

These Minutes are edited for Data Protection purposes because in effect putting them on the Internet is publishing them. An unedited paper copy is available on request.

**MIONTUAIRISCÍ CRUINNITHE BHUISÉID COMHAIRLE CHONTAE
CHIARRAÍ, A THIONÓLADH I SEOMRA NA COMHAIRLE, ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE, TRÁ LÍ, DÉ LUAN, 13 EANAIR 2014.**

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, TRALEE ON MONDAY
13TH JANUARY 2014.**

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Cllr.s/Comhairleoirí

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| R. Beasley | J. Brassil | T. Buckley |
| M. Cahill | P. Connor-Scarteen | S. Counihan |
| B. Cronin | J.J. Culloty | T. Ferris |
| J. Finucane | S. Fitzgerald | N. Foley |
| M. Gleeson | M. Griffin | D. Healy-Rae |
| J. Healy-Rae | P. Leahy | P. McCarthy |
| A. McEllistrim | T. O'Brien | B. O'Connell |
| P. O'Donoghue | M. O'Shea | L. Purtill |
| J. Sheahan | G. Wharton Slattery | |

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

| | |
|---|--|
| Mr. T. Curran, County Manager | Ms. A. McAllen, A/Head of Finance |
| Mr. M. McMahon, Dir. Of Planning | Mr. J.D. Flynn, Dir. of Corp. Services |
| Mr. O. Ring, Dir. of Water Serv.& Env. | Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Dir. of Ser. & Nat. Proc. Off. |
| Mr. J. Breen, Dir. of Housing | Mr. G. MacNamara, D/Dir. of Roads |
| Mr. L. Quinlan, SEO Housing | Mr. J. Kennelly, A/SE Water Services |
| Mr. G. O'Brien, Meetings Admin. | Mr. P. O'Shea, A/SEO Finance |
| Ms. J. Foley, AO Water Services | Ms. K. Lynch, AO Finance |
| Mr. B. Looney, Head of IT | Ms. J. Brosnan, AO Housing |
| Ms. K. Curtin, AO Revenue | Mr. L. Brosnan, AO Planning |
| Ms. S. Sheridan, SSO Finance | Mr. P. O'Connor, SSO Finance |
| Ms. C. O'Connor-Galvin, SO Finance | Ms. M. Moriarty, SSO Finance |
| Mr. R. Tangney, ASO Finance | Mr. P. Corkery, Press & Comm. Off. |
| Ms. B. Reidy, SSO Corp. Affairs | Mr. I. Brick, SO Housing |
| Ms. J. Dillane, SO Housing | Ms. E. Weir, CO Housing |
| Ms. M. O'Carroll, CO. Housing | |

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am.

Mayor S. Fitzgerald took the Chair.

Mr. T. Curran, County Manager informed the meeting he has a duty to prepare a balanced Budget for consideration by the members in accordance with Section 102 of the Local Government Act 2001. During 2013 Kerry County Council continued to maintain delivery of its core services that are essential to the functioning of the County. This has played an essential role in the county demonstrating resilience in facing the difficulties that the ongoing economic climate presents. The Council is acutely aware of the impact that our services have on the everyday life of business and communities and this Draft Budget for 2014 seeks to balance the continuation of these services to the greatest extent possible with the available resources.

The Draft Budget 2014 is prepared against an economic climate with predicted modest recovery in growth, however, the availability of credit and the continued recovery in the global economy still remain critical to the Irish economy. This Budget is also prepared mindful of the financial and operational uncertainties and risks inherent with change the scale of which has not been experienced within the local government sector. We must not underestimate the impact of the introduction of Irish Water, the unification of the Town Councils and the introduction of the Local Property Tax on the local government funding model and the way we do our business in the future.

Local Authority financing will radically change in 2014 and this will impact on our finances i.e. the Landfill Levy generates in excess of €3m per year but this must be paid to the Department. Because of the changes to the administration of the Higher Education Grants Scheme we are issuing fewer grants and funding is subsequently down by €2m and this will impact on our cash flow. That is a total of €5m in 2014. An estimate of road grants is included and the figure included for non national roads is down 10% on 2013. These grants could in fact be lower or higher but as it is a contra item it will not adversely affect the Budget. Irish Water has altered the situation and has led to a lot of confusion. The Local Government Fund allocation for 2014 reflects these changes and for the first time we received a county at large allocation of €11,043,837. This is inclusive of the allocation for Tralee, Killarney and Listowel Town Councils. The adjusted allocation for Kerry County Council, therefore, is €9,877,123. This amount is disappointingly less than the amount anticipated.

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. The cost of providing these services will be recouped directly from Irish Water. The cost of payroll and a portion of the Council's central management charge will be recouped from Irish Water and this is reflected within the Draft Budget 2014. It is anticipated that all other expenditure on water services, such as goods and services, will be done through the Irish Water Financial Systems. However, it may be necessary to purchase some goods and services for water/waste water operations through our own financial system, AGRESSO, during 2014 and, subsequently, recoup same from Irish Water. We will be seeking members'

approval for this over-expenditure as it arises as provided for in section 104 of the Local Government Act 2001, as is usual. Considerable financial and operational uncertainties remain as we embark on our new Service Level Agreement with Irish Water. This local authority could face very significant financial and operational risks if the Service Level Agreement as currently agreed and with underlying assumptions made are not honoured in full by Irish Water.

The Budget for Water Services includes the cost of salaries, wages and the Central Management Charge and this totals €12.1m. This is a contra item but the real issue is that we will continue to deliver water services to the people of Kerry. General goods and services are charged directly to Irish Water and this creates confusion with overall expenditure levels in the Budget. The spending on Water Services in 2014 is the same as 2013 but it does not appear on our books. There was a problem with the Local Government Fund allocation prior to Christmas and both he and the Head of Finance had an urgent meeting with the Department and this resulted in an increased allocation from €6m to €11m. The Local Government Fund is not broken down between the services and the allocation is reduced as the cost of delivering domestic water is met by Irish Water. The Department say that broadly speaking our allocation is the same as last year but he did not agree. He sought €11.5m but got €11m.

Unification of Kerry Local Authorities

Budget 2014 is completed for a full year on the basis of the current structure of local authorities in the county, i.e. Kerry County Council Draft Budget 2014 reflects a full years budget allocation for income and expenditure, likewise Tralee, Killarney and Listowel Town Councils draft budgets also reflect a full years income and expenditure allocation. Upon unification in 2014 the financial and management accounts of all Kerry local authorities will be combined under the merger approach to accounting. It is critical that full year provision is made within all budgets to ensure continuity of services post unification.

Impact of the Local Property Tax

Under the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012, commencing in 2014 the Minister for Finance will pay into the Local Government Fund an amount equivalent to the Local Property Tax paid during that year. This revenue is then allocated to local authorities through the LGF General Purpose Grant Allocation. The Government has indicated an intention to move to 80% retention of all local property tax receipts within the local authority area where the tax is raised. It should be noted that the proposed 80/20 split would result in a shortfall to the County of €7.7m approx. This does not include an additional €4m approx. shortfall caused by the cessation of the NPPR. It is felt that a 60/40 split would be a more equitable split for rural counties, to enable a greater share-out of the local property tax receipts.

Current Financial Update & Looking forward to 2014

It is anticipated at this stage of the year that this Council will achieve a balanced Budget for 2013. This is achieved through continuing implementation of strict budgetary and debtor controls. This strict budgetary and debtor control will continue into 2014, cognisant of the challenges facing us by the significant change outlined above.

The Draft Budget 2014 provides for expenditure of €98,775,340 resulting in a reduction of approx. 16% on the 2013 projected out-turn, allowing for a 10% reduction in road grant allocations in 2014 and reflects the Service Level Agreement for Irish Water. 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:-

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Division Income | €49.418m |
| • Rates | €21.050m |
| • Local Government Fund | € 9.877m |
| • Town Council share-out of charges | € 6.330m |
| • Irish Water recoupment | €12.100m |
| <u>Total</u> | €98.775m |

The explanatory memorandum gives the background and full details of the various Budget figures.

Charge on Non-Principal Private Residences

The charge on Non-Principal Private Residences, which was introduced in 2009, will be discontinued in 2013. In the 5 years since the introduction of this charge, a total of €17.8m has been collected countywide in respect of NPPR properties in Kerry. There are, at present, 15,900 properties registered in Kerry. Kerry County Council has responsibility for collection of this charge for the Town Council areas. The Council has, over the last number of years, been actively pursuing unpaid charges in this area.

It is felt at this stage that there is scope for the Council to collect additional monies in respect of properties who have yet failed to register and pay the NPPR charge and late fees for some or all of the years between 2009 and 2013. To this end, it has been decided that staff resources will remain in place for the 2014 year to pursue arrears in this area. It is proposed to initiate legal proceedings in a number of cases where the NPPR charge has not been paid. A provision of €0.525m has been made in the Draft Budget as a projected income from this source in 2014.

Staffing

There has been a reduction in excess of 300 staff from the peak staffing numbers of June 2008 to November 2013. This figure is likely to increase further reflecting the departure of staff approved under the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme and the further likely retirements under the provisions of the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act, 2013 (effective until 31 August 2014). It should be noted that the working week for staff has increased from 35 hours to 37 hours, a substantial reduction in annual leave has been imposed and staff workload has increased to ensure services are continued with a reduced staffing level. The Council has commenced a full manpower planning review, this is a complex undertaking given the ongoing uncertainty in a number of significant areas, e.g. Town Councils and Water Services.

Commercial Rates & Commercial Water

A Forfas Report produced in 2011 states that Rates generally account for a relatively small proportion of total business costs for many businesses. For small businesses it accounts for 1 – 9% of employment costs. The Crowe Horwath Report stated that “Electricity, oil, gas have greatest impact on cost base of small hotels”. The Manager pointed out that the cost of LPG has increased by 30% since 2009 with diesel up by 47% since 2009 yet rates have not increased during that period. In Kerry over 50% of Ratepayers pay less than €2,000 per annum while 25% pay less than €1,000 with 10% paying between €100 and €200. The Council's water/waste water pumping costs have increased by 47% for the smaller loads since 2009 with a 24% increase for the larger plants. The Council services fulfill essential needs in the economic and social life of the county and the Council needs funding to provide them. So, on this basis and for the reasons mentioned, he was not proposing any increase -for the fifth consecutive year- in the Annual Rate on Valuation for the coming year.

This Budget was framed in the context of a distinct lack of buoyancy in the 2014 income, due in part to the fact that the Valuation Office has failed to value new commercial properties in recent years despite numerous representations from this Council. Unfortunately, no new valuations are forthcoming. This has resulted in a lost of income for the Council of approx. €300,000 per annum. We will continue to pursue this critical matter with vigour during 2014. Some businesses are rate free and are competing with other businesses who must pay rates and that is not fair.

The Council, while making all efforts to optimise collections, will continue to review the position of businesses on a case-by-case basis particularly those experiencing difficulties due to the current economic climate, subject to the submission of required documentation. Payments plans have been agreed with many businesses. A distinction, however, needs to be made between those businesses who have genuine trading difficulties and those apparently unwilling to pay. The latter businesses will be pursued through the appropriate channels.

The Manager pointed out if we do not realise our income targets we cannot deliver the services.

Irish Water will have the power to set non-domestic and other water services charges. Irish Water has confirmed that the current water services charges will continue to apply until further notice.

Cost Savings

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 April 2012 to 31st December 2012, indicates savings (excluding Payroll) of €6.623m. The Draft County Development Plan was prepared in-house as we now have the expertise while other local authorities use external services.

