair Budget and he asked members to be realistic as many businesses can afford to pay the increased rates.

Cllr. R. Beasley complimented the Chief Executive and Head of Finance on the Chief Executive's comprehensive report. He welcomed the provision of €800,000 for tourism and asked that favourable attention would be given to traditional seaside resorts when this funding is being allocated. They cannot compete with Killarney and in Ballybunion most visitors come to play golf. Of the 300 that would play golf in Ballybunion at a particular time 250 stay in Killarney while the remainder stay in Ballybunion. These traditional seaside resorts depend on visitors from Cork and Limerick who only visit a few times a year and over the past 30 years business in these resorts has reduced dramatically. He asked that the bulk of this allocation would be given to traditional seaside resorts. Cllr. Beasley agreed with the views expressed by previous speakers in relation to the wages paid to staff in the hospitality sector and the fact that the jobs are seasonal.

Cllr. Beasley then referred to the forthcoming Centenary of 1916 and asked that funding would be provided to present all children in the county with a copy of the Proclamation or to have trees planted in every village/park in memory of the seven signatories. In January he hoped the SPC would meet and draw up a programme of events for 2016. He asked that funding would also be provided for this purpose. The provision of funding for playgrounds is vital and some parts of the county are still awaiting a playground for their area. He asked that the provision of funding for this purpose would be given serious consideration in the lifetime of the current Council. In conclusion Cllr. Beasley called for the removal of the embargo on the recruitment of staff and said more staff are required.

Cllr. S. Locke complimented management on presenting a balanced Budget. He agreed that the harmonisation of rates should take place over the lifetime of the present Council and said if the increased rate causes hardship each case could be dealt with on its merits. He welcomed the fact there would be no increase in rates in 2015 and he called for the implementation of a new Tenant Purchase Scheme as soon as possible. This would create an income for the Council and he was aware of tenants who have the finance to purchase their home. Cllr. Locke referred to the Housing Adaptation Grants and said grants are being awarded in respect of applications received in 2012 and this needs to be improved upon. He called for the allocation of additional funding for this Scheme.

Cllr. N. Foley said she wanted to be associated with the compliments paid to the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance. She acknowledged the huge amount of work that went into balancing the Budget. She also acknowledged the tremendous work done by the staff in the Housing Department. Cllr. Foley said it is a disgrace that the new Tenant Purchase Scheme has not yet commenced despite the fact that councillors are calling for it for a number of years. This is a serious infringement on tenant's rights. She asked that a letter would issue to the Minister for Environment asking that he would introduce the new Tenant Purchase Scheme immediately. Cllr. Foley welcomed the proposed building programme and said she looked forward to the return of that programme. In relation to the Long Term Leasing Scheme Cllr. Foley said the Council should avail of the more popular shorter lease. She acknowledged the work of the Homeless Service and said there appears to be a shortfall in what is paid out and what is recouped and she asked that this would be brought to the Minister's attention as it is unacceptable. If additional funding is available it should be used for the Homeless Service. Cllr. Foley acknowledged the success of the Housing Adaptation Scheme and the work of the staff in this section. Every effort should be made to secure additional funding for the Scheme. In relation to unfinished housing estates Cllr. Foley said while there is a list of these estates many others are not on the list and they should be facilitated if possible. She asked that the Department would be requested to introduce another scheme for unfinished estates.

Cllr. D. Grady welcomed the Chief Executive's Report and said while he did not agree with the entire Budget, members must act for the good of the county. In relation to the Killarney Town Council Budget in the past €3m was paid to Kerry County Council for the County Demand and it was never questioned. He said a number of small businesses are struggling to survive in Killarney as well as a number of hotels. He had hoped the harmonisation of rates would be over a 10 year period but he acknowledged that is not possible. While businesses had one good year they had six bad years prior to that. Killarney Town Council did an excellent job in Killarney and there is concern this may not continue. The Council must be fair and give businesses an opportunity to recover from the recession. The only way to get housing at present is through the RAS Scheme and that is unacceptable. There is a huge housing waiting list in Killarney and many people cannot afford to rent as the cost is too high. As a result they must live with their parents and grandparents. More funding is urgently required for housing. In Killarney some people sleep in the National Park in tents.

Cllr. J. Sheahan complimented the Chief Executive, the Head of Finance and all staff on presenting a balanced Budget. Many people take on an amazing workload to look after their loved ones at home and this saves the State a lot of money. For this reason additional funding should be provided for the Housing Adaptation Scheme for Older People and for People with a Disability. He called for the immediate introduction of the new Tenant Purchase Scheme. Tenants take great pride in their homes and estates and if they want to extend their homes, because of over crowding, the funding is not available.

Cllr. P. Connor Scarteen thanked the Chief Executive, Head of Finance and all the staff for the work that went into preparing the Budget. He welcomed the provision of €800,000 for tourism. The harmonisation of rates over eight years is fairer particularly for rate payers in Killarney. He complimented management on the savings of €1.6m through cost savings and efficiencies. Cllr. Connor-Scarteen expressed his dissatisfaction with NPPR and said €20.3m has been paid for this charge in Kerry since it was introduced. The initial charge was €200 but the penalties are unfair and now the amount due is in excess of €7,000. He called for the introduction of an Appeals process for people who genuinely were not aware of their liability for this charge. He welcomed the provision in the Budget for the Housing Adaptation Grants and said they make a tremendous difference to the quality of life of the recipients. This funding also benefits local builders etc. As the Land Aggregation Scheme has been abolished loan charges are a burden for local authorities. In conclusion Cllr. Connor-Scarteen said he hoped the housing construction programme would recommence in the near future.

Cllr. J. Finucane welcomed the allocation of €800,000 for tourism in the Budget and he said markets change and he hoped more tourists would come to Kerry. The task now is to attract more tourists to Kerry and their experience is very important. They want and must get the authentic experience. The hotel sector is a very important element of this infrastructure and a series of suppliers contribute. Cllr. Finucane welcomed the fact that Kerry County Council will host a meeting of all counties on the Wild Atlantic Way. This will allow for the setting up of a lobby group. If we show economic leadership with a budget of €800,000 we will have funding to develop the product. The overall Revenue Budget of €123m is very important for the economy of the county and we must be practical about what we can do to attract industry to the county. His information is that the new Tenant Purchase Scheme will be announced at the start of 2015. Cllr. Finucane said the Housing Adaptation Grants are very important for employment in the county.

Cllr. M. O'Shea commended the Chief Executive, the Head of Finance, Mr. J. Breen and Mr. L. Quinlan on the excellent report on Housing and Building. He understood the Government will provide €2.2bn for a housing programme over the next few years and he asked if Kerry County Council has a plan in place to avail of this funding. There is a lack of apartments for single people in the Dingle area and he asked if an application for funding is being submitted to the Department that a specific request would be made for apartments for single people. He asked how many people are on the housing list in Kerry. The HAP Scheme will commence shortly and the Department made a presentation on it at the AILG Conference. At that time members were informed it would be introduced with effect from 1st January 2015. At present Kerry has 1,800 people on Rent Allowance and they will transfer to HAP. There are an additional 1,000 people on RAS and that will give a total of just under 3,000 people on HAP in Kerry. If the Department insist that all these people must come off the housing list how many will remain on it. He asked of those on the housing waiting list at

present how many are genuinely seeking social housing. When accommodation is provided by landlords the State does not benefit and does not have an asset. He acknowledged, however, that many landlords pay PRSI, USC and income tax on the profits. Cllr. O'Shea welcomed the provision in the Budget of €2.1m for Housing Adaptation Grants but said this was €2.9m in the past. These grants have improved the living conditions of applicants and he called on the Housing Department to seek additional funding for this Scheme.

Cllr. A. Thornton thanked management for the professional report and agreed with previous speakers that tourism is very important for the county. In relation to rates Cllr. Thornton said the Council cannot become complacent in relation to rate payers. Many of them have struggled to pay rates over the past five years and they must be supported. It is incumbent on the executive and members to advise them of the services available to them i.e. the Wild Atlantic Way etc. She asked if rates could be reduced over the next eight years. In conclusion Cllr. Thornton asked if income from parking charges will be retained locally for services.

The Cathaoirleach said members took a responsible and difficult decision to maintain the current rate of LPT and while 14 other local authorities did the same some reduced the rate. A document from the Department was circulated and that stated that 20% of the income from LPT is retained nationally. He was anxious to ensure that counties that took difficult decisions and asked their citizens to pay the full rate of LPT will not be penalised. The Cathaoirleach called on the Government to introduce a new Tenant Purchase Scheme immediately. He referred to Cllr. Daly's proposal that rates would be harmonised over 5 years and said he could see merit in it as it maybe better not to burden the next Council with their decision. However as rates are increasing it is better to allow harmonisation to take place over a longer period. The Cathaoirleach said he would support the proposal to harmonise rates over 8 years. The administration of the HAP Scheme will take considerable staff resources which the Council does not have. The Government announces these schemes without providing the resources to implement them and this is not acceptable.

The Chief Executive said it is difficult to achieve a balance as there is a range of conflicting interests. The Council wants to support all businesses while at the same time ensuring the Council is adequately resourced. She pointed out that there was no increase in rates over the past seven years. She would have preferred to harmonise rates over 5 years but she believed it can be achieved over 8 years. If the Budget is adopted rates will be set for the next seven years. While Kerry has the highest rate in the country we also provide a top class service to the people of the county. If the rate is set for the next eight years we may not then be the highest rate in the country. She referred to the request for an incentive scheme for rates and said there are some incentive schemes around the country. However in Kerry where a rate payer is in difficulty we work out a solution with them. In going with an 8 year harmonisation she factored in an increase in the collection levels. The Chief Executive informed the meeting that a

Tourism Strategy will be developed and it is important to have a capital fund for the Wild Atlantic Way which will support traditional seaside resorts. She was satisfied that the fund of €800,000 will front load this Strategy for the next year or two. In relation to the query on income from parking charges Ms. Murrell said the Council must take a countywide approach and we need to look at how and where we are charging.

Ms. Murrell said the administration of HAP will have an impact on resources and the recruitment embargo is still in place. The Municipal District Economic Plan will seek to grow enterprise and the need to ensure proper governance of the LCDC means we must acquire new skills and build them into our work plan.