Better value in all our procurement practices remains a key senior management imperative across all our services and will be further targeted during the coming year. Cost savings have been achieved in a range of our purchases/contracts such as plant hire, trade services, civil works, road making materials, telecommunications, advertising, energy, general goods and services, general construction and trade services. It is his 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. This Council continues to host procurement initiatives on a shared service basis on behalf of 33 other local authorities for 2014. Draft Budget 2014 reflects the income and expenditure arising from this initiative.

The members have made various provisions from Revenue to Capital over a number of years. These provisions are ringfenced for specific areas of expenditure. Without these provisions balancing of Draft Budget 2014 would not be possible. Draft Budget 2014 is supported by these provisions and income generated in the Capital account including Housing Internal Capital Receipts to the value of €2.7m. Details of capital to revenue transfers are reflected in this report within each Division review.

Revenue Budget 2014 – Main Service Features

- **Housing and Building**

A sum of €650,000 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.

The Draft Budget 2014 contains an allocation of €1.697m for the Housing Adaptation and Aids for the Elderly Grants Schemes subject to grant-aid of €1.358m (80%) from DoECLG. This requires a local contribution of €0.339m.

This Council has an extensive portfolio of land for the construction of housing. Due to new Government policy it is unlikely that any new social housing will be constructed in the foreseeable future. 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, this Council has consulted directly with the HFA and negotiated a 5-year interest only payment option for matured land loans. The impact on the revenue Budget 2014 is €302k expenditure taking account of all factors in relation to this issue.

This Council is liable in 2014 for €201,510 approx. for the Local Property Tax in respect of Local Authority Housing and given the pressures on income and expenditure in balancing this Budget he had included recovery of this sum through housing rents at a nominal sum of €2 per week for 45 weeks from tenants. However, members had a major difficulty with this proposal so he considered other ways to fund this amount that would not impact on the Revenue Budget. He suggested the following minor amendments.

- (1) Income from Housing Rents to be reduced by €201,510. There is a capital fund for house improvements that was not required as grants were received from SEAI. €100,000 can be offset against the LPT expenditure.
- (2) Over the years plots of land were sold and the proceeds ring fenced in the capital account. He suggested that €101,510 of this would be used to meet the balance due for LPT. However, he pointed out with the amalgamation of the Kerry local authorities we will have housing stock in excess of 4,000 houses in 2015 and he would not be in a position to fund LPT on local authority houses in 2015. He added there will be a national review of housing rents in 2014 and added that his suggestion is a reasonable alternative which will not burden local authority tenants and will not impact on services.

- **Road Transport and Safety**

The Draft Budget 2014 figures for the Roads Grants Schemes are prepared on the national road allocations 2014 which were recently advised to the Council. The remainder of the Budget has been prepared on an anticipated reduction of 10% in the level of grant funding. The Roadworks Programme when presented in early 2014 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 provided with a marginal reduction on the 2013 figure. In addition, an own resource provision has been included for road design costs previously provided from NRA grant funding.

- **Water Services**

Irish Water will, under a Service Level Agreement with Kerry County Council assume responsibility and funding of water services.

- **Development Management**

The Draft County Development Plan (2015-2021) will go on public display during January 2014 for a period of 10 weeks. The purpose of this phase of the review process is to set out an overall strategy for the development of the county and to decide the broad policy structure to be contained in the Draft Development Plan, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. The formal review process will entail periods of public consultation, a minimum of 3 special planning meetings where the draft will be considered by the Elected Members, publication of the Draft Plan, report on any submissions, material amendments and, finally, the adoption of the new plan in early 2015.

The Draft Budget 2014 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 have short and long-term benefits.

In recognition of the special need at this time to support local initiatives in the tourism/economic development fields during the year, an allocation of €100k is included under this Division's Draft Budget figures. The Council is working closely with Fáilte Ireland and the Development Partnerships to make optimum use of funds in this area. Budget 2014 contains a new income heading in this area - Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the costs of the current County Enterprise Board staff will be funded here by Enterprise Ireland. These staff will form the new local enterprise office situated within the local authority structure that will focus on maximising the effectiveness of Kerry Local Authorities in enterprise support and economic development particularly to small and micro businesses across the county. This new Local Enterprise Office will be strengthened by the allocation of additional staff, creating a one-stop shop for all new and existing business contacts.

- **Environmental Services**

From a technical and financial perspective, as discussed at a recent Council meeting, it has become difficult to operate the North Kerry Landfill within the revised biodegradable requirements. In 2014 in order to allow for an orderly transition from the current situation the North Kerry Landfill will remain open for Kerry Local Authority and public waste only.

The Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems National Inspection Plan was published in 2013. Kerry County Council is required to carry out a minimum of 57 inspections. These commenced in December 2013.

Selection of the properties to be inspected is an environmental risk-based process and emphasis is placed on unregistered properties. A dedicated unit has been set up to ensure that all Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems are registered in the current county database systems and will actively pursue all non-registered units.

- **Library Services**

In recognition of the extensive use of our library services a special effort is made in the Draft Budget to support the book fund. The allocation provided is €270,000. Kerry Libraries aim to continue to get the best value from its annual book fund by working with local and national suppliers.

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 2014-2016 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.

Development Contributions

A statement regarding the amount of Development Contributions on hands, the estimated income expected for 2014 and an indicative statement of the proposed application of the funding available is included at Schedule 2 at the end of the Budget Explanatory Memorandum. The current economic climate has led to a very sharp decline in our receipts from this source and the coming year is expected to show a continuing sharp downturn.

Acknowledgements

The Manager expressed his appreciation and thanks to the Mayor, Cllr. Seamus Fitzgerald; to Cllr. Terry O'Brien, the previous Mayor, and to the Members of the Council for their support, co-operation and application during the past year. He also thanked the Corporate Policy Group and the Strategic Policy Committees for their work over the past twelve months.

The Manager paid tribute to the staff and management of all the Council's services for their work. This Draft Budget 2014 represents a sixth year of contracting resources, despite this, every effort is being made by our staff to support the ongoing development of the Kerry economy. In the year past staff have been flexible in adapting to the changing work environment and trying to ensure the maintenance of quality services with limited resources. The coming year will be more challenging and he looked forward to the commitment of all to doing the best we can for the benefit of the county.

The Government has embarked on a significant local government programme. This programme is driven by a number of policy documents, initiatives and reports. This will require a re-organisation of the Council in activities as presented at a recent Council meeting.

He believed that this initiative will ensure that Kerry Local Authorities will respond to the many challenges facing us in 2014, embracing the forthcoming change in an effective, positive and pro-active manner.

He also thanked Angela McAllen, Head of Finance, and all the staff of the Finance Department for their hard work and diligence in preparing a balanced Budget.

The Manager also recorded his appreciation to each of the Directors of Service and their staff for their essential work in the detailed budgeting process.

In conclusion the Manager recommended the Budget for adoption.

Ms. A. McAllen said she presented a balanced Budget for 2014. The Manager has covered the main issues that we faced in balancing this Budget and outlined some issues that may well face us in the future. She believed that this is a realistic Budget which is pragmatic and takes cognisance of the economic environment. The Council continues to operate within budget and it is very conscious of its impact on the local economy. The inclusion of the actual allocation of our Local Government Fund notified in late December goes some way towards ensuring a level of certainty within the income figures. The structure of the Local Government Fund has changed for 2014 and will change further in 2015. We will endeavour to ensure that we maximise not only this vital source of funding, but all income whether local or grant aid. This Council has continued to maintain its strong financial standing and manage its resource base effectively. We have put in place prudent expenditure and debtor controls so as to sustain our financial capacity to deliver core essential statutory services to the residents and visitors to the county. The management controls and measures put in place have limited the impact of the economic downturn on the delivery of services. This strong financial base, from which we operate, will be further strengthened by Budget 2014. We will continue to actively control our budget, maximise revenue and achieve better value for money as we go forward so as to sustain our overall strong financial position. This is essential as we continue to operate in this difficult economic climate. We are also reliant on transfers from Capital to support this revenue Budget. These transfers are possible through prudent financial management by both members and budget holders and totalled €2.7 million in this Budget.

Ms. McAllen then referred members to the top of Page 12 for details of Revenue Expenditure. The expenditure proposed amounts to €98,775,340 – representing a reduction of approximately 15.78% on the 2013 projected outturn figure. The diagram on Page 12 shows the distribution of the proposed expenditure amongst the divisions for 2014. The combined expenditure of the Divisions titled Housing

and Building, Road Transport, Water Services and Environmental Services accounts for 74% of the Council's overall Revenue Budget in 2014. The Graph on Page 13 indicates the breakdown of our expenditure of €98m. This Graph clearly indicates the portion of overall spend on non-discretionary categories, such as payroll, recoupable and contra payments, loan charges, energy and insurances, has increased to 69% leaving very little, if any, scope for further reductions in expenditure. Maintenance of our income streams will be critical in 2014. The income Graph on Page 14 illustrates our continuing reliance on Central Government for 37% or €36.4 million of our funding i.e. State Grants and Local Government Fund allocation and our increasing reliance on locally sourced income – 51% or €50.1m. She has, where realistic, increased collection targets for staff. The Graph also reflects income from recouped expenditure from Irish Water.

Provision of €21.050m income from Commercial Rates is included in the Budget. Commercial Rates are an extremely important local income and continue to be the biggest source of revenue over which the Council has control. They account for 21% of the funds required to deliver all of the Council's Revenue Services in 2014. The Budget for 2014 has been balanced on the basis of an Annual Rate on Valuation of €80.35. This is the fifth consecutive year in which there has been no increase in the commercial rate level on businesses. No increase in this area is proposed for 2014. 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 2013 year has again proved most challenging for the collection of Rates as well as our other major income accounts. This is reflected in the substantial amount of legal proceedings in this area, with some 76 cases brought to Court for non-payment in 2013 and with more expected to follow in early 2014. 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. Collection level projections are the basis for the budget of €21.05m in 2014.

The revision of valuations in 2013 by the Commissioner of Valuation resulted in a marginal decrease in the commercial rateable valuation. This is the second consecutive year which showed a decrease in this area. The distinct lack of buoyancy in this area is due in part to the failure of the Valuation Office to value new commercial properties despite representations. We will continue to pursue this critical matter in 2014.

Considerable emphasis will, therefore, be required in the area of collections, including arrears during 2014 and it is proposed that additional staff will be allocated to this area in conjunction with the unification of the Town Councils. Included in this amount is the provision for irrecoverable rates of €2.975m in accordance with Department Guidelines. The provision for irrecoverable rates is in respect of vacant properties and settlements for businesses in financial difficulty. This is covered in more detail in Division H.

Provision of €6.330m is made for County Charges. This represents a marginal decrease on the 2013 charges and represents a full year's provision. This follows on from previous reductions in the past three years.

A sum of €12.1m is included as income from Irish Water. Income reflected here represents the recoupment of Water Services related payroll and net Central Management Charges recoupable from Irish Water under relevant expenditure headings in the Water Services Division budget for 2014, as outlined in the Water Services chapter in this document. Any additional income in this area will be further recoupment of expenditure going through our own financial management system.

Provision of an income of €5.176m is made from Housing Rents but this figure will reduce slightly to €4,974,990 if the Manager's suggestion in relation to LPT is adopted. This sum represents the income expected from the tenants of the Council's housing stock. Collection levels in this area continued to remain satisfactory throughout 2013. As in 2013, the provision for income in the Draft Budget has been increased. This increase reflects the continuing emphasis on collections and arrears outstanding. This amount does not include payments under the RAS Scheme.

Ms. McAllen informed members that income of €740,000 is provided for in the Budget and 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. The Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) implemented by the DoECLG and effective from 01/10/2012, gives guidance to local authorities on a structured means for dealing with accounts in arrears, and particularly in ensuring that there is a consistent approach across all local authorities. This process is being implemented in Kerry County Council.

Presently, of the total 538 loans in Kerry County Council, the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process is used by 43 of our customers.

Income of €525,000 is included from NPPR. 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. In addition, in the years 2012 and 2013 alone, a sum of €1.5m has been collected in respect of outstanding arrears.

It is felt at this stage that there is scope for the Council to collect additional monies in respect of properties who have yet failed to register and pay the NPPR charge and late fees for some or all of the years between 2009 and 2013. To this end, it has been decided that staff resources will remain in place for the 2014 year to pursue arrears in this area. It is proposed to initiate legal proceedings in a number of cases where the NPPR charge has not been paid. A provision of €525,000 has been made in the Draft Budget as a projected income from this source in 2014. Revenue from this area supplements our reduced Local Government Fund and reflects some contribution by second homeowners in the County to the upkeep of essential services such as Roads, Environmental Protection, Amenities, etc. Payment can be made using the online facility at www.nppr.ie or over the counter at Kerry County Council's offices.

A sum of €331,000 is provided for in the Budget for income from Planning Application Fees/Charges while a provision of €221,000 is included as income for Burial Fees. Income of €183,000 is provided for Fire Safety Certificates, Disability Access Certificates and Inspection Fees. A sum of €322,220 is included for Charges for Attending at Fires.

Provision of €1.609m is made for income for Use of Waste Disposal Sites.

Draft Budget 2014 is prepared on the basis that Muingnaminnane Landfill and the Transfer Stations will remain open for business for Kerry Local Authority and public waste only, and this Draft Budget has, therefore, been prepared on the basis of an estimated 10,960 tonnage intake at landfill which will fill the remaining cell. All existing charges remain at the same rate.

Ms. McAllen said no income will accrue to Kerry Local Authorities for water charges from 01/01/2014. Local authorities will continue to be responsible for non-domestic customer meter reading, management and processing of billing data, invoice fulfillment, collection of customer payments and the management and processing of related non-domestic customer queries. Following the enactment of the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013, Irish Water will have the power to set non-domestic and other water charges from 1st January 2014. Irish Water has reviewed these charges and advised that all water charges currently in place will continue to apply until further notice.

During 2013, non-domestic customers continued to improve their consumption management and this has been reflected in invoices issued. Likewise, the number of leak notices issued to customers – 325, has also decreased. Water consumption, while reducing considerably in previous years, has remained largely the same in 2013.

During 2013, efforts continued to improve our collection performance. Unfortunately, some disconnections of supply have to be carried out from time to time where people, after prolonged warnings, have refused to pay without good grounds. During 2013, some 257 disconnection notices were issued and 37 carried out, resulting from failure to reach a satisfactory resolution. In addition, legal proceedings have been initiated in another 96 cases, resulting in 44 summons issuing. This high level of activity is similar to 2012. A significant effort was required to manage our collections satisfactorily. While as stated above, no income will accrue to the Council in this area in the future, collection activity will continue until further notice in 2014, with a view to maximising income.

Ms. McAllen pointed out that the Capital Programme for all Divisions is at the back of the County Manager's Report. She said that concluded the overview of the Budget and with members' agreement she would proceed to outline Division A Housing and Building.

It was unanimously agreed to proceed to Division A.

Division A Housing and Building

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 23 to 39 of the Manager's Report and Pages 10 to 12 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division. The proposed expenditure of this Division is €15,847,207 which represents 16% of the overall Budget and reflects €825,000 transfers from Capital which includes Internal Capital Receipts of €550,000 to fund Vacant House Maintenance. Exchequer capital funding under the Social Housing Investment Programme 2013 was notified to Kerry County Council on 1st March 2013. As was the case in 2011 and 2012, the DoECLG made one overall allocation covering the four housing authorities in Kerry. Specific to Kerry County Council, a sum of €400,000 was allocated for social housing construction purposes and €270,000 to meet final account commitments in respect of completed voluntary housing projects. In addition, €292,936 was initially allocated towards energy efficiency upgrades to the local authority social housing stock county wide. This was supplemented in the Jobs Stimulus Retrofitting Programme 2013, announced in July 2013, which brought the total DoECLG funding available for energy efficiency to €585,872. Also, a sum of €76,811 was allocated towards adaptations and extensions to our social housing stock countywide.

A call for proposals was received from the DoECLG in July 2013 for a limited number of acquisitions by the Council. We were successful in securing €943,308 to fund the purchase of 6 dwellings to meet existing Part V commitments.

Having regard to the steady decline in exchequer capital funding over the past number of years and the consequent significant reduction in the construction and acquisition of new units, social housing need is increasingly met utilising alternative social housing options i.e. the Rental Accommodation Scheme and the Social Housing Leasing Initiative in line with Government Policy. Significant

resources have been deployed in sourcing suitable properties from private landlords using these options. In addition, the filling of casual vacancies from within our own housing stock and voluntary housing developments continues to be a significant element in meeting social housing need within the county.

Ms. McAllen then referred to the termination of the 1995 Tenant Purchase Scheme and said all sales under the scheme must be completed by the extended date of 30 June 2014 as per Department Circular of 19/12/2013 and no new applications can be accepted under the scheme in accordance with national regulations. All tenants will be fully advised of the decision to terminate the existing scheme and of its terms. The present lack of credit facilities continues to impact on the number of tenants deciding to purchase. Notwithstanding this, 31 sales resulting in proceeds of €1.208m were completed in the period to the October 2013. While not hugely significant in overall numbers, take up is much higher than in other counties. All income from tenant purchase sales is ring fenced for housing improvements works subject to DoECLG approval.

We have been advised by the DoECLG that work is proceeding on the preparation of the General Scheme of a Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. It is expected that the Bill will underpin a new tenant purchase scheme for existing local authority houses. Further details are awaited in this regard.

Maintenance of local authority housing units is made up of two figures €1.003m on for Maintenance/Improvement of local authority Housing Units and €600,000 for repairs to vacant dwellings. For 2014 we have maintained the allocation for Housing Maintenance which reflects improved procurement practices and the reduction in housing stock due to tenancy sales of €1m. For 2014 we have allocated €600,000 for the repair of vacant houses prior to re-let. This allocation includes extensive energy efficiency works which are funded by the DoECLG. This grant funding has been reducing in recent years; however the majority of the older stock requiring energy upgrades is now largely completed. In anticipation of similar funding the total budgeted expenditure for vacant house repairs has been reduced by €50,000 for 2014. Despite this reduction the increased efficiencies through procurement practices will ensure these funds are sufficient to continue the repair and maintenance of vacant dwellings.

Ms McAllen then referred members to Page 28 of the Manager's Report for details of the Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer for which provision of €404,000 is made. This sum is in respect of the administrative cost involved in the employment of investigation officers, and of back up 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 in the allocation of individual tenancies.

Under Section 21 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, the Council was required to prepare, by May 2013, a summary in the prescribed format, of the social housing assessment carried out in its administrative area.

This extensive work entailed assessment of 2,372 applications and a total of 1,478 households were considered to be qualified for social housing support at the end of April 2013. It should be noted that a significant number of qualified applicants are renting privately in appropriate accommodation. Having been deemed qualified by the Housing Department, these are able to avail of rent allowance, pending an alternative social housing option being offered to them.

The Table on Page 29 reflects the outcome of the assessment. In addition to the figures shown for the above assessment, a total of 213 new applications for Social Housing were received in the period January to October 2013. The Government decided on 23rd March, 2012 to approve in principle, the transfer of responsibility for recipients of rent supplement with a long-term housing need from the Department of Social Protection to local authorities, using HAP. On 18 July 2013, the Government approved the introduction of the Housing Assistance Payment. DoECLG is working with the CCMA in relation to the effective implementation of the scheme.

Provision of €540,000 is made for Debt Management and Rent Assessment. The Council offers a variety of payment methods to facilitate and help our tenants and encourages where possible use of the various electronic methods of payments most suited to our tenants circumstances. It is estimated that approximately 87% of our customers regularly use electronic or 'non-cash' payments methods i.e. bill pay, direct debit, standing order, Household budget deductions etc,. We continue to encourage customers, who are not utilising these electronic options to do so where feasible.

We continue to operate our 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, put in place effective measures to address the situation before significant levels of arrears accumulate.

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 2013. We continue to work very closely with the Kerry Money Advice and Budgeting Service (KMABS) in this area.

The average weekly rent is €43 approximately and is calculated in accordance with our Differential Rent Assessment Scheme, which is based on household income. In accordance with the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, proposed national regulations requiring the introduction of a new rent scheme are expected to be made before the end of the year. The proposed new rent scheme based on these regulations is expected to be commenced from the start of 2015 following its adoption by Council.

Provision of €137,000 is made for Housing Estate Management and Tenancy Management. This allocation is for the employment of a Housing Liaison Officer, Tenancy Compliance Officer, running Pre-Tenancy Courses, skills training for tenants, etc. It also includes for the employment of back up administrative staff who advise tenants on a regular basis of their rights and responsibilities with regard to their tenancy agreement and other service support costs. The Tenancy Compliance Officer's main role is to ensure the compliance by tenants with Council policies and procedures in respect of lettings, anti-social behaviour etc and the enforcement of terms of tenancy agreements such as ensuring that tenants keep their dwellings and surrounding areas in good condition and that all occupants are declared to the Council for rent assessment purposes.

Provision of €627,000 is made for Homeless Grants/Other Bodies while €21,000 is provided for the Homeless Service. A Ministerial Directive provides for a regional approach to be taken in the preparation and implementation of Homeless Action Plans nationally. Cork City Council is the lead Local Authority Agency for South West Region. The initiative by the DoECLG, to adopt a regional approach regarding homeless services is seen, generally, as a positive development in that it ensures it will lead to co-operative and co-ordinated practices and protocols to address homelessness in the region.

Provision of €5.226m is made for RAS Operations. It is anticipated that funding will be made available from the DoECLG to continue to operate the scheme in 2014 in respect of the associated costs of ongoing payments to landlords, in respect of existing RAS tenants, and also in respect of new tenancies. It is anticipated that the scheme will continue to be cost neutral in the 2014 Budget. As part of the RAS unit activities each potential RAS property is inspected to determine if it meets the Private Rented Standards Regulations.

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). In the period January to October 2013, 155 new RAS tenancies have commenced (inclusive of 22 existing voluntary housing tenants transferred to RAS).

The Housing Department in Kerry County Council continues to operate the Social Housing Leasing Initiative in its own administrative area only. There are two options for property owners who are considering making their properties available for leasing to Kerry County Council (1) Long-term Lease Arrangements (10 – 20 years) and (2) Availability Arrangements (typically 1 – 10 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. Leases were executed in respect of 37 properties in the period January to October 2013 and allocated to tenants.

Provision of €416,000 is made for Long Term Leasing. Long term leasing is at an early stage in Kerry County Council. Under terms of the scheme, suitable properties can be leased to the local authority for short or long term periods. The leasing cost is recoupable from the DoECLG.