Mr. J. Breen thanked members for their positive comments for the staff and the work they do. Housing is about people in the main and he agreed that a new Tenant Purchase Scheme should be introduced as soon as possible. He referred to the possibility of using internal capital receipts to fund ongoing maintenance work and said both he and Liam Quinlan contacted the Department and while they got some additional funding it was nowhere near what is required. In relation to grant applications it is intended to deal with the 2014 high priority applications as there is a backlog. Mr. Breen then referred to estate management and said the Council was in Court recently and in order to get Court Orders for anti-social behaviour residents must work with the Council. In relation to the housing building programme no specific allocation was received as of yet. It will be a substantial body of work to implement the HAP Scheme. Mr. Breen referred to Cllr. O'Connell's query in relation to the RAS houses in Cahereen Heights, Castleisland and said that is a matter between the Management Company and the landlord. This issue was raised at a recent meeting of Killarney Municipal District and a commitment was given that the Council would look at the legal position and revert to them. There are 60 to 65 houses vacant at any one time and this represents 1.4% of our housing stock. He referred to the proposal to use capital funding to repair vacant houses and emphasised the need to be prudent. Mr. Breen said he briefed members on the new Rent Scheme at the October Meeting and the base rent must be agreed by members. Kerry is doing comparatively well nationally on the Long Term Leasing Scheme. He echoed the views expressed by members in relation to the shortfall in funding for the Homeless Service and emphasised the need to have an extensive service for the homeless. Anyone who needs shelter in the county can be accommodated and people should engage with the services in place. Mr. Breen said any housing programme will address the need for apartments in South West Kerry. The housing list was reviewed recently and many on the list are in good quality accommodation. Many applicants are on the list so they can get Rent Allowance. In conclusion Mr. Breen said HAP will not impact on a person's ability to gain employment.

Ms. A. McAllen referred to members queries on housing grants and she referred them to Page 12 of the Budget Tables where it shows the increase in the budget provision for grants from €2m in 2014 to €2.4m in 2015. The Housing Department is in constant contact with the Department trying to secure additional funding for housing grants. She acknowledged that the 2013 provision was greater but it is up to the Housing Department to stay in constant communication with the Department with a view to getting additional funding. Additional provision is made in the Budget to allow us to avail of additional funding if and when it becomes available. Details of the Irish Water Programme are set out on Page 60 of the Chief Executive's Report and on Page 17 of the Budget Tables. This expenditure is fully recoupable. The service support costs are as a result of the costing methodology introduced in 2007 where the Central Management Charge is applied across the services based on a number of criteria. These are indirect costs. Provision is not included in the Budget for external consultants. The service support costs for housing includes the salaries and wages of people indirectly supporting that service. Ms. McAllen referred to the query regarding the use of €2m from Capital and said these amounts are put aside by members when the AFS is presented in April for very specific purposes particularly where there is some uncertainty in some areas i.e. pensions and gratuities. In a year when a number of staff leave there is considerable impact on the Revenue Account. If a revenue surplus exists the areas typically in difficulty when balancing the Budget are provided for, for example, €50,000 was used for burial grounds to support the revenue budget. The Chief Executive mentioned the development of tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way and said funds from the Capital Fund will be used to fund the own resources contribution. It is detailed in each Chapter where specific funds are transferred from capital to revenue.

Cllr. P. McCarthy referred to the Cathaoirleach's proposal that a letter would issue to the Department in relation to the retention of 20% of LPT.

It was unanimously agreed that this letter would issue to the Department on behalf of the members.

Cllr. T. Ferris referred to her proposal that rates would be standardised at the lower rate and said Killarney would benefit from this proposal. She also PROPOSED that full rates would apply on vacant properties.

Mr. J.D. Flynn referred to Cllr. Gleeson's query regarding the taxing of commercial vehicles and said this issue relates to the licensing of vehicles at the lower commercial rates. Where a vehicle is used solely for or in connection with a business undertaking then it may be licensed at the appropriate commercial rate. However if at any time the vehicle is used for private, domestic or pleasure purposes then the vehicle cannot legally be licensed as a commercial vehicle.

In the case of first registration or first licensing (new vehicles or change of ownership), then appropriate documentation must be produced to verify that the vehicle is a commercial vehicle used solely for commercial purposes.

Where the required insurance documentation presented to the Motor Taxation Department indicates the use of a vehicle for purposes not connected to the business then the Motor Taxation Department cannot license the vehicle as a commercial vehicle. The Department makes reasonable enquiries and Insurance Policies are scrutinised to confirm that named drivers are business employees using the vehicle for business purposes. Indeed we are aware that in some other counties Motor Taxation Offices require the production of payslips to confirm that the named drivers are actual business employees.

It is entirely a matter for the owner of the vehicle to ensure that all uses and all drivers are insured within the law.

The Cathaoirleach said it was 1.20pm and he would adjourn the meeting for lunch. He reminded members when they go through Road Transport and Safety in the afternoon there would be a Special Roads Meeting early in 2015 when there would be a detailed discussion on roads.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch at 1.20pm.

The meeting resumed at 2.05pm.

In view of the fact there would be a Special Roads Meeting early in the New Year Cllr. M. O'Shea PROPOSED that members would note the Road Transport & Safety Division.

Cllr. P. McCarthy SECONDED this proposal.

The Chief Executive said members must consider this Division and go through the Budget Report.

The Cathaoirleach said with members agreement there would be no speakers on this Division.

Road Transport & Safety

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 41 to 56 of the Chief Executive's Report and Pages 14 – 16 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division. This is the largest area of expenditure in the Council at 26% and is estimated based on the 2014 allocations.

Local Contribution to Road Transport and Safety Programme

Provision of €4,492,000 is made for Non-National Road Maintenance and this reflects the increase in the number of councillors. The total expenditure, net of Grant Support, for Local Contribution to the Roads Programme 2015 is €16,747,893 which is a marginal increase on the 2014 levels. The newly named Municipal Operations Councillors Allocations approved in the Municipal Plan are contained within this allocation to the value of €29,000 per councillor. This scheme will be developed in the coming months. This own resource allocation

particularly taken in conjunction with our street cleaning budget now shown under Environmental Services of €2.5m is considerable but critical to ensure we continue to maintain our road network and attract grant funding.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae referred to local link roads and asked that a specific request for funding would be made for these roads. He also requested that funding for the Local Improvement Scheme would be reinstated.

Water Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 57 – 60 of the Chief Executive's Report and Pages 17 and 18 of the Budget Tables for details on this Division including Irish Water.

The following areas in the Water Services division have been retained by Kerry County Council. The 2015 Draft Budget proposals are as follows:

Operation & Maintenance of Public Conveniences (C04)

Operation & Maintenance of Public Conveniences (C0401) €675,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Kerry County Council owns and operates Public Conveniences at 29 locations throughout the County which includes the Public Conveniences previously operated by Town Councils. The 2015 Budget includes for the caretaking, maintenance and repair of these public conveniences.

Seven of the facilities, located at Ballybunion, Portmagee, Sneem, Waterville, Cromane, Kells and Knightstown, are operated by local community groups on behalf of the Council. The Council is most appreciative of the outstanding works of these local groups and provision is again made in 2015 to continue with this co-operative approach.

The storms early in 2014 caused damage to Inch and Ventry Public Conveniences. Both these facilities were repaired and upgraded where necessary and are now fit for purpose for the future. The Public Convenience at Castlegregory Beach was completely destroyed and has now been replaced with a new demountable unit.

In other facilities, relatively minor improvements works such as retiling, greatly enhanced facilities and these works are again proposed for 2015.

RURAL WATER PROGRAMME (C05)

The administration and development of the Group Scheme Sector continues to be a function of the Local Authorities under the guidance and supervision of the DOECLG and Irish Water has no authority, responsibility or involvement.

Irish Water Programme

Kerry County Council will continue to provide water services to the people of Kerry, as an Agent of Irish Water, under a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

For 2015, the following service areas are covered under the SLA:

C01	Water Supply	€7,609,794
C02	Waste Water Treatment	€3,157,418
C03	Collection of Water & Waste Water Charges	€1,480,803
C06	Support to Water Capital Programme	€915,867
C07	Agency & Recoupable Services	€208,064

The amounts shown in the tables reflect monies recoupable – Payroll, Central Management Charge (net of Superannuation Income) and, to a lesser extent, Goods & Services as more of this water services expenditure moves over to Irish Water's Financial Procurement system.

Irish Water Capital Programme

Under the SLA the Council's Capital Project Office will carry out specific projects on behalf of Irish Water and the costs of this office are fully recouped also.

The Estimated expenditure of Kerry Projects included in the Capital Investment Plan for 2014 - 2016 is €14.144m (€3.457m on Water Schemes and €10.687 on Waste Water Schemes).

The Project Office will continue to work with Irish Water to prioritise Kerry Water Services projects for capital investment.

Development Management

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 61 to 80 of the Chief Executive's Report and Pages 19 to 21 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division.

Forward Planning (D01)

This allocation covers the salaries and other costs associated with the preparation of the County Development Plan, Local Area Plans and other Statutory Plans and Policy.

Statutory Plans and Policy including Local Area Plans (D0101) **€586,000**
(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

County Development Plan

The review of the current County Development Plan (2009 – 2015) commenced in March 2013 with a series of meetings, procedures and processes underway.

Most recently amendments/material alterations to the draft plan, as approved by the members, went on display for a 4 week period commencing on October 22nd and a further Chief Executive's report will be submitted to the elected members in late December 2014.

The County Development Plan (2015 – 2021) will be considered for adoption by the elected members in January 2015.

During 2015, work will continue in the following areas:

- Completion and Adoption of the Kerry County Development Plan 2015 – 2021.
- Completion and Adoption of the Development Contribution Scheme 2015 – 2021.
- Commence preparation of the Four Municipal District Plans.
- Commence review of the Renewal Energy Strategy in line with new DOECLG guidelines.
- Prepare Shopfront Design Guidelines.
- Prepare Urban Design Guidelines.

Planning Control (D0201)

€1,874,000

(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

The improving economic climate is reflected in a slight increase in activity levels in planning control with approximately 1,000 planning applications received county-wide during 2014.

This small increase in activity is in line with other local authorities around the country and may be an indication that the decline in applications during the past number of years has stabilised. However this level of activity is significantly lower when compared to an annual average of 3,000 over the last 20 years and a high of over 5,000 in 2006 and 2007. Applications for large-scale housing and commercial developments are still at a low level.

Enforcement Costs (D0301)

€901,000

(Operations, Health & Safety)

The Planning Enforcement Unit will continue to follow up on complaints received in this area.

Housing Estates Unit

Considerable progress has been made with regard to inspecting housing estates in the county, since the establishment of the Housing Estates Unit in 2009.

To date, 978 housing estates out of a total of 1,027 have been inspected on one or more occasions. The Estates Unit is endeavouring to liaise with developers/receivers to ensure that estates are completed to a satisfactory standard.

General Development and Promotion Work (D0404) **€756,000**

(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

Members, when considering the Budget Strategy for 2015, requested that a sum of €600,000 would be set aside from the Local Property Tax allocation for the purposes of Recreational/Amenity/Community/Tourism/Economic Development Supports has been incorporated as part of the General Municipal Allocation.

This allocation provides for a sum of €750,000 in respect of the fund. The total amount of GMA provided is allocated across the 4 Municipal Districts on the basis of maintaining the existing levels of specific financial supports in the Town Councils 2014 Budgets and KCC supports.

The full amount is allocated to this Subservice in 2015 pending the development of a scheme to take place shortly to enable this fund to be applied for by the various Community/Tourism/Economic Development groups within each specific Municipal District.