Provision of €943,000 is made for Loan Interest and Other Charges. This sum 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. It includes Mortgage Protection Insurance and the repayments on their loans the cost of which is recovered from the borrowers and is passed on by the Council from the Insurance Company. There is no cost to the Council arising from this insurance.

Ms. McAllen then referred to Land Purchase Service Costs and said it is disappointing that the Department has advised that the Land Aggregation Scheme, announced in April 2010, has now ceased. This was confirmed in the DoECLG circular dated 11/12/2013, which confirms that “the Department will not accept any new submissions for consideration in respect of loans which have matured or are due to mature. Furthermore, any submissions currently under consideration will not be accepted into the Scheme. On that basis, this Council has consulted directly with the HFA and negotiated a 5-year interest only payment option for matured land loans. The impact on the revenue Budget 2014 is €302,000 expenditure taking account of all factors in relation to this issue. In 2014, a sum of €175,000 is being brought into Revenue from Capital to support this cost.

Provision of €1.697m is made for Housing Support Grants. In 2013, a total allocation of €1.697m was approved for these schemes, inclusive of the Local Authority contribution. This is an increase of 17% on the original allocation notified to us earlier in 2013 following extensive representations to the DoECLG by the Council. In previous years, the Council approved putting provisions aside for Housing Support Grants and in 2014 a sum of €100,000 is being brought into Revenue from Capital to support this area. Ms. McAllen said she made provision in the Budget based on best estimate as to what Grant Funding will be available. Should there be an increase in these amounts she gave a commitment to ensure this amount is fully drawn down as has always been done in the past. These schemes are very important both for the recipient for the improvements to their quality of life and for the construction trade in the county as a source of activity. Ms. McAllen said that concluded her overview of Housing and Building.

All members thanked the Manager and Ms. McAllen for their overview of the Budget and Ms. McAllen for her presentation on Housing and Building.

Cllr. J. Finucane complimented the Finance team on their excellent work prior to Christmas when it was evident there was a gap between the funding notified and what was required to balance the Budget. Following meetings with officials of the Department in Dublin this deficit was reduced by €5m and this must be welcomed. He also complimented the Mayor on contacting the Minister’s office in

this regard. There was an acknowledgement that there was an error on behalf of the Department. He understood from his contacts in the Minister's office that the Executive presented a robust argument in favour of an increase in the Local Government Fund allocation. He also commended councillors who put pressure on the Department to rectify this problem. He welcomed the Manager's decision not to impose LPT on local authority tenants. Now that there is some growth in the economy any levy on tenants would be detrimental to them. The County Enterprise Board and the staff of the County Enterprise Department are exemplary. He thought a One-Stop Shop that is accessible to all should be provided as he was concerned that the existing building is not accessible. He welcomed the commitment in the Budget to Housing Grants and said this is important both for the applicants and the construction industry. Cllr. Finucane said this is a realistic, pragmatic Budget which gives the Council a basis to move forward. He accepted the points made by the Manager on the issue of rates and said that rates are portrayed in the media as being the reason businesses are in difficulty.

Cllr. T. O'Brien complimented Ms. McAllen and the staff of the Finance Department on presenting a balanced Budget. He welcomed the Manager's suggestion that would ensure tenants would not be charged LPT. He thanked the Manager for meeting with Party Whips on this issue. Cllr. O'Brien also welcomed the clarity on Irish Water and water services. He complimented the Manager and the Head of Finance on their meeting in Dublin with Department officials in relation to the Local Government Fund allocation and the successful outcome to same. This was a huge oversight by the Department which would have been a calamity for this county.

Cllr. B. Cronin complemented Ms. McAllen and the staff of the Finance Department on the preparation of the Budget. He commended the Manager and Ms. McAllen on resolving the issues surrounding the Local Government Fund allocation. Overall the Budget is down €2m. He referred to the Housing budget and asked if the Council will build houses in 2014. He welcomed the fact that this is the fifth year there would be no increase in rates and said this is very important for the business people of the County. He asked will the County rate apply for the three urban areas following the abolition of the Town Councils. There is a substantial variation between the rates in Killarney and Kerry County Council. He welcomed the fact that the County Development Plan was prepared in-house without the use of outside consultants. This is particularly important in light of the recent revelations in relation to Irish Water and their expenditure on consultants. The Mid Kerry Water Supply Scheme is an ongoing problem and the people of this area are angry and frustrated at the ongoing interruptions to supply. Irish Water spent €50m on consultants yet no funding is available to replace this water mains. Councillors are elected to represent these people and he was concerned about the future of water services. Householders have not yet been informed how much water charges will be. On behalf of the people of Mid Kerry Cllr. Cronin PROPOSED that this Council would seek legislation to ensure Irish Water is subject to FOI legislation and is accountable to the people for expenditure.

Cllr. M Gleeson **SECONDED** this proposal.

Cllr. M. Cahill acknowledged the work of the staff in the Finance Department in preparing the Budget. He expressed concern at the implications of setting up Irish Water and said that he hoped the Service Level Agreement with local authorities will work out. People in the Mid-Kerry area are outraged when they see the amount of money being squandered by Irish Water yet they do not have continuity of supply. This is a national disgrace. Cllr. Cahill referred to the Local Property Tax and asked how much of the tax collected in relation to the first six months of 2013 did Kerry County Council receive. Because of the establishment of Irish Water we will not get the money collected in 2014 until 2015. Cllr. Cahill then referred to the Housing programme and asked how many single rural properties are vacant that will never be used again. He asked if they could be sold to fund Housing Grants. He expressed concern that because of the unification process Kerry County Council will have almost 5000 applicants on the housing waiting list yet in 2013 very few houses were provided. There is a need to build houses and also to purchase houses. At present there is great value in the property market and he asked that a submission would be made to Government to allow local authorities to purchase houses on the open market while such good value is available. He also asked that a request would be forwarded to the Minister for Environment to introduce a new Tenant Purchase Scheme.

Cllr. Cahill expressed disappointment that funding was not provided in relation to the recent storms damage. He asked that members would be given a detailed breakdown of the submission made to the Department for funding. Kerry County Council is not in a position to make a 25% contribution for coastal protection works and the Department should provide 100%. Cllr. Cahill said it would probably be necessary to revisit the submission made to Government arising from further damage by storms over the weekend. He requested that 'Danger' signs would be put in place in Rossbeigh immediately as the dunes are unstable and dangerous.

Cllr. D. Healy Rae thanked the Manager and the Head of Finance for the excellent work done prior to Christmas to secure our rightful allocation from the Local Government Fund. He fully appreciated their efforts. He welcomed the Budget report and referred to the Mid-Kerry Water Supply Scheme where there were many interruptions to supplies throughout 2013. Killorglin town has been without water for a few days and it will not be restored until later that evening. This is happening all too often and the entire scheme is totally obsolete. It is frustrating that €50m was spent by Irish Water on consultants while no funding was provided for new schemes. Irish Water is stonewalling the Government and in the past he asked the Minister to ensure they are answerable to him but this is not the case. He asked what satisfaction members would get when they request that works would be done in the future. He believed they would not get any satisfaction at all. He expressed his disappointment that there is no Specific Improvement Scheme funding for local roads in 2014 in particular for the

Bealnadeega road. Cllr Healy Rae said that he was glad the Land Aggregation Scheme was suspended as he did not want to give up land as it will be needed in the future. He was aware of houses in housing estates that would be sold for as little as €50,000 and this gives local authorities an excellent opportunity to acquire houses. He called on the Executive to apply to Government for funding to acquire such houses. In the past he requested that we would renegotiate our loans and he welcomed progress in this area. Cllr. Healy Rae then referred to the Local Property Tax and said in the past Management informed members if the Council did not collect the Household Charge the Local Government Fund would be reduced. Kerry had one of the highest collections from the Household Charge and it was sad to see the Manager and the Head of Finance having to go to Dublin to secure an additional allocation. He then referred to the Fire Service and said many services are being centralised in Dublin and he was concerned that this would also happen in relation to the Fire Service. With the services that have been centralised when you phone Dublin they do not know the location you are speaking about in rural Kerry. In one instance the Gardaí had to go looking for a fire brigade that was summonsed and the people themselves put out the fire before the fire brigade arrived. Cllr. Healy Rae asked how many vacant houses will be repaired with the allocation provided in the Budget. He referred to vacant houses and said they should not be sold unless they are not accessible or are derelict as there are so many people in need of housing in the county. Cllr. Healy Rae referred to the RAS Scheme and said unfortunately an applicant cannot be considered unless there are on Rent Allowance for 18 months. This criteria is impractical and many people, including lone parents in particular in Killarney, find that rents have increased by about €120 per month.

Cllr. T. Ferris said the Manager spoke on commercial rates and said that Kerry County Council has a social remit. By leaving rates the same as last year indicates that the Council has indeed a social remit. She concurred with the comments made by the Manager in relation to rent on commercial properties. She expressed concern about Irish Water as they will decide the rate of commercial water charges in future and Kerry County Council will have no say. She referred to the Manager's suggestion in relation to the Local Property Tax provision for council houses and said she greatly appreciated his suggestion and she made a similar proposal last May. However on that occasion no member seconded her proposal. Fortunately the Manager found a way to ensure that a person who doesn't own a property will not now have to pay the Local Property Tax. However the Manager mentioned that his proposal relates to 2014 only but she pointed out it is likely there will also be a rent increase next year. She was aware of a couple who have two children and the man previously worked in construction but is now unemployed while his partner is on a low income. However their rent is €60 per week and at present there are barely managing. To rent a private house would cost just €40 per week extra but the landlord would be responsible for the maintenance of the property. If the rent increases by 7% next year and they will also have to pay Property Tax it could be the difference between being able to afford to allow their child to do swimming lessons or not. If someone proposed that she had to pay someone else's income tax it would be

considered preposterous yet members have no difficulty with a tenant paying LPT despite the fact they do not own the house. In conclusion Cllr. Ferris asked in 2015 due to the reduced level of staffing will there be a delay in upgrading houses bearing in mind the recent Court case.

Mr. J. Breen said that case is under review.

Cllr. Ferris referred to the Tenant Purchase Scheme which was extended to 2014 only for those who had applied by the end of 2012. Since 2012 tenants who want to purchase their homes cannot do so as there is no scheme in place. Members were informed that a new scheme was imminent but it has not issued by the Department. Cllr. Ferris referred to the Land Aggregation Scheme and said it is unfortunate the Council did not renegotiate the terms of housing loans until this scheme was suspended. She asked that the Town Councils would follow the example of Kerry County Council and not charge tenants LPT. Cllr. Ferris expressed concern that a sum of €0.5m is being provided to pursue the collection of NPPR. Many people had to emigrate and they were unaware of this charge. The penalties being applied are excessive and she had a conflict of conscience if a sum of €0.5m is provided to impose hardship on homeowners.

Cllr. Ferris then referred to Irish Water and asked if it is appropriate for the Council to pass the Budget and recoup money from Irish Water without having a Service Level Agreement in place. There was a lot of controversy recently in relation to expenditure of €50m by Irish Water on outside consultants despite the fact that there is huge expertise in local authorities on water services. Minister Hogan has shown contempt for local authorities by not meeting with them. Cllr. Ferris expressed concern at the reduction in the Budget for Homeless Services. In conclusion Cllr. Ferris said members are being asked to adopt a Budget to provide for services some of which will be billed to a Company without knowing how much is involved.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty expressed concern at the 10% cut in the Road Maintenance Budget which will have a big impact on roads around the county. He also expressed disappointment at the reduction in the 'own resources' provision. It is disappointing to note that funding has not been provided for Minor Works as this can make a big difference. If roads are maintained it saves money in the long term. He welcomed the fact that there will be no increase in rates. He acknowledged the assistance given to those who cannot afford to pay their rates and he expressed his disappointment at the suspension of the Land Aggregation Scheme. He called for additional funding for the housing support grants and said a reduction of 40% is huge. There is huge pressure on staff to decide who is awarded grants. He called on the Government to apply for funding under the European Solidarity Fund to fund the repairs necessary following the recent storms.