Some of the areas that would have benefited from support in the past include: Festival lighting in Tralee; Killarney and Listowel; Féile na mBláth; St. Patrick's Day parades; Chambers of Commerce; Listowel Writer's Week etc. In subsequent years this €750,000 will be reflected in the areas defined in the Scheme.

Tourism Development and Promotion (D05)

General Economic Promotion (D0501) **€512,000**

(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

This allocation includes the salaries, operational and associated costs of a strengthened Tourism Development & Built Infrastructure Unit. It also includes contributions to a limited number of voluntary bodies which provide a county wide benefit. This includes a provision of €75,000 towards the Rose of Tralee Festival, which was previously supported by both Kerry County Council and Tralee Town Council. Also included here is a contribution towards:

- €5,000 for Brú Columbanus, Wilton, which provides accommodation to families with long-term and critically ill relatives in the Cork Hospitals, including a substantial number of bed nights for Kerry people.
- Provision has also been made to support the existing Twinning arrangements that are in place.
- Support for Kerry Mountain Rescue.

- Supports for links with Zhejiang Province, China, including the secondary school Chinese language initiative.

Tourist Facilities Operations (D0502) €231,000

(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

This allocation relates to the staff costs for the Windmill in Tralee, together with a contribution of €150,000 in respect of the operation of the Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre. This is a major additional tourist attraction for Tralee and the Council's continued support in this area reflects the importance of the tourism industry to the overall economy of the town and the county.

A provision has been made towards supporting any potential grant funding for works to the Windmill and/or Tralee Steam Railway Train.

General Community and Enterprise Expenses (D0601)

€679,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

This area has seen an increase largely due to increased staffing. Under Section 36 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, each local authority was required to establish a Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The aim of the LCDCs is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.

This allocation covers the costs of setting-up and supporting the work of the new Kerry LCDC and associated structures and establishing the Public Participation Network (PPN) and its operating structures.

As in previous years, it includes voluntary contributions to a number of groups such as Kerry Community Awards, Pride of Place, Comhairle na nÓg and Kerry Children's Services Committee.

Ms. McAllen referred members to Page 68 which lists the proportion of this area and lists the structures in place to deliver this work such as:

- Kerry Local Community Development Committee
- Kerry Public Participation Network (PPN)
- Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)
- Comhairle na nÓg
- Kerry (Immigrant) Integration Strategy
- Kerry County Community and Voluntary (Kerry C&V Forum)
- Kerry Community Awards

The objective of the Community Awards Scheme is to recognise, reward and encourage the work of the community and voluntary sector who seek to improve the Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental quality of life in our local communities.

The Community Awards celebrated its 11th Anniversary in 2014 and the awards ceremony was held in October. The overall winner for 2014 was Féile na Bealtaine Daingean Uí Chúis. Féile na Bealtaine aspires to build on the rich tradition of arts and culture that exists on the Dingle peninsula.

Pride of Place

Pride of Place is an all-island competition, which is directed towards recognising improvements by local communities to create civic pride in their area. Kerry County Council nominates the entries following participation in the Kerry Community Awards competition.

Four projects were selected to participate and represent Kerry in the National Awards for 2014; Kenmare, An Bhainseach Housing Estate Killorglin, Mitchel's/Boherbee Regeneration Project and Ballyduff Community of Excellence promoting Mental Health & Wellbeing. The national awards ceremony will take place in November.

Building Control (D08)

Building Control Inspection and Enforcement Costs (D0801 and D0802) *(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)*

€263,000

The Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014 [S.I. No. 9 of 2014] relating to the commencement and certification of construction works came into effect on 1st March 2014. For certain building works, the new regulations require that Certificates of Compliance and other documents must be submitted with the Commencement Notice. They also recommend that the preferred means of administration of the Building Control Unit is via electronic means. In this regard, a new IT based system The Building Control Management System [BCMS] has been developed to facilitate the electronic option. Commencement Notices and 7 Day Notices which were previously forwarded to the appropriate Building Control Unit can now be done electronically using the new IT system.

Economic Development & Promotion (D0905) *(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)*

€239,000

Tidy Towns / Events Support / Amenity Work

The sum of €35,000 is included to support worthwhile Tidy Town initiatives by local Tidy Town Committees and €14,000 in respect of support to amenity works / event.

Local Enterprise Office (D0906)

€1,004,000

(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

This allocation covers the Council's expenditure in staffing, administration and miscellaneous office supports to the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), following the dissolution of the Kerry County Enterprise Board Ltd. (CEB). This includes expenditure of €743,000 supporting businesses, which is recoupable from Enterprise Ireland.

The Local Enterprise Office combines the resources of the former CEB and the Local Authority to become the first-stop-shop for all entrepreneurs and existing micro and small businesses to deliver an enhanced and integrated support service.

The specific functions of the LEO are as follows:-

- *Business Information and Advisory Services:*
- *Enterprise Support and Development Services:*

- *Entrepreneurship Support Services:*
- *Local Economic Development Services*

The new LEO will operate at a local level within the Local Authorities, it will be the critical access points for the delivery of a radical reform of the system of supports for small and micro enterprises supported by the Centre of Excellence in Enterprise Ireland and with a strong positive policy dimension from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Ms. McAllen said the LEO extensive work programme is set out on Page 76.

Heritage Services (D1101)

€192,000

(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

Ms. McAllen said this allocation provides for the Heritage and Archaeology Office and their extensive work programmes are set out on Pages 78 and 79 of the Chief Executive's Report.

Cllr. D. Nolan referred to the public convenience in Listowel which she said is the most expensive public convenience in the country and asked that this lease would be terminated. She acknowledged the work done by the Estates Management Unit and said it gives greater focus to this area. She welcomed the fact that 53 Bonds have been drawn down and said this gives a sense of security to residents in estates. Cllr. Nolan commended the breath of work undertaken by the Community and Enterprise Department on a small budget.

Cllr. A. Thornton said she was informed at a recent meeting of the Listowel Municipal District that the Tidy Towns Committees should apply to the Municipal District for funding but she noted funding is provided at a county level also. She requested clarification on this.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae asked if there was any progress in relation to the taking in charge of estates and the problems with Irish Water. He expressed concern at the number of quarries that are closing as this will have a detrimental effect and will prove to be more costly for the Council who are the main users of these quarries. South Kerry had two limestone quarries and they will both close. Stone for road works will then have to be drawn from Castleisland and Ardfert and the cost involved will mean fewer roads can be improved. Cllr. Healy-Rae referred to the new requirements under the Building Control Regulations and said it is putting severe financial hardship on young people building a home. He referred to the additional staff in the LEO and asked were additional staff recruited or existing staff reassigned. Cllr. Healy-Rae emphasised the need to maintain street cleaning as rate payers see this and public lighting as the only services they get for the rates they pay. He asked if the street cleaning machines could be upgraded as this would improve the service. He asked that towns and villages would be maintained in as pristine a condition as possible.

Cllr. S. Locke asked in light of the national opposition to water charges how well prepared is the Council in the event that Irish Water is abolished. He welcomed the continued support of the RAPID Programme which has worked well in Tralee. He also welcomed the support in the Budget for various events across the county.

Cllr. N. Foley said in the formation of the Roads SPC there was a gross omission as those representing the Rural Transport initiative are not represented. They provide an invaluable service and it is very important that niche is represented and she PROPOSED that they would be represented on the Roads SPC. She referred to the protocol being drawn up for Councillors Allocations and said what was in place until now worked well and was transparent. The majority of the allocation was spent on roads and for the general good. She asked that the new protocol would adhere to the existing scheme. Cllr. Foley referred to the 'Winter Ready' Campaign and asked if the Council has an adequate supply of salt and grit. She welcomed the funding provided in the Budget for tourism facilities and said huge strides have been made in that area. Cllr. Foley asked if there was any progress on her proposal that the national Diaspora Centre would be located in Kerry.

Cllr. M. O'Shea said while funding was allocated for the Mid Kerry Water Scheme there are still interruptions to the water supply. The Mid Kerry Scheme is in place since 1974 and many of the pipes are old and the system needs to be upgraded. Valves and fire hydrants are not operating for a long time. Building Control inspections cost €263,000 but the new Building Regulations will have a negative effect when the economy picks up. He asked if these costs are recouped by the Department. If there is another boom these costs will increase from €0.25m to €0.5m. Cllr. O'Shea referred to the provision in the Budget for the LEO and he asked how this money is spent.

Cllr. J. Healy-Rae said the delays in taking in charge estates, because of Irish Water, is a most serious issue. He asked if there was any update from Irish Water on this issue. He referred to flashing amber lights at schools and said some are operated by solar panels. The ones at Caher are on all the time while in Foilmore and Kilgarvan one side only is working. He asked that they would be checked and repaired as required. From his experience when they are repaired they only work for a week and are out of order again. Sections of footpaths in Kilgarvan, Kenmare, Sneem and other areas are in a very bad state of repair and he asked that they would be repaired. When the first section of the Kenmare Relief Road opened it caused consternation at the Hospital Road. He expressed disappointment that funding is not available to progress the next section of the Kenmare Relief Road.

Cllr. N. Kelleher said the service AirTricity is giving in the repair of public lighting is very poor. In the past a member of the public could report that a particular public light was out of order and it would be repaired. However he heard a number of reports recently that these reports are not being dealt with. In Rathmore there are seven public lights out of order at present. A sum of €1.9m is provided in the Budget for public lighting and he was aware of one public light that is on constantly. There is a service level agreement with AirTricity and they need to deliver the service required. Provision of €1m is made in the Budget for the LEO and he asked how much they receive from Enterprise Ireland. The LEO is vital in job creation in the county and they are filling a void that is not being filled by Enterprise Ireland or the IDA. Cllr. Kelleher said at present commercial customers pay Kerry County Council for water charges and it is rumoured these charges could increase to €2.40 per cu m which would be a disaster for these customers.

Cllr. J. Moloney said car parking costs €1.7m while the income from car parking charges is €2.79m. He suggested that free parking could be considered at certain times.

The Cathaoirleach supported this suggestion.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty asked if there was any update on the new proposal to take estates in charge and that by Ministerial Order they would be given over to Irish Water. He asked that priority would be given to improving the worst sections of footpaths in the county. Cllr. Culloty said he hoped the Scartaglin/Gneeveguilla road would be resurfaced in the near future. He referred to the need for a By-Pass for Adare which would be very important for Kerry.

Cllr. P. McCarthy said the lack of By-Passes in Macroom and Adare is costing jobs in Kerry.

Cllr. P. Connor-Scarteen asked if there was any update on the difficulties with the taking in charge of estates and Irish Water. There are ongoing issues with Estates and Bonds and he asked that additional resources would be assigned to this area. He called for a briefing for members on the LCDC, funding, powers etc. He concurred with the views expressed by Cllr. Foley in relation to Councillors Allocations and said the scheme in place until June worked well and should not be changed much.

Cllr. M. Cahill asked when work will commence on the Mid Kerry Water Supply Scheme at Gerah. He asked if Glencuttane is part of the Mid Kerry Scheme and was funding allocated to replace it. Cllr. Cahill called for a Traffic Management Plan for Killorglin as it takes 45 minutes to drive 300 – 400 yds during busy times.

Cllr. D. Grady referred to the Kilcummin road and said it is in an atrocious condition. He referred to broken public lights and said any time he reported a broken light to David Doyle in Killarney it was fixed within two weeks.

The Cathaoirleach said it is critical that the problems, with Irish Water, on the taking in charge of estates, are resolved. He hoped there would be clarity on the taking in charge of group water schemes in the coming days. Eighteen months ago when Minister Jan O'Sullivan addressed the Council she announced new development levy schemes for local authorities. This broad base scheme would reflect the current climate while the current scheme reflects the boom. Unfortunately eighteen months on the current scheme is detrimental to development. In the interim LPT was introduced and water charges will commence in 2015. He called for the introduction of a new development levy scheme by the end of Q1 in 2015 and he asked that the new scheme would reflect the current economic climate.

Ms. McAllen said provision of €1m is made in the Budget for the LEO and €835,000 of this is recoupable for grants to local companies together with an element of staffing costs. Kerry County Council is an agent for Irish Water and we collect commercial water charges. She understands the current rates will continue to apply.

Mr. J. Breen referred to the query regarding funding for Tidy Towns Committees and said the provision at a county level is for work on infrastructure whereas general funding is provided at Municipal District level. The LCDC will meet on the 4th November and tenders are due by the 19th December.

Mr. C. O'Sullivan referred to the taking in charge of estates and said a circular was received from the Department indicating where there are legacy estates Irish Water will take responsibility for them and the Council can proceed to take these estates in charge in consultation with Irish Water. The issue of street cleaning will be dealt with in the Municipal District Work Plans. It is hoped to, at least, maintain the existing service and where possible to improve it. A Special Roads Meeting will be held when the grant allocations and full details are received. It is hoped these allocations will be received by mid-December and that the Roads

Programme will be prepared earlier than previous years. As soon as the Operations SPC is formed it is intended that a policy on the Municipal District Operations Fund will be drawn up. Mr. O'Sullivan undertook to take members views on board in relation to the existing scheme which worked well but he pointed out there is now a wider remit. He undertook to follow up on school flashing lights as requested. In relation to public lighting Mr. O'Sullivan said the Council has a contract with AirTricity. The new Kenmare Relief Road only opened in the past few weeks and while there were a few issues initially these have now been resolved. He acknowledged that funding for the second part of this Relief Road is an issue but said his Department are in discussions with the Department on it. He added that funding would have to be provided from own resources and this would be taken into account in the review of the Development Levy Scheme. The Adare and Macroom By-Passes are critical for Kerry and this will be highlighted with the NRA. The Macroom By-Pass is more positive but there are still significant issues with the Adare By-Pass.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty referred to the Circular issued by the Department on the taking in charge of estates by Irish Water and asked when there would be a decision on this as people's lives are on hold because of it.

Mr. C. O'Sullivan said he could not give a specific timeframe but the Circular from the Minister is very definite that local authorities should proceed and that Irish Water would fund works except where the Bond is in place. There is a list of 43 estates at present waiting to be taken in charge and he hoped that progress would be made on these in the next few months. There are some points in the Circular that need clarification.

Cllr. M. O'Shea PROPOSED that the next four Divisions would be taken together.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty SECONDED this proposal.

Environmental Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 81 to 104 of the Chief Executive's Report and Pages 22 to 24 of the Budget Tables for details on this Division. This section is managed as four distinct business units:

- Waste Management
- Environmental Regulation and Environmental Awareness
- Laboratory
- Veterinary Services

Landfill Operations (E0101)

€2,195,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Between 1st January - 11th July 2014, 4,521 tonnes of waste was landfilled in North Kerry Landfill and built capacity was reached. North Kerry Landfill ceased accepting waste on the 12th July 2014.

The budget allocation for 2015 provides for a portion of the cost of operating the four Transfer Stations at Killarney, Milltown, Kenmare and Caherciveen and also a portion of the operating cost of Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne. The costs associated with the five licensed waste transfer stations/civic amenity site includes operation and maintenance of facilities, transport of waste and disposal cost of waste at a private facility and treatment of effluent off-site as well as administration costs.

The cost of operating the recycling facilities at each location is not included in this allocation as it is shown separately (E02).

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 EPA licence requirements.

Bring Centres Operations (E0202)

€219,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

A total of 99 Bring Banks are located at various locations around the county. The usage of these recycling facilities has resulted in approximately 3,400 tonnes of recyclables being accepted in 2014.

As a measure to counteract illegal and indiscriminate dumping at these sites, the Council has provided the "adopt a bring bank" to 35 Community Groups. This involves the local community helping to police the Bring Bank site to limit the 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 collection credit for the bins.

In addition, a provision has been made to enhance and provide permanent security cameras to prevent illegal dumping. The Council has also rolled out a covert roaming camera which is monitoring known dumping areas associated with our Bring Bank Network.

The cost effectiveness of these sites will be monitored on a continuous basis throughout 2015 to ensure value for money. The allocation provided covers the cost of servicing and maintaining the various locations throughout the county.

Provision of Waste Collection Services (E04)

The following provisions in this area relate to the provision of the refuse collection service in the former Killarney Town Council area. The total cost of this service is budgeted at €637,000 for 2015. The budgeted income for this area is €370,000.

Litter Warden Service (E0501)

€217,000

(Operations, Health & Safety)

Kerry County Council employs three full-time Litter Wardens county-wide on a permanent basis and assistance is also provided on a part-time basis by the Traffic/Litter Wardens in the towns of Dingle, Caherciveen, Castleisland, Killorglin, Killarney, Kenmare and Listowel.

During 2014, covert CCTV cameras at litter black spots continue to be used in an attempt to identify offenders and act as a deterrent against unauthorised dumping.

Litter Control Initiatives (E0502)

€80,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

This figure provides for Litter Control Initiatives incorporating Awareness Programmes promoted through the local media, schools, Tidy Town Committees and Community groups.

Environmental Awareness Services (E0503)

€115,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

There is an increasing demand on the environmental protection programme, to keep the public informed of the relevant issues and how they can play a role in improving their local environmental quality. This also applies to businesses and schools who are encouraged to take a personal responsibility for their environmental impact.

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 87 and 88 for details of the good work in this areas across the county i.e.

- Home Composting demonstrations
- Kerry County Council participated in the IBEC sponsored 'Bin it your Way' campaign
- The Council worked closely with the committee of Entente Florale in their successful participation in the event.
- Community Presentations. These are held on request and members of the community are provided with information on waste, energy and water.
- The Council currently have 123 Green Flag Awards for both Primary & Secondary Schools
- Blue Flag Beaches & Green Coast Award Schemes.
- Funding 55 communities through the Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership fund.
- The Council will maintain 'Adopt a Road' programme during 2015. Each community group gets €500 along with bags, gloves, pickers etc and an arrangement is made to have the bagged litter collected.

- The Spring Clean Up of the county in 2014 was the largest to date, in particular the County Clean Up day on April 12th which saw over 2000 volunteers countywide.
- Working with Local Communities to maintain Bring Bank Sites in Kerry. Currently, the Council have 99 Bring Bank sites and we are cooperating with 35 communities in the Adopt a Bring Bank Scheme. This scheme works along the lines of the 'Adopt a Road' project.
- The first of the Preferred Walking Routes for dog owners was developed in Dingle town during 2013. This has now been extended and there are facilities for dog owners in Listowel, Beaufort, Ballybunion, Killorglin and at all blue Flag beaches. The necessary signage, poop scoop dispensers have been installed on the route.
- The Council continued to work closely with Tidy Town groups during 2014, through seminars and site visits by a number of experts dealing with various aspects of the national competition.

Street Cleaning (E06)

Contribution to Street Cleaning Service (E0601)

€2,139,000

(Operations, Health & Safety)

This provision is for the operation of the street cleaning service in various towns throughout the county. A total of €1.2m is in respect of salaries/wages. Other costs include waste disposal charges, repairs and maintenance of vehicles, diesel, cleansing materials and insurance.

This amount is a significant provision from our own resources each year. Both Killarney and Tralee have consistently achieved IBAL "litter free" status over the past number of years, and have succeeded in retaining the classification of "Cleaner than European Norms". Extensive street cleaning programmes have assisted in achieving these results, as has the very significant voluntary work of local communities.

The Council will continue to promote its environmental awareness initiatives to inform the public of their role in improving the appearance of their local communities.

Provision & Improvement of Litter Bins (E0602)

€15,000

(Sustainable Communities)

Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement (E07)

Monitoring of Waste Regs (including Private Landfills) (E0701) **€226,000**
(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Enforcement of Waste Regulations (E0702) **€132,000**
(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

The allocation allows for continued activity in the waste enforcement area in 2015. The waste enforcement team responds to and investigates reports from members of the public and state agencies, regarding unauthorised waste activity in the County such as illegal dumping and unauthorised waste collection. This important work will continue in 2015.

Waste Management Plan (E0801) **€42,000**
(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

The Draft Southern Waste Management Plan policy objectives and targets have been developed over the last 9 months with a strategic vision to rethink our approach to managing wastes, including viewing our waste streams as valuable material resources that can contribute to a healthier environment and sustainable commercial opportunities.

The Draft Plans will be published on the 18th November 2014 and a further 2-months public consultation phase will follow. Written submissions will be accepted until 23rd January 2015.

Operation and Maintenance of Burial Grounds (E0901) **€786,782**
(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Community Organisations have continued to undertake excellent maintenance works in an increasing number of graveyards throughout the county and the Council is highly appreciative of their support and assistance. This co-operation and the close working arrangement with such groups builds and strengthens the on the Council's relationships with local communities.

The Council is currently working with approximately 60 community groups, and also makes financial contributions the 40 of these organisations in recognition of their voluntary work in burial grounds. Provision is made in the 2015 Budget for continued support to community groups, in recognition of their ongoing involvement and valuable assistance. There are currently 150 burial grounds in the county, including the new Cromane Burial Ground which was completed in 2014.

Ninety two of Kerry's burial grounds are classed as Archaeological Sites and are protected by the National Monuments Act. Following consultation in 2010 with the County Archaeologist, the structural conditions of many of the tombs, mausoleums and underground vaults in graveyards were addressed. Many of these structures were open or in a state of complete collapse, which, coupled with general overgrowth, made it difficult to walk safely in some burial grounds. A programme of sealing and basic repairs to tombs was put in place. To-date, structures have been sealed and repaired in over 30 graveyards.

Burial Grounds Capital Works

This provision covers the cost of borrowings incurred in respect of the improvement of existing burial grounds and also the provision and development of new graveyards throughout the County. Progress has been made on the following developments:

- The new Cromane Burial Ground was constructed during 2014, a Caretaker/Registrar has been appointed and this Burial Ground is now fully operational.
- Construction of an extension to the Burial Ground at Abbey Island, Derrynane is ongoing and it is anticipated that this will be completed and fully operational in 2015.
- Construction of the extension to Inch Burial Ground is ongoing and this will be complete and fully operational in the 4th quarter of 2014.