Cllr. M. Gleeson said Killarney Town Council would consider its Budget the following Wednesday and the people of Killarney are concerned that the rate in the pound in Killarney is €70 while it is €80 in the county. This is a huge gap.

Killarney Town Council will determine on Wednesday night what will happen in relation to the Local Property Tax and council tenants. Irish Water paid €50m recently to consultants and some of these consultants were at the heart of economic life when it imploded. Some are now advisers to the Government and that is deplorable. People who do not perform satisfactorily in their jobs should face the consequences. The division of the proceeds from Local Property Tax on an 80/20 split as against 60/40 split brings up the east coast/west coast syndrome. He asked that a decision on the breakdown of the percentage of LPT to be retained by local authorities would be deferred until 2015. The west coast counties have suffered hugely and while he appreciated the point made in relation to NPPR he pointed out that the vast majority of people can pay. However he asked that those in an invidious situation would be facilitated. All local authorities will need land for building in time and it was misleading of the Government to renege on their commitment in relation to the Land Aggregation Scheme. Cllr. Gleeson complimented all rate payers who make a genuine effort to pay rates and said they are treated fairly by the Council. However those who do not pay or do not engage with the Council should be pursued vigorously. He called on the Minister for Environment to introduce a new Tenant Purchase Scheme forthwith. He expressed disappointment at the reduction in funding for Housing Grant Schemes in 2014. The positive change to people's lives that benefit from these grants is incredible. There are a number of stair lifts acquired under these grant schemes that are no longer in use and he asked, where possible, that they would be reused. In conclusion Cllr. Gleeson asked how many traveller accommodation units are vacant at present.

Cllr. S. Counihan condemned the present Minister for abolishing Town Councils. He welcomed the Manager's suggestion in relation to finding the cost of LPT which it was proposed to levy on local authority tenants. He was concerned that tenants would be brought into this net. The road network around the county is deteriorating and this must be addressed. Houses can now be purchased on the open market for as little as €50,000 and he called on the Manager to apply to the Department for funding to purchase them. Cllr. Counihan said a hotel in Killarney can be liable for rates and water charges while a neighbouring premises is only liable for water charges. This is unfair. He asked what charges will be levied when Irish Water take over responsibility for water services.

Cllr. J Brassil said he wished to be associated with compliments paid to Ms. McAllen and the staff of the Finance Department. He complimented the Manager on presenting a balanced Budget and said unfortunately the figures are embarrassing as members are being asked to adopt a Budget of €98m with €50m of this to be spent on salaries. When the present Government came into power they gave assurances that they would make local government more meaningful yet they were responsible for the abolition of Town Councils and reducing the number of elected members. Local authorities are not being given more power when their Budgets are slashed and they are not given an opportunity to raise further income. The present Government established Irish Water and domestic water charges are about to be introduced. While local

authorities will act as agents for Irish Water they will no longer have control over water services. This is also likely to happen with regard to waste management and NRA roads. He asked what is the purpose of having councillors when their role has been reduced. The option is to adopt a Budget or be abolished. He referred to the provision in the Budget for NPPR and said he also had difficulty allocating €0.5m for the collection of this charge. If a landowner has deliberately avoided paying the charge they should be penalised. However other property owners were unaware of it and it is unfair that they should have to pay such ridiculous penalties. He called on the Council to be reasonable with them. This is known as the second home charge however many people are not living in their homes for economic reasons and they are not aware of their liability for this charge. Cllr. Brassil then referred to the Land Aggregation Scheme and said when that debate was ongoing he suggested that our loans should be renegotiated. It was only when the circular issued from the Department stating that this Scheme was suspended that the Head of Finance renegotiated these housing loans. All loans held by this local authority should now be renegotiated in an effort to achieve savings. It is incredible at the present time that a Tenant Purchase Scheme is not in place to allow tenants purchase their local authority homes. There has not been a Scheme for a considerable period of time and he called on the Minister to introduce a new Tenant Purchase Scheme immediately. He asked if there is any provision in the Budget for the building of rural houses. A few commenced last year and there are just a few remaining that had gone through the Part VIII process. He asked if a local authority tenant requires an extension or renovation of their house is the funding available. He welcomed the decision by the Manager not to charge tenants Local Property Tax. It is unreasonable to expect a tenant to pay LPT on a property they do not own. He called on all councillors to request the Minister to review the proposal that tenants would be liable for Local Property Tax.

Cllr. N. Foley acknowledged the work done by the Manager and Ms. McAllen and her team in preparing a balanced Budget. She welcomed the fact that there would be no increase in rates in 2014 and she acknowledged the Manager's statement in relation to the amount of rates paid by various categories etc. 56% of ratepayers pay less than €2000 etc. The overall Budget is down in 2014 and this will have an impact on all divisions. She expressed concern in relation to the €50m spent by Irish Water on consultants. She **SECONDED** the proposal that Irish Water should be subject to FOI and she asked that information would be freely available from them. Local authority staff have a wealth of experience in water services and she **PROPOSED**, on the grounds of our excellent record in providing water services through the years, that a letter would issue to the Minister proposing Kerry County Council as consultants to Irish Water. Kerry County Council has the talent, expertise and experience to do this work.

Cllr. T. O'Brien **SECONDED** this proposal.

Cllr. Foley acknowledged the superb work carried out daily by the staff of the Housing Department and she said there is great credit due to them. There is a long-standing culture in Ireland where people want to own their own homes and there is a higher uptake in Kerry of Tenant Purchase Schemes than in any other county. It is a disgrace that there is no Tenant Purchase Scheme in place at the present time and she called for the introduction of a new scheme immediately. Cllr. Foley welcomed the suspension of the Land Aggregation Scheme. She asked if housing assistance payments transfer to local authorities what impact would that have from a staffing point of view. She acknowledged the work done under the Energy Efficiency Programme as over 600 houses have been improved. Cllr. Foley said she was totally opposed to charging local authority tenants LPT when they do not own the property. She expressed her disappointment at the reduction in funding for housing grants and said it is reprehensible. This scheme means so much to so many applicants and for very little money and it enhances their standard of living. She asked if additional funding becomes available will the Council be in a position to provide matching funding. In conclusion Cllr. Foley said the Department should do the decent thing and make additional funding available at the outset.

Cllr. J. Healy Rae thanked Ms. McAllen and the staff of the Finance Department for preparing a balanced Budget. He complemented Management on preparing the Draft County Development Plan in-house and said this is an excellent development. Cllr. Healy Rae said he respected the Manager's comments in relation to rates however it should be borne in mind that many business people have serious difficulty paying rates. He called on the Revenue Department to be reasonable in their dealings with them. Cllr. Healy Rae expected his disappointment that there is no Tenant Purchase Scheme in place at present. He referred to the Land Aggregation Scheme and said he fought hard to retain lands in Kenmare, Sneem etc as he believed these lands will be invaluable in time. He called on the Minister to fund a housing construction programme again. He referred to the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme and said it is very difficult to break the news to an 88-year-old man that he was not successful in getting a grant because the Minister had cut the funding by 56%. Rents charged by some voluntary housing bodies are exorbitant when compared with local authority rents and he asked if anything could be done about it. Recent changes in legislation provide that vacant commercial premises will be liable for 50% of rates. He asked how much income this would generate and said he was totally opposed to this measure. Many businesses are closed because of the seasonal nature of their business and he believed if the 50% rates charge is imposed they will have no option but to apply for a change of use and to revert to a residential property. He said this would impact hugely on his area.

Cllr. M. O'Shea congratulated the Manager, Ms. McAllen and the staff of the Finance Department on preparing a balanced Budget. Every Department has experienced serious cuts to their Budget in 2014. He welcomed the announcement by the Manager that local authority tenants will not be charged LPT in 2014. He asked if the Council will absorb this charge thereafter. Cllr.

O'Shea referred to the Land Aggregation Scheme, which has now been suspended, and asked if it is possible the Council would commence a house construction programme on this land in the near future. If not he PROPOSED that the land would be leased to the GAA or provide allotments by lease in the short term until funding is provided for a building programme.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue SECONDED this proposal.

Cllr. O'Shea referred to the Annagh Banks housing estate in Castlemaine and called on the Council to make a submission to the Department for funding to buy this estate for social housing. There are further problems with the Mid Kerry Water Supply Scheme and there was an interruption to supply again that morning. If it continues schools will have to close. €50m was wasted by Irish Water and Deputy Shane Ross stated that the Minister selected an incompetent team who then had no option but to seek the services of consultants.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue complemented Management on presenting a balanced Budget in such difficult economic circumstances. He expected it would be a year of severe cutbacks for all services as a result of a reduction in funding from central Government. He complimented the Manager on moving quickly and amending the Budget to ensure tenants will not be charged LPT. It would be unfair to ask tenants to pay this charge when they do not own the property and it was devious of the Government to ask us to do this. He was glad that the Manager responded to the concerns of councillors and suggested an appropriate amendment to the Budget. Many tenants are finding it difficult to pay their rent as it is. He welcomed the fact that rates will not be increased in 2014 and said most business people cannot afford an increase. Tenants cannot absorb any increase in rents as they are finding it difficult to survive. He asked the Council to be mindful of this when they are reviewing rents later in the year. The proposal to implement a national rent review will undoubtedly result in an increase in rents and he called on the Government to review this proposal and to put a moratorium on rent increases in a similar way to rates. Cllr. O'Donoghue referred to NPPR and the 10% outstanding and said this income could be used to keep rents down. Local authorities are not being permitted to build houses by the Government but this is our core function. It is widely accepted that tremendous work is being done by the Housing Department but the reality is that not one new house is being provided. This gives very little hope to qualified applicants and it is a basic human right to have a home. Kerry County Council must provide homes for qualified applicants. In 2013 234 homes were provided and this was mostly through RAS. He expressed concern for single men and women who find it very difficult to get housing and he asked that their situation would be reviewed. Irish Water spent €50m on consultants to-date and they still cannot say how much water charges will be in 2014. People want to know as they want to budget for it. Cllr. O'Donoghue then referred to the RAS Scheme and said an applicant must be on Rent Allowance for 18 months in order to qualify for it and this is unreasonable. If they qualify for housing they should qualify for the RAS Scheme. The reduction in funding for housing grant schemes is a severe blow to the elderly in the county.

There have been substantial cuts to funding for these schemes since 2010. He requested that a letter would issue to the Minister pointing out that as a result of these schemes many people can remain at home.

Suspension of Standing Orders

The Mayor said it was 1.30pm and it was necessary to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. N. Foley, SECONDED by Cllr. P. McCarthy it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue.

The Manager thanked members for their compliments to staff. In relation to Irish Water the legislation was passed into law establishing Irish Water. It gives Irish Water the power to deliver water services and Kerry County Council signed a Service Level Agreement with them. Notification of funding for 2014 was received and the charges that applied in 2013 will continue until charges are agreed with the CER. He responded to members concerns in relation to the charging of Council tenants for LPT and he thanked them for their support. The Town Managers were aware of his proposal last week and he believed they would have a similar proposal for the Town Councils. It is a matter for the Town Councils how they wish to proceed. How this issue will be dealt with in 2015 will be a matter for the new Council. The Manager acknowledged there will be a difficulty with rates when the Town Councils are amalgamated with the County Council. Discussions are ongoing at a national level on how this will be addressed and it is likely there will be a rationalisation over a number of years. He believed it would take up to 10 years to achieve a coming together of rates. In relation to NPPR the €525,000 included in the Budget is the projected income and he believed there are further properties that have not paid the charge. He was aware of member's concerns in relation to the penalties and he accepted that some property owners were not aware of their liability for this charge. However we do not have the discretion to waive the penalty and this has been raised at a national level. A payment plan can be agreed if necessary but some property owners thought they could get away without paying the charge. The Manager referred to storm damage and said we got a short time to submit figures to the Department. He welcomed the €3.5m provided nationally for immediate repairs and the €16.5m for coastal protection works in the areas worst impacted by the recent storms. There is no provision in the Budget for this work as it is emergency work. When making the submission we requested that 100% funding would be provided. Some clean up work is ongoing and this is being funded from our maintenance budget. The Manager pointed out that County Councils were not involved in the demise of Town Councils nor were the City and County Managers Association.

Cllr. J. Brassil said the Council is not permitted to negotiate the amount to be paid for NPPR. However if NPPR is abolished what the Council does in 2014 is a matter for them.

The Manager said we must operate within the law. He understood the Minister was considered introducing an amnesty with the current penalty but in October the penalty was doubled.

Cllr. M. Cahill said he understood some people appealed the penalties but nothing was done.

The Manager agreed that people have paid. Others who were away paid the charge on their return.

Cllr. M. Cahill pointed out there are some genuine cases. He was aware of a case where the husband and wife were both ill yet they had to pay the penalties.

Ms. McAllen said each Town Council adopts its own rate. Discussions are taking place at a national level on the harmonisation of rates. The Minister has confirmed that the retention of LPT collected in a county will commence in 2015. In the current climate seeking and getting loan approval is proving to be very difficult. Our loan book is €94m and during negotiations with the HFA they were only willing to negotiate housing land loans. She pointed out that we must eventually deal with the reality of our loans liability. We will now be paying interest only on the housing land loans but we must deal with the principal and also satisfy the Local Government Auditor requirements. The provision for interest repayments on our loans is reflected in the Revenue Budget.

Mr. J. Breen, Director of Housing thanked members for their positive comments. The Minister announced that €30m will be provided to construct houses in 2014. It is intended to submit an application for funding to construct a few single rural dwellings in the current year. There are 9 or 10 derelict rural council houses and this issue was recently discussed at an SPC meeting and it is intended to dispose of them. Under the RAS scheme there is a requirement to be on Rent Allowance for 18 months to qualify for the Scheme. This is a national scheme and the Council does not have any discretion to waive this requirement. As information on the National Rent Review comes to hand it will be circulated to members. Mr. Breen pointed out that Kerry County Council does not let substandard properties. If a new Tenant Purchase Scheme is introduced it is likely to be an incremental scheme. This will have major consequences for us as our income from house sales will diminish. An extension to a local authority house can be provided through the Social Housing Capital Programme. Mr. Breen referred to the query on rents in voluntary housing schemes and said generally they have additional costs i.e. care taking. He confirmed that his Department would not be seeking to acquire the Annagh Banks housing estate in Castlemaine. The Council offers more tenancies now than ever before and 33% of tenants are single.

Cllr. B. Cronin asked if many loan applications were received in the past 12 months.

Mr. Breen said 20 loan applications were received and 4 loans were allocated. He pointed out that there are capital costs associated with all land purchased and these must be dealt with.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.50pm.

The meeting resumed at 2.30pm.

Division B Road Transport & Safety

The Mayor said a Special Roads Meeting will be held in March and he suggested that detailed discussions on this Division would be deferred to that meeting.

The Manager said that the salient point in the Roads Budget at this point relates to our 'own resource' contribution and it would be appropriate to refer to this while all other items are contra items.

Ms. McAllen referred the members to Pages 13 – 15 of the Budget Tables and Pages 40 – 61 of the Manager's Report for details of this Division. The total Budget expenditure in this Division is €28.1m which represents 28.5% of the Budget and it is the highest expenditure area. Transfers from Capital to support the Revenue Budget amount to €185,000. She then referred members to Page 60 of the Manager's Report for details of our 'own resource' contribution to this Division. Provision of €11,946,930 is made in the Budget for own resources and this is a marginal decrease of 2.6% on previous years. She continued to recognise the benefit of County Councillor's Allocations in addressing issues of importance to local communities and a sum of €26,750 per member is provided under this measure. However these monies can only be used for works where there are no future ongoing running costs given the funding outlook.

Division C Water Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 62 – 83 of the Manager's Report and Pages 16 and 17 of the Budget Table for details of this Division. Expenditure in this Division represents 15.2% of overall expenditure and includes Capital transfers of €14,000. The expenditure in this Division is €15m which represents 15.2% of the overall expenditure and it includes transfers from Capital to Revenue.

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. The cost of providing these services will be recouped directly from Irish Water.

The Services to be provided under the Service Level Agreement include:

- Revenue Collection.
- Operation and Maintenance of Public Water Supplies.
- Treatment Plants – Water.
- Water Networks, Reservoirs & Pumping Stations.

- Water Conservation.
- Operation and Maintenance of Wastewater Treatment.
- Treatment Plants – Wastewater.
- Wastewater Networks including Pumping Stations.
- Capital Programme (including Mains Rehabilitation Works and other Minor Capital works previously funded under the Small Schemes Programme).

The 2014 Water Services Budget has been agreed with Irish Water as part of an Annual Service Plan under the Service Level Agreement (SLA). The Budget includes a 'staff headcount' figure agreed in the SLA to provide for costs of all staff in the four Kerry Local Authorities working in water services. It will provide for staff working full-time in Water Services (Operations & Capital) as well as staff in other sections working part-time on Water Services functions (e.g. Laboratory, Revenue Collection etc.) on a pro-rata basis.

Performance targets (based on 2012 levels of performance) and the Budget for 2014 are set out in the Annual Service Plan. This will form the basis of Water Services activities in 2014 for which Kerry County Council can seek payment from Irish Water under the Service Level Agreement.

Kerry County Council will retain responsibility for private water supplies including Group Schemes. The Council will also continue to administer the Rural Water programme. These services are provided for in the Draft Budget for 2014.

Kerry County Council will continue to provide water services to the people of County Kerry. The amounts shown in the Budget Tables are reflective of monies recoupable from Irish Water for Payroll and Central Management Charges associated with the following areas – water supply, wastewater treatment, collection of water and wastewater charges, support to water capital programme and agency and recoupable services, which were previously included in the Council's Annual Budget, and are now Included in 2014 Service Level Agreement with Irish Water. Operating expenses at the time of Budget preparation are to be put through Irish Water purchasing and payment systems.

The Rural Water Programme and the operation of Public Conveniences in the Water Services Division will be retained by Kerry County Council for 2014.

Provision of €415,077 is made for the Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences.

Kerry County Council owns and operates Public Conveniences at 26 locations throughout the county. 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 2014 to continue with this cooperative approach. This partnership represents good

value for money as the service is provided to a high standard at a relatively low cost.

The provision for the Rural Water Programme is €1.9m.

Cllr. A. McEllistrim asked if the Water Services engineer would continue to attend Electoral Area Meetings now that Irish Water has taken over responsibility for water services. She asked if Water Services staff will be protected into the future and will Irish Water be privatised. Domestic customers are now being asked to pay water charges yet they are concerned about the health implications of adding fluoride to water and she was glad this would be reviewed. In conclusion Cllr. McEllistrim said there are ongoing interruptions to water supplies in some areas and this must be rectified.

Cllr. T. Ferris said she understood earlier the Council had not entered into a Service Level Agreement with Irish Water but it now appears we have. She asked Management if they are satisfied they know how much they will receive from Irish Water in 2014. She asked if the water softener would be provided in the Ardfert/Spa areas in 2014. She said it is bizarre that Irish Water determines the charges, the Council collects the money on their behalf and they pay us for providing a service we always provided. She asked how safe is it to continue to deliver water through asbestos pipes and how much asbestos pipes are in the county.

Cllr. P. McCarthy said staff have concerns regarding their future with Irish Water. The Minister said the reason Irish Water is attached to Bord Gais is that into the future water services will remain in public ownership.

Cllr. M. Griffin said the level of leakage from the pipe network is unacceptable. Until the pipe network is replaced there will be leakage of expensive water into the ground. There needs to be a much greater emphasis on water harvesting and this should be a condition of planning for large scale developments. The volume of water used by hotels for non drinking purposes is substantial. Cllr. Griffin expressed his disappointment that due to a breakdown between the Department and the Council the Kilcummin Sewerage Scheme has not progressed despite the fact that it is urgently needed.

In response to queries Mr. O. Ring, Director of Environment and Water Services assured members that Water Services engineers would continue to attend Electoral Area Meetings. Breaks are a difficult issue for everyone and sometimes network control and better management are required. He was aware of the major interruptions to supply in Mid Kerry and said contracts to replace part of the pipeline would commence shortly. The funding arrangement with Irish Water is a transitional arrangement for 2014 as we move from a local authority system to the new Irish Water system. New management and financial systems were launched by Irish Water during the year. He referred to Cllr. Ferris's query regarding the provision of water softener in the Ardfert area and undertook to try to get this work done under Irish Water. His Department would shortly be

entering into negotiations with Irish Water on the Capital Programme for the next few years. Mr. Ring assured members there is no risk to human health from asbestos cement pipes used to transport potable water. The difficulty arises when breaks occur and the asbestos is inhaled while repairing the pipe. The problem is that these pipes are fragile and break easily. The only potential problem is from white asbestos while there is no problem with blue asbestos. There is no risk in transporting potable water in asbestos pipes. A large programme was undertaken to replace lead pipes and the last remaining lead pipes in Tralee will be replaced in the near future. He agreed that water harvesting should be encouraged and said this should be provided for by Building Control policy.

Cllr. S. Counihan again referred to Kilcummin Sewerage Scheme and asked Mr. Ring if he got written notification stating the Scheme will not proceed.

In response Mr. Ring said when the Department was responsible for water / waste water schemes no written notification was received in relation to Kilcummin. A list of priority schemes was submitted and Kilcummin was included on that list.

Cllr. B. Cronin asked what the position is with the foul smell and taste from the water supply at Dromduigh, Ballyhar and he asked that it would be investigated immediately. He was informed that the reducing valve was working at Barleymount yet there were 4 interruptions to supply one day the previous week resulting in a vast area being left without water. Cllr. Cronin added that he understood Irish Water took over responsibility for reservoirs and he asked were levies also handed over to Irish Water on the 1st January.

Cllr. J. Healy-Rae referred to the Mid Kerry Water Supply Scheme and asked if contracts for pipe replacement would be signed shortly. The people of this area were without water for two of the past three days. He asked how often the water is tested.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae said members were informed there would be a stand alone treatment plant in Kilcummin. Members requested that it would be piped to Killarney to allow the houses between Killarney and Kilcummin to be serviced. He was advised that the Killarney Treatment Plant could cater for this. He asked why it was then proposed to build a stand alone plant in Kilcummin. Cllr. Healy-Rae asked if new group water schemes can be facilitated. Also what is the future for group schemes that have not been taken over, can they be taken over in the future.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty also expressed concern that it is proposed that Kilcummin Sewerage Scheme will be a stand alone scheme as members understood it would be linked to the Killarney Treatment Plant. A number of people in the area expressed concern at this proposal. Any new development in the Killarney area over the next number of years is likely to take place in this area and it would be appropriate to connect the scheme to the Killarney Plant.