Ms. McAllen referred members to Page 93 of the Chief Executive's report where further details of the activities in this area are set out.

Operation Costs Civil Defence (E1001)

€204,240

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

The allocation in the Draft Budget is in respect of salaries, equipment, travel, rent, energy and miscellaneous costs for Civil Defence. Details of the activities in this area are set out on Page 94 of the Chief Executive's report.

Water Safety Operation (E1005)

€318,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Voluntary Rescue Services at Ballybunion, Ballinskelligs, Ballyheigue, Banna, Cashen, Derrynane and Killarney, together with Irish Water Safety and R.N.L.I., will again receive financial support in 2015.

Operation of Fire Service (E11)

The estimated cost of providing an efficient and effective Fire and Emergency Service for the county for the year 2015 amounts to €5,281,046.

The Fire Service has responded to 772 incidents up to the end of September 2014. Road Traffic Collisions, Gorse Fires and Chimney Fires are the major incident types requiring brigade mobilisation.

There has been a decrease in the number of incidents in 2014 when compared to the same period in 2013 which was exceptionally high due to a 139% increase in gorse fires that year. The Council has been very active with public awareness and fire safety promotion.

Fire Prevention and Education (E1202)

€188,000

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

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 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 DOECLG under the Community Smoke Alarm Scheme 2014. The Primary Schools Fire Safety Programme targeted at children between the ages of 8 and 9 years of age continues to be rolled out by Kerry Fire Service Personnel.

Operation of the Council Laboratory

The cost of operating the Council Laboratory is spread across Environment and Water Services divisions and Irish Water recoup the costs relating to water. In 2014, the laboratory will process 5,000 samples involving a total of at least 70,000 tests.

Introduction of new Laboratory Information Management System (L.I.M.S.)

In order to improve the reporting efficiency of the laboratory, a new Laboratory information management system (LABWARE) has been put in place and commissioned in July 2014. This will greatly modernise how we record and report data and will save significant amounts of staff time in this area.

Laboratory Accreditation

All laboratories supplying data to EPA and EU will have to be formally accredited to ISO 17025 standard by 2015. To this end, the Council's Laboratory formally commenced this process in 2013. A pre-assessment visit by auditors was undertaken in October 2014. The feedback from this visit was in general positive and indicated that the laboratory was on track to attain accreditation of significant parameters by July 2015.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

The Energy Office is deployed over a number of services to promote energy conservation, monitor energy consumption, meet legislative requirements relating to energy reporting and ensure best value through the installation of energy efficient equipment, such as pumps, electric motors, lighting and heating systems. Funding for the Energy Office is provided from allocations in Housing, Water, Environment and Corporate Services Divisions.

Much progress has been made in this area in recent years. The work programme implemented during 2014 is presented on Page 103 of the Chief Executive's report and the financial benefits have and continue to be felt across all divisions of the Council.

Recreation and Amenity

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 105 – 113 of the Chief Executive's Report and Pages 25 and 26 of the Budget Tables for details on this Division.

Leisure Facilities Operations (F0101) **€506,000**

(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

The costs in this area relate to the Killarney Swimming Pool / Leisure Centre. The proposed allocation includes €267,548 Leisure Centre loan repayment charges, €45,172 in respect of administration and technical support salary costs, €3,175 staff and ICT expenses, €40,105 insurance costs and €150,000 towards the future costs of plant replacement and potential shortfall on income from the Leisure Centre operations.

Contribution to External Bodies Leisure Facilities (F0103) **€40,000**

(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)

This allocation is provided in respect of financial support from the Council to Ballybunion swimming pool. This is in recognition of the importance of this facility in supporting the area and its business community and the need for an indoor leisure facility for those visiting this seaside destination. The allocation is contingent on the performance of the swimming pool in adhering to business plans submitted.

Library Service Operations (F0201) **€2,277,000**

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

The increase in recent years of the core adult and children's book lending service continues and in 2013 the no. of items borrowed increased further to 619,089 items. Usage of other areas of the service is reflected in the 517,284 individual visits to the 11 service points. In 2014, statistics indicate a similar upward trend.

Kerry Library works at many levels with communities throughout the county, ranging from the various Mobile Library stops to the provision of block loans and classroom novels to schools, working with community resource centres, open days, an exhibition and events programme, children's services, book club support and local history material.

Local History & Archives Service (F0202) **€82,000**

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Work commenced during 2014 on listing some of the library collections relating to the 1916 period, including the Con Casey, Tom Sheehy and Charlie Daly papers. A major exhibition in May on World War 1 at Tralee Library was a great success.

Purchase of Books, CD's etc. (F0204) **€270,000**

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

The provision for the purchase of books, CD's etc. has been maintained in 2015 and improved value for money has been achieved through procurement and practices and this will continue in 2015. The Council has made a special effort again in 2015 to support this area, especially in view of the high public demand / participation in this service. Details of cost savings and value for money initiatives for 2014 are set out on Page 108 of the Chief Executive's Report.

Parks, Pitches and Open Spaces (F0301) **€1,679,000**

(Operations, Health & Safety)

Amenity Areas

This allocation relates to the maintenance of Amenity Areas throughout the county. Significant provision is made in this programme for the maintenance of green areas in Tralee, Killarney and Listowel. With the dissolution of the town councils and the amalgamation of services, the maintenance of these areas will be critically reviewed in 2015, to optimise the use of our own resources.

Kerry Walking Routes

Kerry's long and short distance walking routes, developed over the years, are supported financially under this programme.

Walks / Cycleways

The newly formed Capital Infrastructure Unit has taken over responsibility for the development of the Amenity Trails in the county. Work is ongoing on the continuation of the Tralee Fenit Line within the town of Tralee and the section between Rock Street and Edward Street should be completed and open to the public in early 2015.

National Cycle Network Programme funding from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has been secured for the Glenbeigh to Renard Trail. Public consultation is ongoing on the sections between Glenbeigh and Cahersiveen. Work will start before the end of 2014 on the construction of the trail between Cahersiveen and Renard. Upon completion the trail has the potential to be an iconic piece of tourism infrastructure in the county.

Work is also ongoing on the Lough Leane Loop Walk in Killarney with the design development works nearing completion. It is anticipated that the planning application for the project will be lodged with An Bord Pleanála in 2015. It is hoped to take the Tralee to Fenit project to planning approval status in 2015.

Playgrounds (F0302) **€110,000**

(Operations, Health & Safety)

Beaches (F0303) **€366,000**

(Operations, Health & Safety)

Blue Flag Beaches

The provision made in the budget will allow for the continuation of the Blue Flag Programme in 2015 and it is anticipated that the county will achieve 13 Blue Flags again in 2015.

Community Grants (F0401) **€42,000**

This allocation is in respect of a contribution towards Kerry Life Education Ltd towards health education and substance / alcohol abuse awareness programme across the entire county.

Administration of Arts Programme (F0501 & F0502) **€291,000** *(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)*

This allocation provides an extensive work programme which is outlined on Page 112 of the Chief Executive's Report and in many instances partnered with various agencies to maximise funding.

Contributions of €68,600 to the following voluntary groups: Siamsa Tíre, Tralee; Samhlaíocht/Kerry Film Festival, Tralee; St John's Theatre & Arts Centre; Tech Amergin, Waterville; Carnegie Arts Centre, Kenmare; Kerry Cultural Centre.

Museums Operations (F0503) **€456,000** *(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)*

The museum will continue to be marketed at all Holiday shows along with the other visitor attractions in Tralee. The joint ticketing of the three attractions, the Kerry County Museum, Tralee Bay Wetlands and the Windmill will continue in 2015.

While there is a cost to the Council in supporting this area, the significant positive contribution to cultural, recreational and economic activity of the town is recognised in the provision for Budget 2015.

Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 114 to 117 of the Chief Executive's Report and Pages 27 and 28 of the Budget Tables for details of this division.

The main areas of expenditure in this division relate to Piers and Harbours.

Operation and Maintenance of Piers/Harbours, Fenit (G0203) **€861,000** *(Job Creation / Sustainable Economic Development)*

Kerry County Council has responsibility for the operation and promotion of Fenit Harbour. Major development of this facility is planned over the coming years. This will promote economic activity and assist with the operational costs and viability of Fenit Harbour into the future.

Planned Protection of Coastal Regions (G0302) **€25,000**

(Operations, Health & Safety)

This funding is provided to cover the requirements that may arise for coastal protection works around the coastline. The Local Authority is required to cover 25% of the costs of any scheme co-funded by the State. No funding has to-date been received in respect of emergency work carried out at Inch in 2007.

Provision of Veterinary Service (G0401) **€107,000**

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

Operation of Dog Warden Service (G0404) **€149,000**

(Sustainable Communities / Quality of Life)

This provides for the implementation of the Control of Dogs Act, 1986 and associated Regulations. The allocation provides for four Dog Wardens including one Pound Keeper together with the operation of the dog pound and shelter.

Payment of Higher Education Grants (G0501) **€1,500,000**

(Corporate Services)

During 2015, the Council will administer approximately 200 Higher Education Grant awards. During 2014, 95% of ongoing students had their first grant instalment paid by early October. Kerry County Council has an excellent record in respect of paying student grants expeditiously where students submit all necessary documentation in a timely manner.

Miscellaneous Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 118 – 124 of the Chief Executive's Report and Pages 29 to 31 of the Budget Table for details on this Division.

Refunds and Irrecoverable Rates (H0303) **€7,900,000**

(Finance)

The allocation provided is in respect of irrecoverable rates in cases of vacant / disused properties or settlements negotiated with rate payers. The Council will continue to liaise with any rate payers that are experiencing financial difficulties. The Council, however, will continue to make every effort to pursue all collectable rates and outstanding arrears in 2015. The addition of rate payers from the former Town Councils has impacted considerably in this area. The overall provision for 2015 has been significantly reduced from previous years to take account of reducing settlements and the continuing emphasis on the management and collection of outstanding arrears.

Rates on Vacant Properties

Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides for a change to rating law in relation to the refund of rates on vacant properties; 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 absence of a decision to vary the

refund means that the existing legislative provisions regarding the rate of refund applies i.e. the existing rate of refund at 100% continues to apply.

An initial analysis would indicate that this source of revenue would provide a very low collection rate. It is accepted that some potential income may exist in the larger towns in the county, however, Members do not have the option to vary the rate in particular locations within the Municipal Districts. In light of these difficulties and given the many unknowns in this area, it is considered prudent that an economic assessment of this area be carried out in 2015 prior to the implementation of any proposals to vary the rate.

Coroner Fees and Expenses (H0501)

€303,000

(Corporate Services)

The enactment of legislation transferring this service from Local Authorities is long overdue. It is anticipated that this area will be a cost to the Council for the foreseeable future.

Local Representation/Civic Leadership

Ms. McAllen said typically in framing the budget confirmation of some areas crystalised later than others. Expenses are reflected in H0901 to H0999. When the Director of Corporate Services reviewed the depth and range of training to be provided in 2015 he indicated that we could have under budgeted by €20,000. If this occurs and in line with the norm generally each service division covers its own over expenditure within its own programme. She suggested that the €92,000 in other expenses in this area would be used to support the Members Training Programme if required.

Representational Payments (H0901)

€547,000

This division reflects costs of Local Representation/Civic Leadership which has an overall Budget allocation of €1.6m and covers budget relating to :

- Representational Payments
- Allowances
- Training and Expenses
- Gratuities
- Contributions to Members Associations.

Motor Taxation Operation (H1001)

€1,009,000

(Finance)

This allocation includes salaries, office management and administration, security and all other relevant expenditure, associated with the processing and issuing of Motor Taxation discs.

The approximate, number of transactions, which will be dealt with in 2014 by the Motor Tax office will be 65,000 with a value of approximately €15.5 million. Approximately 70% of these transactions were dealt with over the counter, with 30% processed by post within 24 hours. In addition approximately 110,000 transactions (70%) will be processed on line by the National Vehicle Registration unit in Shannon by the end of 2014. This is a significant increase on the 2013 figure.

Agency and Recoupable Services (H1101)

€2,750,000

(Finance)

Included in this Budget are the general expenses of courthouses. This sum is recoupable.

The Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC)

The recoupable cost of the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) of €1.830m is included in this allocation. During 2014, this office relocated to the former Killarney Area Services Centre.

The LGOPC will play a key role in the implementation of the local government procurement programme. It will be an operational centre with responsibility for the operation of the local authority sector led Category Councils for (i) Plant Hire (expenditure of €49.1m) and (ii) Minor Building & Civil Works (expenditure of €522.2m), as set by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), as well as the development of relevant procurement enabling software in conjunction with the OGP and other relevant stakeholders.

Central Management Charges

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 125 – 134 of the Chief Executive's Report and Page 33 of the Budget Tables for details on this Division.

This Budget includes caretaking, security and maintenance costs for Áras an Chontae and other corporate offices, including those in the former Town Councils as well as the Area Services Centre in Castleisland, the Area Services Centre in Killorglin, the unification of the Town Council's following the local election saw the establishment of Municipal District Offices in the former Town Hall Buildings, the Town Hall at Princes Quay, Tralee will accommodate the Tralee Municipal District Office, the Capital Infrastructure Unit of the Council and the Motor Taxation Department, the Town Hall Building in Killarney now accommodates the Killarney Municipal District Office. The former Killarney Area Services Centre now accommodates the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre, the Town Hall Building in Listowel now accommodates the Listowel Municipal District Office and the Ashe Memorial Hall, Tralee which accommodates the County Museum and the Revenue section of Kerry County Council.

Information and Communication Technology (J03) €1,770,225

Kerry County Council increasingly depends on **Information & Communication Technology** (ICT) and **Information Systems** (IS) for the provision and/or management of almost all frontline and back-office services.

Human Resources Administration (J0501) €1,129,343
(Corporate Services)

The provision for 2015 covers the operation of the Human Resources and Organisational Development Unit (including the Training Department).

Pensions and Lump Sum Costs (J07)

Pensions and Lump Sums (J0701) €7,952,742
(Finance)

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.

Area Offices Costs (J0801) €418,769
(Corporate)

This allocation includes non-payroll costs of the administration and running of the Area Offices.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae said members were not given the cost of moving the Motor Tax Office and other offices. He did not believe the Motor Tax Office should be moved from the County Buildings Complex. People who have crew cab vehicles want to tax them commercial but they are told they must have three employees to qualify for the commercial tax. These people are being unfairly penalised with this requirement. He asked that Fenit Harbour would be properly maintained to facilitate the export of cranes by Liebherr Ireland. For a number of years he has been calling for an extension of the time for gorse burning and he asked that it would be extended to 15th April due to the inclement weather. He requested that a letter to this effect would issue to the Department. Cllr. Healy-Rae asked why it takes 8 to 10 weeks to get a permit to move inert waste. This material is different types of soil or stone and he asked that this delay would be reviewed. Since he was co-opted to the Council eleven years ago he has been asking that a new burial ground would be acquired for Killarney and there is still no progress on it. The people of Killarney are entitled to this and he called on management to acquire land for a burial ground in Killarney before land gets more expensive. He added that a new burial ground is also needed in Gneeveguilla. In conclusion Cllr. Healy-Rae called for the re-instatement of the dump at Rockfied.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty referred to Coolcashlagh and said it is important that the work there would continue. A large number of people use this facility and it is vital that it is retained for the people of Killarney and East Kerry. The Bottle Banks in Gneeveguilla were removed a few weeks ago and he was aware the Council is looking for a new site. Cllr. Culloty thanked KWD and all the volunteers involved in the annual clean up and he called on the Council to continue to support this very important annual event. Heretofore the level of street cleaning in Killarney was excellent and he called on the Council to continue this service. Cllr. Culloty referred to Recreation and Amenity and asked for support for the Loop Walk and he added that the volunteering side of that project is tremendous. He hoped support for the Arts would continue at least at the same level as in the past, and increased if possible, as it is hugely important for the county.

Cllr. J. Finucane referred to Coroners and said he understood legislation is due before the Oireachtas to remove this liability from local authorities. He asked that a letter would issue to the Minister for Justice asking when this legislation will be brought to the Oireachtas. The Ashe Memorial Hall is an old building which is a poor state of repair. Members were informed if the Museum and security were upgraded it would allow for the transfer of national archives with a Kerry connection. Cllr. Finucane welcomed the provision for Fenit Harbour and called for the appointment of a marketing executive with a view to increasing the number of leisure craft using Fenit as this would be a huge boost to the area.

Cllr. D. Grady said Killarney urgently needs a public burial ground. In 2010 – 2011 a group tried to acquire land from the OPW or to purchase a private burial ground. However this was not successful and Killarney still does not have a public burial ground. He pointed out that Killarney Town Council provided funding for this new burial ground for the Town and he asked that renewed efforts would be made to purchase a burial ground. Cllr. Grady welcomed the new Motor Tax Office and said he hoped they would issue driving licences also. A district heating programme would be very beneficial for Killarney and he asked that it would be progressed. Cllr. Grady said he hoped the cost of running the swimming pool in Killarney could be reduced. He welcomed the progress in Killarney in the provision of cycle lanes but said more are required. He requested an update on the proposed bike track at Glenflesk.

Cllr. G. Spring said there is great credit due to Tidy Towns Committees for the excellent work they do while he condemned those responsible for illegal dumping. He welcomed the covert CCTV with a view to catching those responsible. However there are very few prosecutions and he asked what are the obstacles to prosecutions. He asked if the prosecution rate is similar in other counties and if the Minister should be requested to review the legislation to enable more prosecutions to be taken. It should also be possible to get assistance from the Gardaí. Cllr. Spring referred to burial grounds and the expenditure following last winter's storms and said there is concern regarding the condition of the surrounding wall in Kilmore.

Cllr. A. Thornton expressed concern at the level of prosecutions for illegal dumping. She referred to Ballinagar Bog and said there is illegal dumping there and it should be addressed. She asked that the processes for prosecuting illegal dumping would be reviewed. She requested clarification on the funding provided for loan charges for the swimming pool in Killarney. Cllr. Thornton requested an update on the proposed walkway from the Limerick border to Listowel. In relation to irrecoverable rates Cllr. Thornton said she had no doubt the Council vigorously tries to recover rates but the sum of €7.9m for refunds and irrecoverable rates is very substantial. She asked if anything could be done to help rate payers.

Cllr. R. Beasley welcomed the continued subvention for Ballybunion Leisure Centre and said since the new heating system was installed costs have reduced. While the catchment area is small the Centre is doing well. He commended the County Librarian on the excellent service provided and the value for money got in the way books are sourced and purchased. Large numbers of people use the libraries and are very satisfied with the service provided by the staff. As Chair of the Culture SPC Cllr. Beasley expressed his disappointment that increased funding was not provided in the Budget for the Arts which is a very important service. He asked that this budget would be increased in 2016. Cllr. Beasley asked that the street cleaning service would commence from St. Patrick's weekend till the October Bank holiday weekend in tourist towns and villages. Dog fouling is a major problem and while some work has been done in this area a more stringent approach needs to be undertaken. He acknowledged the excellent work done by Tidy Towns Committees and said 50% of the work done in towns and villages can be attributed to them and this must be recognised. It is important to recognise the work of voluntary organisations. The centenary of 1916 is fast approaching and he asked that funding would be provided to support centenary events. He suggested that trees could be planted in Town Parks for each of the signatories of the Proclamation. In conclusion Cllr. Beasley asked that events during 1916 at Ballykissane, Banna Beach and Tralee would be recognised in 2016.

Cllr. T. Ferris asked what the cost of the refurbishment of offices is. The Council is still paying interest on the Motor Tax Building and it does not make sense to move Motor Tax from a purpose built building. The Housing Department should have been moved to Princes Quay which would be a more suitable location for it. She asked how much is paid each year in Rent and she requested a list of buildings owned by the Council. If the Council is renting office space she wanted to ensure it is necessary. She referred to the File Storage facility and asked If the Council is paying loan charges on it. She requested clarification on Property Management and Facilities Management and what is the cost of units rented. Provision of €78,000 for drainage of the three areas of Ardkeragh, Banna and Lough Gill and she asked how the drainage at Ardkeragh would continue if there is no recognised right of way. The provision of €25,000 for coastal protection works is very small having regard to the storms experienced last winter. Cllr. Ferris asked what the operational costs of Fenit Harbour were before the Council took it over as those involved in it for years believe it should be profitable.

Provision of €100,000 is made for dredging of Fenit but members were under the impression a proper job would be done there. She asked is €100,000 per annum adequate. The figure of €7.9m provided in the Budget for irrecoverable rates is staggering but she said some properties should not be on the list. Sinn Féin's proposal in relation to the levying of full rates on vacant properties would yield substantial funding. Cllr. Ferris referred to the provision of €450,000 for NPPR and asked if this takes into account people who enter into an agreement with the Council. She pointed out that the Council has discretion to waive some or all of the penalties.

Cllr. J. Healy-Rae said there are a lot of problems with dumping at Bottle Banks and while CCTV cameras are used at some locations this issue needs to be addressed. In the continent there is railing around the Bottle Banks and this should be considered. He asked if the €600,000 could be used to provide Playgrounds. Street cleaning in Sneem starts late in the year and he said it is important that it would commence in March and continue until the October Bank holiday weekend. Libraries are a tremendous asset and he welcomed the fact that the numbers using them have increased. In conclusion Cllr. J. Healy-Rae expressed his disappointment that funding for the Arts has not increased over the past few years.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald asked if the rent for the new offices in Dingle is factored into the Budget.

Cllr. M. O'Shea said he hoped the Transfer Stations would be retained as there is substantial revenue collected at the one in Milltown. The Bring Banks in Milltown are a dumping black spot and he asked that a CCTV camera would be provided on a permanent basis at Old Chapel Lane. He welcomed the extension to the burial ground at Inch and also the new playground in Milltown which will open shortly. He asked what is the cost of refurbishing offices and why are offices being moved.