Mr. Ring said he was not aware of a bad taste and smell from the water supply at Dromduigh, Ballyhar but he would arrange to have it checked out. Kerry County Council is responsible for testing water and we have entered into a Service Level Agreement with Irish Water to continue this service. From an operations point of view there will be no difference for the customer. The Council will report to Irish Water. The frequent interruptions to supply from the Mid Kerry Water Supply Scheme are unfortunate and he acknowledged there were a large number of breaks in recent days. Approx. 5,000m to 6,000m of water pipe in this area will be replaced this year.

Cllr. J. Healy-Rae requested that notification on this would be sent to members.

Mr. Ring informed members that he would be meeting with Irish Water shortly to discuss the Capital Programme and he would put forward the best case possible for the Kilcummin Sewerage Scheme. Mr. Ring confirmed that responsibility for Group Water Schemes would remain with the Council.

Cllr. D. Healy-Rae said Management concurred with the Department that a stand alone treatment plant is the best option for Kilcummin.

Mr. Ring said it is his intention to get the best result for the area. The Department said a stand alone plant is the best option and this will be reviewed before the meeting with Irish Water. He pointed out that cost is the big issue. He again stated that the Council will continue to deal with Group Schemes and he confirmed they can still be taken over.

The Manager informed members that no levies were handed over to Irish Water. He believed levies collected in Kerry must be spent in Kerry. However we would have to hand over the levies if we are required to do so. We presently have a fund of €7.5m in levies.

Mr. Ring said in accordance with EPA Regulations water testing is carried out at treatment plants and at customer's houses. If a member wants a particular customer's house tested that can be arranged. However it must be done by a staff member as there is a specific way to carry out the test.

Division D Development Management

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 84 to 105 of the Manager's Report and Pages 18 to 20 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division. Expenditure has reduced in this area from €7.3m to €7.1m which is 7% of our overall expenditure. Transfers from Capital in this area amount to €319,000. The Planning Function/Development Management Programme of Kerry County Council is divided into three specific business units:

- Forward Planning
- Planning Control
- Planning Enforcement

Provision of €954,145 is made for Forward Planning. This allocation covers the salaries and other costs associated with the preparation of the County Development Plan currently ongoing, Local Area Plans and other Statutory Plans and Policy. Work is ongoing on the review of Local Area Plans in accordance with the core strategy of the County Development Plan.

Provision of €1,602,000 is made for Planning Control. During 2013, a further decline continued in activity levels in planning control with applications in all sectors reduced significantly. The ongoing economic climate is reflected in a significant drop in planning applications. For the third year in a row, less than 1,000 applications will be received in 2013 compared to an annual average of 3,000 over the last 20 years and a high of over 5,000 in 2006 and 2007. In particular, applications for large-scale housing and commercial developments are at their lowest level since the early nineties. In the current economic climate, there is no indication that this downturn will be reversed in 2014. Hence, both administrative and technical staff numbers have been reduced significantly in the Development Management Unit over the past few years.

However, changes introduced by section 28 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 has resulted in a significant increase in the numbers of applications for Extensions of Duration of Planning Permissions with approximately 190 such applications processed in 2013.

Provision of €861,000 is made for Enforcement Costs and unfortunately the workload in this area has not witnessed any significant decrease in activity. The Planning Enforcement Unit will continue to follow up on complaints received in this area. Considerable progress has been made with regard to inspecting housing estates in the county since the establishment of the Housing Estates Unit in 2009. The following is a list both of estates taken in charge in 2013 and also those proposed to be taken in charge.

Taken in Charge July 2013

1. Sundays Well, Lisloose, Tralee.
2. Cois Árd, Duagh.
3. Cill Mhuire, Kilmurry, Kenmare.
4. Quarryvale, Ballynahoulort, Tralee.
5. Hazel Grove, Ardfert.
6. Old Forge, Iron Mills, Killarney.
7. Páirc an Gluinín, Commons East, Ardfert.
8. Castlecove, Knocklyne, Killorglin.
9. Baile an Tooreen, Farrantoreen, Killorglin.
10. Gransha Lower, Castlemaine.

Proposed to be Taken in Charge

1. Church Close, Gortagullane, Muckcross, Killarney.
2. Shanow Banks, Aulaneduff, Abbeydorney.
3. Cois Clydagh, Brosna West, Brosna.
4. Radharc na hEaglaise, North Commons, Ardfert.
5. Beech Grove, Cahirdown, Listowel.

Work also continues in the Quarries Unit. Provision of €510,000 is made for General Economic Promotion. This allocation covers the contributions made to various local organisations which promote and support the economic, social and tourism interests of the county overall, and includes a provision to enable support for any exceptionally worthwhile initiative which may arise during the year.

A sum of €100,000 is included in this amount in respect of any particularly worthwhile and innovative proposals in tourism/economic promotion and development. The Council will work closely with Development Partnerships and Fáilte Ireland to maximise this fund.

A contribution of €20,000 is included for Kerry Life Education Ltd towards health education and substance/alcohol abuse awareness programme across the entire county.

A sum of €40,000 is provided in this allocation in respect of financial support from the Council to Ballybunion swimming pool. This is in recognition of the importance of this facility in supporting Ballybunion and its business community and is contingent on the performance of the swimming pool adhering to the business plan as submitted and a commitment given at the December 2013 Council Meeting.

This allocation also is intended to support other exceptionally meritorious promotions that arise during the year and throughout the county. It includes a contribution towards 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 and a contribution towards costs of hosting Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan in 2014.

Provision of €415,000 is made for General Community and Enterprise Expenses. This allocation covers the costs of setting-up and supporting the work for the new Local Community Development Committee (previously named Socio-Economic Committee) and associated structures; voluntary contributions to a number of groups (including Kerry Community Awards, Pride of Place and Children's Services Committee); the development of strategies linked to the enhanced economic, social and community development role for local authorities; staff costs and office expenses of the Community and Enterprise Department (C&E).

The LCDCs are to be charged with responsibility for the co-ordination, governance, planning and oversight of all publicly funded local and community development interventions at local level. It is also planned that the LCDC will have responsibility for developing a 5-year integrated socio-economic plan.

Under PPF proposals Local Government will have a strong role in promoting economic development. It is expected that the establishment of the LCDCs, LEOs and the enhanced role for local authorities in economic development as well as in local and community development planning will be in place by 2014. Details regarding the roll-out of these changes and the composition of the department/unit with responsibility for this work has yet to be determined.

This Division also has an extensive work programme as outlined in the report including working with amongst others – SIM, Comhairle na nÓg, Production of the Kerry (Immigrant) Integration Strategy and an Economic Development Strategy and the work of KEDU. This Division also manages Kerry Community Awards. The Community Awards celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2013. The overall prize for 2013 was awarded to Recovery Haven in Tralee.

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.

Provision is also made for our contribution to the Kerry Children's Services Committee. €272,000 is provided for Building Control. A sum of €335,547 is provided for the Local Enterprise Office. This allocation covers the Council's expenditure on the secondment of staff, office rental and miscellaneous office supports to the County Enterprise Board, which during 2014 will be funded by Enterprise Ireland. These staff will form the new local enterprise office situated within the local authority structure who will focus on maximising the effectiveness of Kerry Local Authorities in enterprise support and economic development, particularly to small and micro business throughout the county.

Provision in this Division includes extensive work programmes in the areas of Heritage and Conservation Services including the Archaeology Department.

Division E Environmental Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 106 – 133 of the Manager's Report and Pages 21 – 23 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division. The expenditure of €13.6m on this Division represents 14% of the expenditure in the Council's Budget. Transfers from Capital amount to €428,600 in this area.

From an operational perspective the section is managed as five distinct business units.

- Waste Management
- Environmental Regulation and Environmental Awareness

- Laboratory
- Energy Management
- Veterinary Services

Overall the waste management environment throughout the Country continues to remain uncertain. The limit on the quantity of biodegradable waste entering the landfill was further reduced in July 2013 to 40%. During 2013 the environment section carried out an in-depth analysis of the options available in relation to the continued operation of the North Kerry Landfill and other waste management infrastructure in an effort to minimise costs and provide the most efficient service possible to the public.

As a result, it was decided that the most prudent option for Kerry County Council was to mothball the landfill following the filling of the remaining cell during 2014 by the public and Kerry Local Authorities. The costs of the operation of the Landfill and the five Waste Transfer/Civic Amenity Sites is reflected in the provision of €2.531m made for Landfill Operations under E01. This allocation under E0101 provides for the expenditure at the North Kerry Landfill, which includes the operation and maintenance of the site, and consists mainly of wages, leachate management / collection and disposal, plant and fuel, landfill gas management, cover requirements, building and weighbridge maintenance, site management, security and EPA licence requirements as well as administration costs.

As well as the North Kerry Landfill facility, this allocation also includes a portion of the cost of operating the four Transfer Stations at Killarney, Milltown, Kenmare and Caherciveen and Dingle 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 to North Kerry Landfill and treatment of effluent off-site. The cost of operating the recycling facilities at each location is included in E02. The Licence remains operational for a period of 3 years with further extensions possible. It may be possible, therefore, to re-open the landfill should it prove necessary and economically viable.

Provision of €238,000 is made for Bring Centres Operations. The Council is in compliance with the targets set out in the Regional Waste Management Plan for the provision of Bring Banks, with a total of 97 Bring Banks located at various locations around the county. The usage of these recycling facilities has resulted in approximately 3,300 tonnes of recyclables being accepted in 2013.

As a measure to counteract illegal and indiscriminate dumping at these sites, the Council has provided the "adopt a bring bank" to 36 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. Kerry County Council has also rolled out a covert roaming camera which is monitoring known dumping areas associated with our Bring Bank Network.

Provision of €93,000 is made for the Litter Warden Service. A new litter plan was completed in 2013 as required under the Litter Pollution Acts 1997 to 2009. The principal aim of the plan which extends to 2016 will be to further reduce the amount of illegal dumping/litter pollution around the county.

A sum of €116,000 is provided for Environmental Awareness Services. The following is an example of the work in this area:

- Home Composting demonstrations were held in 2013 throughout the county, attended by over 50 people.
- Community Presentations. These are held on request and members of the community are provided with information on waste, energy and water.
- We currently have 106 Green Flag Awards for both Primary and Secondary Schools and hope to increase this number during 2013. There are 60 schools which renewed their flags on Water Conservation, Energy Conservation, Travel and Biodiversity and Global citizenship.
- Public Open Days / Seminars on Environmental Issues
- Will extend 'Adopt a Road' programme during 2013/14. Each community group gets €500 along with bags, gloves, pickers etc and an arrangement is made to have the bagged litter collected.
- Organised the Spring Clean Up in April 2013. The 2013 year saw an increase in tonnages collected and the number of participating groups.
- The first of the Preferred Walking Routes for dog owners was developed in Dingle town. The necessary signage, poop scoop dispensers and bins have been installed on the route. It is hoped to develop this in other locations around the county in 2014.
- We continued to work closely with Tidy Town groups during 2013, through seminars and site visits by a number of experts dealing with various aspects of the national competition. Kerry has had its most successful year to date with Killarney and Kenmare winning their national sections and several gold, silver and bronze medals awarded.