Cllr. B. O'Connell asked what progress has been made on compiling a database of the waste disposal methods used by Council tenants. Every household must be accountable for the way they dispose of their waste. It is anti-social and anti-community to illegally dump refuse. Most households pay to deposit their waste. It is imperative that the Council, as custodians of the environment, pursue this matter vigorously. If a household does not avail of a refuse service and do not have transport to go to a Transfer Station how are they disposing of their refuse. He was informed at numerous Budget Meetings that a database of local authority tenants would be created. The small numbers of people responsible for illegal dumping ruin the environment for everyone. He asked that priority would be given to compiling a database of all households in the county. Cllr. O'Connell complimented the County Library on the excellent service they provide and said the new library in Castleisland is used extensively. It is a tremendous facility for education and older people.

Cllr. P. McCarthy asked how moving the Motor Tax Office from a purpose built building on the Ring Road to Princes Quay at a considerable cost will benefit the Council. He referred to hedge cutting and said while the Roads Enforcement Officer is doing the best he can the lack of hedge cutting is a problem throughout the county. It is not practical for one person to manage the entire county. He suggested that additional resources should be assigned to this area from September to December. When the hedge cutting season opens in September 5,000 or 6,000 Hedge Cutting Notices issue and landowners have 21 days to comply. While many landowners cut their hedges some remain uncut and he asked how this problem can be overcome.

Cllr. N. Kelleher agreed with the views expressed by previous speakers regarding the need to provide burial grounds in Killarney and Gneeveguilla. There is a great disparity in street cleaning especially in rural towns and villages where there is very little street cleaning, compared to Killarney. Cllr. Kelleher expressed concern at the level of funding provided in the Budget for the Arts and said Killarney Town Council gave €10,000 to Killarney Arts. This funding is spread across the Municipal Districts and he would have liked to see an increase in funding in this area. Killarney Town Council put a lot of work into getting a Purple Flag and he would like to see this continued. He referred to the refund from IPB and asked where it is shown in the Budget.

Cllr. N. Foley referred to the poor success rate in prosecuting illegal dumping and asked if more covert cameras should be purchased. She referred to the Arts Budget and said she would have liked if it was increased. The Arts Department give small grants to local communities and St. John's Theatre etc and this is very much appreciated. A large variety of art activities are supported throughout the county and she acknowledged the work done by the Arts Officer. Cllr. Foley asked if the provision for School Meals includes Breakfast Clubs. She welcomed the ongoing support for Fenit Harbour and supported the views expressed by previous speakers in relation to the Ashe Memorial Hall which is deserving of an upgrade. She acknowledged the work of the Library Service under the stewardship of the County Librarian. The Mobile Libraries provide a fantastic service and Cllr. Foley welcomed the scheme that allows schools to borrow books. She welcomed the €10,000 received for Killarney and Castleisland Libraries to provide facilities for children with disabilities and she asked that these facilities would be rolled out further. There was great success by Tidy Towns Groups in 2014 and also in Entente Florale and she commended all the volunteers involved.

Cllr. J. Sheahan said a new burial ground is urgently needed in Killarney and he thought the private burial ground would be taken over in the summer when there was lots of digging there. He referred to the provision of €303,000 for Coroners and asked why the Council is still responsible for the cost of this service. Cllr. Sheahan asked if equipment is still provided to Tidy Towns groups and is the Unit responsible for cleaning up Bottle Banks still in place. The cutting of roadside hedges is still a problem with many hedges overgrown and unsafe. When

landowners who do not cut their hedges are taken to Court they do not get the penalty they deserve and legislation must be amended to address this problem. He commended the Library Service and the Fire Service. He referred to Water Safety and said while Kells Beach has a Blue Flag there are no lifeguards there.

Cllr. J. Moloney said the problem with tackling litter is with the legislation. If a person is caught dumping rubbish they get a fine and if they pay the €60 fine it does not go to Court. He welcomed plans for the Neo Data building in Listowel. Cllr. Moloney expressed his disappointment at the funding provided for the Arts Budget and the fact that the €5,000 prize for Writers Week is not provided in the Budget.

Cllr. R. Beasley requested an update on the Great Southern Trail from the Limerick border to Listowel.

The Cathaoirleach said for the Spring Clean last year the Council issued people with a permit which allowed them to deposit rubbish collected at the landfill. This facility is now closed and he PROPOSED that a similar system would apply in 2015. He then referred to burial grounds and expressed his disappointment at the lack of progress in resolving the flooding issues at Kilmoyley. After the flooding last winter the Council gave a commitment that something would be done to address this problem. There was a long dry summer which was an ideal opportunity to carry out the works yet nothing was done. He spoke to the engineer who indicated that the works would be done in March and he was concerned and dissatisfied at the lack of progress to-date. The call out charge for the Fire Service is €250 and he was aware of a case where, following an accident, a lady driver walked out of the car and was unaware the Fire Brigade was called. This charge should be reviewed. The Cathaoirleach referred to the Laboratory and asked if there was any concern it would become surplus to requirement with Irish Water centralising the service. He referred to the subvention of €240,000 per annum for the pool in Killarney and asked how many years are remaining in this loan. The subvention of €40,000 for the Ballybunion Leisure Centre represents good value for money. He is involved with KETB and while they support the Tralee Regional Sports Complex the subvention is nowhere near €240,000. There is a need to do a root and branch review of the cost of running the Killarney pool. The Arts Budget is modest for the work they do and the positive impact they have on the county. He asked that any additional funding that becomes available would be allocated to the Arts Department as their funding is lower than other local authorities.

Mr. J. Breen referred to Cllr. D. Healy-Rae's query on the length of time it takes to process a waste permit and said that is the process but he would review it.

In relation to the burial ground in Killarney Mr. Breen said the Council is very close to finalising agreement on it. Mr. Breen referred to the problems with illegal dumping at Bottle Banks and said the Bottle Banks were removed in Gneeveguilla and they will be removed in Milltown. It is a shame some members of the community do this and he asked that any information on who is

responsible for the illegal dumping would be passed on to the Council. He agreed with the views expressed by members in relation to the Spring Clean Campaign. The proposed cycle track at Glenflesk is still ongoing and the issue is to get agreement between the owner and Cycle Ireland. In relation to those caught dumping illegally he said if the fine is paid there is no prosecution. The biggest problem with illegal dumping is there is no way to identify the perpetrator and for this reason the Council needs the co-operation of the local community. Kerry County Council's rates of prosecution are no better or worse than any other local authority. Before a prosecution can be taken evidence is required. Mr. Breen referred to Cllr. O'Connell's comments on the carrying out of a household survey and said the new Waste Regulations require local authorities to do this. With regard to the 1916 commemorations Mr. Breen said he would meet with Cllr. Beasley on this issue in the next few weeks. He added that national plans for the 1916 commemorations are being put in place. Playgrounds are funded from development levies. In relation to the Arts Budget Mr. Breen said it must be borne in mind that the Council does a lot for the arts that is not reflected in the Budget i.e. the site for Siamsa Tíre was provided free of charge by Tralee Town Council. Mr. Breen said Kerry County Council will promote the Purple Flag in Killarney. It is hoped to roll out more self-service in the libraries to free up staff. The 20% grant for facilities in Killarney and Castleisland was provided by the Department of Children and he would avail of any future funding that may become available. Mr. Breen assured members that the Council would fund the Listowel Writers Week prize again in 2015. It will be necessary to put arrangements in place for the Spring Clean in 2015. Mr. Breen referred to the Cathaoirleach's comments in relation to flooding in Kilmoyley and undertook to follow up on it. There is not usually a problem with the call out charge for the Fire Brigade but he undertook to review it. The work of the Laboratory will be accredited to allow the Council to be in a position to offer any services required.

Ms. McAllen said the loan for the Killarney Pool was taken out in January 2008 and it was for €3.5m over 15 years. There is a balance of €2m still outstanding on this loan and it will expire in 2023.

Cllr. A. Thornton asked if a contribution for the Killarney Pool is received from any other body.

Ms. McAllen said a capital grant was received for the Pool and this was Kerry County Council's contribution. She referred members to Pages 125 and 126 of the Chief Executive's report for details on the maintenance and operation of Corporate Buildings and said this provision is for all Corporate Buildings and includes cleaning, salaries, rental etc. This area has seen significant cost savings on contracts and efficiencies. Rental income of €98,000 includes income for Killorglin, Caherciveen, Sara Lee, Ashe Memorial Hall and Irish Water has taken some offices in Castleisland. The costs associated with the File Store in Monavalley are mostly wages. Ms. McAllen referred members to Page 126 of the Chief Executive's Report for details of the work undertaken by the Facilities Management Unit who manage all corporate buildings. The Property

Management Unit deals with small property valuation issues. A small provision is made in the Budget for coastal protection and she said she tries to make provision for this in the AFS. This work is incredibly expensive and the Council has an unfunded balance of €936,000 for works at Inch. The provision in the Budget is to allow for matching funding if grant aid is provided. All balances have been built into the budget for Fenit Harbour and there are no profits from it. The provision for dredging at Fenit is increased to €100,000 and this will be increased in the AFS if necessary. Ms. McAllen said the provision in the Budget for NPPR does include those entering into agreements in 2015. While there is income from the Transfer Stations Ms. McAllen pointed out the Council is liable for landfill charges of €900,000. Provision is made in the Budget for the new offices in Dingle. A sum of €219,000 is provided for Bring Banks under Environmental Services. An IPB dividend of €250,000 is used to fund the overall cost of €3.7m for insurances for 2015. While a sum of €1.4m was brought forward from Listowel there was also a liability of €800,000. Funds in the Capital Account are provided for a specific programme of works and areas of expenditure as agreed by members. She referred to the Cathaoirleach's query regarding the Laboratory and Irish Water and said this is one of the key risks over the next number of years. However it is intended to put the Lab in a firm position and new IT equipment is being installed so they can compete with any laboratory service. Ms. McAllen referred to the sum of €7.9m provided for irrecoverable rates and said this was reduced significantly with €3m received in settlements and an overall income from rates of €41m. This gives the Council an element of flexibility and allows us to work with rate payers who are in difficulty. This figure was reduced by €700,000 in anticipation of the upturn in the economy. It is also hoped to increase the collection targets. A sum of €4.5m is included for vacant/disused properties and these are historic amounts. She believed if these properties were revalued by the Valuations Office they would be delisted. It will be necessary to look critically at what is on that list and whether some of the properties should be on the list at all. At this point it would not be prudent to change this provision. There is a large list of properties with the Valuations Office and the Local Government Auditor would expect this provision to be made.

The Chief Executive said it will be her priority to target what can be collected in 2015.

Mr. J.D. Flynn said local authorities are liable for Coroners expenses/costs in accordance with the Coroners Act. While a Coroners Bill has been prepared it has not gone through the Houses of the Oireachtas. A Facilities Management Unit was established to manage all council buildings and they were responsible for the refurbishment of the Council Chamber. The new File Store in Monavalley was acquired at an opportune time which allowed all files from the four local authorities to be centralised. It is estimated when all files are centralised there will be 210,000 files and the capacity of the Store is 300,000 files. The Council has rented office accommodation in five locations (1) Manor West, (2) Maine Street, (3) 24 Denny Street, (4) Farrankilla House in Dingle and (5) the former AIB Bank Building in Killarney. It is hoped to vacate the former AIB Bank

Buildings in Killarney when the Town Hall has been refurbished. Substantial reductions were negotiated as the leases were up for renewal. Mr. Flynn referred to the re-organisation project and said this commenced with Government policy 'Putting People First' etc. and the Directorates on Job Creation and Economic Development, Quality of Life etc. stemmed from that. The LEO had to be incorporated into the new structure and for the purpose of the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water staff had to be in one building. For that reason Irish Water was relocated to Castleisland. As a result the top floor of the Motor Tax building was vacant and members had a debate on what services would be located in the County Buildings Campus and what would be in Princes Quay. There had to be one Housing Department. It was decided to move Motor Tax to Princes Quay and that the Housing Department would move to the Motor Tax building. Mr. Flynn undertook to present a full report to Council on the reorganisation when it is completed. The Neo Data building in Listowel, which is a prefab, is not fit for purpose.

Cllr. M. O'Shea expressed his disappointment at the removal of the Bottle Banks in Milltown particularly for those who use it responsibly. He acknowledged that it was abused but said CCTV could have been installed there. He asked that the Bottle Banks would not be removed for a further two weeks and that signs would be erected advising those who use this facility that they will be removed.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald supported the views expressed by Cllr. O'Shea.

Cllr. D. Grady referred to the Pool in Killarney and said it cost €16m and a grant of €5m was received from the Department. If the Pool is closed the Council will have to repay the €5m grant.

Cllr. T. Ferris referred to the Chief Executive's comments on actively pursuing the collection of rates and asked if there will be a move against those who genuinely cannot pay.

The Chief Executive said that would not be the case and in such cases, as has been the tradition, a satisfactory solution will be sought. As the harmonisation of rates will take place over eight years we must improve collection levels where people can afford to pay.

Cllr. G. Spring requested a reply to his query regarding the boundary wall at Kilmore Burial Ground.

Mr. J. Breen said he would make enquiries about this and revert to Cllr. Spring.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae again asked if rates collected in Killarney would be retained there for services.

The Cathaoirleach said that would not happen.

14.11.17.02 Adoption of the Local Authority Budget for the Local Financial Year ending 31st December, 2015

Cllr. T. Ferris said on behalf of the Sinn Féin members she proposed that €1m would be used from the Capital Account to fund the purchase of 20 housing units.

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 31.12.2015 as presented by the Chief Executive and as set out in Tables A,B ad C be and is hereby adopted.

Cllr. J. Sheahan SECONDED this proposal.

The Chief Executive said Cllr. Ferris's proposal was not a valid proposal. The provision of housing is funded by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and it is not within the remit of the Council to fund the building/purchase of houses. In conclusion she said she had a fundamental difficulty with this proposal.

Cllr. Ferris PROPOSED that €1m from the Reserve would be used to repair the 64 vacant housing units. A few months ago members were informed there was in excess of €3m in the Capital Account.

Ms. McAllen said the balance in the Capital Account changes daily and the expenditure funding in that account is for very specific purposes and general funding of €1m for housing is not available. The €3m in the general Revenue Reserve is made up of small surpluses over a long number of years and it is prudent to have a revenue reserve. It is not a cash reserve. In the event that one of our larger rates payers cannot pay in a year that reserve would be gone as expenditure would exceed income. A €3m Revenue Reserve in an organisation of this size is low. We are fortunate this year that NPPR income is available to offset substantial storm damage costs. Without this source of income expenditure would exceed income and we would need this reserve. It is not her intention to exceed the budget and expenditure is monitored carefully weekly and monthly throughout the organisation.

Cllr. Ferris said there is nothing to preclude members from passing her proposal. If the 64 vacant houses were let it would provide an income of €160,000. Most councillors highlighted their concern at the €6m being paid to private landlords. Cllr. Ferris again PROPOSED that €1m from the Reserve would be used to purchase 20 houses.

Cllr. R. Beasley SECONDED this proposal.

The Cathaoirleach said the Head of Finance advised against this course of action but it was a legitimate proposal and he would take a vote on it.

Cllr. J. Finucane said this local authority is obliged to bring in a balanced Budget and if this proposal is accepted the Budget will not be balanced. The Council is obliged to build up reserves that may not be there in a few months time.

The Cathaoirleach said if Cllr. Ferris's proposal is passed there will be less of a reserve but the Budget will still be balanced.

Cllr. S. Locke asked if the Council has a reserve of €3m.

The Chief Executive said over the years there may at times be small provisions made for specific purposes by members. The Capital Account is a snapshot at a particular time and the Council also has significant liabilities. The Council cannot decide at the last minute to take €1m from the Capital Account for this purpose. The Capital Fund is not provided for this type of work and she advised against doing this.

Mr. G. O'Brien said a vote would then be taken on Cllr. Ferris's proposal which was seconded by Cllr. Beasley as follows:

That €1m be taken from the Capital Reserve funds and transferred to Division A for the purposes of refurbishing unoccupied housing stock to allow for their allocation and the €160,000 rent that would generate could be set aside for similar works.

The vote resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Beasley, Daly, Ferris, Nolan **(4)**

Against: Cllrs. Connor-Scarteen, Cronin, Culloty, Finucane, Fitzgerald, Foley, Grady, D. Healy-Rae, Kelleher, Locke, D. McCarthy, P. McCarthy, McEllistrim, Moloney, Moriarty, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Shea, Sheahan, Spring, Thornton, Brassil **(22)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal DEFEATED.

Cllr. J. Finucane again 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 31.12.2015 as presented by the Chief Executive and as set out in Tables A,B ad C be and is hereby adopted.

Cllr. J. Sheahan SECONDED this proposal.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Beasley, Connor-Scateen, Cronin, Culloty, Finucane, Fitzgerald, Foley, Grady, D. Healy-Rae, Kelleher, Locke, D. McCarthy, P. McCarthy, McEllistrim, Moloney, Moriarty, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Shea, Sheahan, Spring, Thornton, Brassil **(24)**

Against: Cllr. Daly, Ferris **(2)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

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

14.11.17.03 Determination of the Annual Rate on Valuation for the Local Financial Year ending 31 December, 2015

The Cathaoirleach said Cllr. Daly had proposed that rates would be harmonised over 5 year at a breakeven point of €77.99.

Cllr. N. Kelleher asked that favourable consideration would be given to granting a discount to ratepayers who pay early.

The Chief Executive agreed to consider this and said the Council always works with our rate payers.

Mr. G. O'Brien said a vote would be taken on Cllr. Daly's proposal which was seconded by Cllr. Ferris as follows:

That we the members of Kerry County Council hereby resolve that rates would be harmonised over a five year period in the lifetime of this Council at €77.99.

The vote resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Beasley, Daly, Ferris, Locke, Nolan **(5)**

Against: Cllrs. Connor-Scarteen, Cronin, Culloty, Finucane, Fitzgerald, Foley, Grady, Kelleher, D. McCarthy, P. McCarthy, McEllistrim, Moloney, Moriarty, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Shea, Sheahan, Spring, Thornton, Brassil **(20)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal DEFEATED.

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 31 December 2015, 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.

TABLE A - CALCULATION OF ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION

Summary by Service Division		Summary per Table A 2015				Estimated Net Expenditure Outturn 2014 (as restated)	
		Expenditure	Income	Budget Net Expenditure 2015			
		€	€	€	%	€	%
Gross Revenue Expenditure & Income							
Housing and Building		21,790,725	21,049,205	741,520	1.3%	359,378	1%
Road Transport & Safety		32,378,339	19,362,246	13,016,093	23.4%	13,002,873	24%
Water Services		15,719,900	14,711,472	1,008,428	1.8%	1,127,966	2%
Development Management		9,504,297	2,266,038	7,238,259	13.0%	6,784,320	12%
Environmental Services		16,480,512	3,486,311	12,994,201	23.4%	13,069,219	24%
Recreation and Amenity		7,809,521	639,517	7,170,004	12.9%	7,299,349	13%
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare		3,830,844	2,950,204	880,640	1.6%	1,023,983	2%
Miscellaneous Services		16,339,940	3,860,685	12,479,254	22.5%	11,631,690	21%
		123,854,078	68,325,678	55,528,399	100%	54,298,778	100%
Provision for Debit Balance							
Adjusted Gross Expenditure & Income	(A)	123,854,078	68,325,678	55,528,399		54,298,778	
Financed by Other Income/Credit Balances							
Provision for Credit Balance							
Local Property Tax / General Purpose Grant			11,659,186	11,659,186			
Pension Related Deduction			2,700,000	2,700,000			

Sub - Total	(B)			14,359,186		54,298,778	
Amount of Rates to be Levied	C=(A-B)			41,169,213			
Base Year Adjustment				662,663			
Amount of Rates to be Levied net of BYA	(D)			41,831,876			
Net Effective Valuation	(E)			527,847			
General Annual Rate on Valuation	D/E			79.25			

Cllr. M. O'Shea SECONDED this proposal.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Connor-Scateen, Cronin, Finucane, Fitzgerald, Foley, Grady, D. McCarthy, P. McCarthy, McEllistrim, Moriarty, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Shea, Sheahan, Spring, Thornton, Brassil **(17)**

Against: Cllr. Beasley, Culloty, Ferris, Kelleher, Locke, Moloney, Nolan **(7)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

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

Harmonisation of rates

Cllr. J. Finucane PROPOSED that Kerry County Council resolve in principle to harmonise the annual rate on valuation in Kerry County Council over 8 years commencing in 2015.

The Cathaoirleach SECONDED this proposal.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Connor-Scateen, Cronin, Culloty, Finucane, Fitzgerald, Foley, Grady, Kelleher, D. McCarthy, P. McCarthy, McEllistrim, Moloney, Moriarty, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Shea, Sheahan, Spring, Thornton, Brassil **(20)**

Against: Cllr. Locke, Nolan **(2)**

Not Voting: Cllrs. Beasley, Ferris **(2)**

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

14.11.17.04 Report on the Capital Programme 2015 – 2017

Cllr. P. McCarthy PROPOSED that the Chief Executive's Report on the Capital Programme 2015 – 2017 as incorporated into the Report on the Budget be noted.

Cllr. T. O'Brien SECONDED this proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

14.11.17.05 Approval of additional Expenditure for 2014

Cllr. J. Moloney PROPOSED that we the members of Kerry County Council resolve that the additional expenditure for 2014 as set out in the Column titled "Estimated Out-Turn 2014 as re-stated" in the Local Authority Budget, as circulated, be and is hereby approved.

Cllr. S. Fitzgerald SECONDED this proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

The meeting concluded at 5.45pm.

Gerard O'Brien

Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council