Provision of €226,000 is made for Monitoring of Waste Regulations (including Private Landfills). The allocation provides for continued activity in this work area. A sum of €132,000 is provided for Enforcement of Waste Regulations. The

allocation allows for continued activity in the waste enforcement area in 2014. 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 2014.

Provision of €709,000 is made for the 144 graveyards in the county. 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 more than 50 community groups, and also makes financial contributions to 40 of these organisations in recognition of their voluntary work in burial grounds. Provision is made in the 2014 Budget for continued support to community groups, in recognition of their ongoing involvement and valuable assistance.

In 2013, Kerry County Council, in conjunction with South Kerry Development Partnership, embarked on a Graveyard Signage Scheme for the erection of signs on the historic graveyards that have been surveyed over the past 5 years. This will be the final piece of work to link the surveys of graveyards and the Local Authority Burial Register website. It is hoped to erect the signs in 50 graveyards around the county in 2014 - funded through the Council's capital investment programme. Kerry County Council supplied the specification for the signs and will provide each committee with a full plan of the graveyard and also a list of the names on headstones and tombs. It is hoped to further develop this project in 2014.

With a view to further development of the website www.kerrylaburial.ie, meetings with the representatives of Saint Brendan's Trust and the Church of Ireland have been held and agreement in principle has been reached to include non Local Authority-owned graveyards on the website. This will continue to be progressed in 2014.

A sum of €200,000 is provided for the Operation Costs Civil Defence. There are 310 volunteers registered in the volunteer database in County Kerry at present. Kerry Civil Defence has 23 qualified Instructors to teach various disciplines across the organisation. They are actively involved throughout the County at many events and emergency situations.

The estimated cost of providing an efficient and effective Fire and Emergency Service for the county for the year 2014 amounts to €5,285,745 and this is a slight increase on last year's provision. As can be seen from the table on Page 123, 2013 shows an increase in the number of incidents responded to over the two previous years. This increase can be attributed mainly to a 139% increase in gorse fires and a 56% increase in chimney fires. This increase will have

implications for the cost of the operation of the fire services. In 2014, the fire services section will actively work in promoting public awareness and fire safety in an effort to curtail the upper trend in this area.

Costs of the Operation of the Council Laboratory are spread across Environment and Water Divisions. In 2013, the laboratory will process 6,100 samples involving a total of at least 72,000 tests. Kerry remains one of the highest local authorities in the country in the submissions for samples for assessment. In 2013, there has been a further increase in test activity in the Laboratory. The increase in workload has mainly been due to:

- Increased sampling demands with regard to river and drinking water regulations.
- Increased emphasis on quality control measures and protocols with regard to both sampling and analysis. The Council's Laboratory is registered to test all 26 areas as set out by E.P.A.

The introduction of a new Information Management System will greatly modernise how we record and report data and will save significant amounts of staff time in this area.

The system will also greatly assist us in achieving, expanding and maintaining accreditation and serve as a platform to firmly launch the Council's Laboratory on a commercial footing, which will allow for the generation of additional income in this area into the future. Overall it is estimated that the laboratory saves the Local authority at least €300,000 pa in monitoring costs alone by doing the vast majority (96%) of mandatory workload in-house.

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. The Energy Office is also responsible for progressing the Council's Renewable Energy Programme and for the tendering process for the electricity supply in the four Kerry Local Authorities. 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 and the financial benefits have and continue to be felt across all Divisions of the Council.

Cllr. T. Ferris referred to Division D Development Management and asked what provision is made in relation to permissions granted for wind turbines. Does the permission last for 20 years? She understood it costs approx. €1m to remove turbines and she asked if provision is made in the Budget for this expense. She referred to the implementation of the Building Control Regulations in March 2014 and asked will it have implications for the Council. She understood it will have huge implications for the construction industry. She referred to the Property

Management Section and said the Council is not in the business of purchasing houses so was it necessary to have this Section. She welcomed the use of a roaming camera to help detect those responsible for illegal dumping. She expressed her disappointment that the Council got out of the waste collection service and now that the landfill will be closed. The cost of €2.5m to maintain it is staggering. She knew it made economic sense to close it but the recycling costs must still be borne by the Council. Private operators are making a profit out of the waste collection service. Cllr. Ferris requested a reply to her query on the policy regard the pumping out of private houses by the Fire Service.

Cllr. B. Cronin said it will be very difficulty to draw down Bonds and he asked what will happen residents if the Bond cannot be drawn down. He welcomed the allocation in the Budget for the Munster Fleadh Cheoil which will be held in Killarney next summer. He then referred to quarries and said An Bord Pleanála overturned a decision of the Council and ordered that a quarry would be closed. He requested clarification on this matter. Over a number of weeks there was indiscriminate dumping of household waste at Ballyhar and he commended the work of the Litter Warden in addressing it. The Litter Warden spoke to the local community and advised that they should try to get the registration number of the vehicle responsible and a hidden camera was also used. It is vital that the network of recycling facilities is retained as they are used widely by the public. If there are closed there would be a huge increase in indiscriminate dumping. He acknowledged the tremendous effort put in by community groups and Tidy Towns Committees in keeping their towns and villages litter free and he congratulated them on their pride in their area. There has been a transformation of graveyards over the past five or six years and this must be welcomed. He commended the Council on their involvement in this. He referred to Page 119 and said substantial progress has been made in a number of instances in acquiring land for new burial grounds or extensions to existing burial grounds. However he expressed disappointment that there has been no progress in Killarney and the burial ground in Aghadoe is almost full. The HSE own a lot of land at St Finian's in Killarney and he called on Management to enter into discussions with them with a view to acquiring land for a burial ground. He complimented the Water Services Section on their involvement in the enhancement of all burial grounds.

Cllr. D. Healy Rae referred to quarries and said a number of owners were told to seek substitute consent from An Bord Pleanála. They cannot operate until the application has been submitted and this could take as long as 18 months. He asked what this process costs. Once the existing supplies of stone are used these quarries cannot operate until they get substitute consent. He PROPOSED that a letter would issue to the Minister calling on him to allow these quarries to continue to operate as the biggest sector to be impacted if they close will be Kerry County Council. This is one of the more serious issues to emerge in recent times. He believed it would result in substantial increase in costs for road works if these quarries have to close. Cllr. Healy Rae then referred to graveyards and requested that one light would be provided at the entrance to every graveyard. Emigrants are not being facilitated in their efforts to return home to Kerry as

social housing is not being made available to them. The Safe Home Programme is the only programme in place for them at present. He asked that every effort would be made to facilitate those who wish to return home to Kerry.

Cllr. Healy Rae referred to the landfill and asked that provision would be made to ensure it could be re-opened if necessary. Members fought hard to provide the landfill and they would like to see it retained if possible. Members were promised funding would be provided to cover Rockfield dump properly and he asked what progress was made. He referred to the €90,000 provision in the Environmental Services area for street cleaning and said this was not adequate. In the past there was a programme where a crew would visit each town and village to clean up a few days a week but this only happens now if a member requests it. This service is very important for the businesses in the towns and villages and the Council must be seen to be spending income from rates on street cleaning.

Cllr. R. Beasley thanked the Council for their intervention and assistance to the Ballybunion Health and Leisure Centre. He hoped this assistance would continue into the future. He referred to coastal erosion which is causing major difficulties in many parts of the county and said funding will only be made available to address it where there is a danger to public roads. Substantial damage was done at Yellow Point in Ballybunion and on the South Beach to the 7th tee at Ballybunion Golf Club. He requested that an application for funding would be submitted to provide rock armour at these locations. He acknowledged that this is private property but said these areas must be protected. The same also applies to the Cashen and Beale where large sections of land are in danger of being washed away. The Bottle Banks in Ballybunion were removed two months ago and were not replaced. He suggested they could be relocated in the car park and he asked that they would be replaced sooner rather than later. Dog fouling is one of the biggest scourges in the county and we must continue the campaign to stamp it out. Cllr Beasley acknowledged the work of Tidy Towns Committees and also groups involved in improving burial grounds.

Cllr. B. O'Connell asked if a survey was carried out of all households to establish how they dispose of their refuse and has a database been established. There is only one service provider now and this could have serious implications for illegal dumping. It would be very easy to obtain this information now if an additional question was added to the LPT form. He requested an update on this issue and said the household survey could be done on a phased basis whereby one town would be surveyed each year. If a household cannot prove how they dispose of their refuse it is possible that it is being dumped illegally.

Cllr. G. Wharton Slattery supported Cllr O'Connell's call for the establishment of a database of all households and said there is still a lot of indiscriminate dumping going on. She asked if an education campaign could be undertaken to advise dog owners of the need to clean up after their dogs. She welcomed the 'Adopt a Road' scheme but said it is making it easier for people to dump by taking on these roles. She asked that the hidden camera would be moved around to different locations in an effort to stamp out indiscriminate dumping. Cllr. Wharton

Slattery emphasised the need to retain Transfer Stations and recycling facilities. In conclusion she thanked the staff of the Finance Department for their hard work in preparing a balanced Budget.

Cllr. S. Counihan called on the Press to cover the changes that are imminent for street cleaning and refuse collection so that people in urban areas are aware of them. He asked Management if they envisaged that the refuse service in Killarney town would be privatised. The Town Council provide staff who provide this service at present are excellent and it should be continued if possible. In Killarney there is both a private and a public refuse service and he had hoped that when the Municipal Districts are in place some of the fine things done in Killarney would be rolled out to the rest of the county but now he was not so sure that would happen.

Cllr. J. Brassil welcomed the continued support for Kerry Life Education, walks and the Health and Leisure Centre in Ballybunion. From 1st March there will be huge changes for the building industry and he asked if we have adequate staff in the Building Control Unit to deal with these changes. He welcomed the continuation of the 'Adopt a Bottle Bank' and 'Adopt a Road' scheme and said they are very successful. He also welcomed the continuation of the Spring Clean. Following the recent storms the cleanup in 2014 must be substantially greater than normal and there will be a need for additional substantial assistance from the local authority. He welcomed the work being done on litter control but expressed his disappointment that of the 419 cases investigated there was just one prosecution. He was involved in a case where they were trying to prosecute an individual but decided not to proceed as there was insufficient evidence. 2013 was a particularly fine summer and this required an additional effort by Council staff to keep beaches clean and maintained to the highest standard and he commended the staff for their excellent work in this area. He hoped 2014 would be just as fine and that the same effort would be forthcoming. A sum of €44,000 is provided in the Budget for playground repair and Ballyheigue and Rossbeigh playgrounds were damaged considerably in the recent storm. He asked if the funding provided will be adequate or will a supplementary budget be required. Cllr. Brassil referred to the new testing procedures introduced by the laboratory and also the new software acquired and asked if all tests carried out are for the Council or is there a commercial income. If not this should be considered.

Cllr. M. Gleeson referred to Page 89 where it states that 176 developments, out of the 846 housing estates inspected, have reached the required standard for release of the security/bond. He asked if this means that the remaining 670 estates have not reached the required standard and if this is the case it is a very serious matter. In the past he called for intermediate inspections as housing estates are built and he would like to see this addressed in future. He concurred with the views expressed by Cllr. Counihan who said Killarney Town Council's refuse service is a superb service and he hoped it would be allowed to continue. He acknowledged KWD's contribution to the Spring Clean last April. Cllr. Gleeson then referred to dog fouling and chewing gum and said the visually impaired

person cannot see dog foul or chewing gum. It is also very inconvenient for wheelchair users and children in buggies. He was picking up litter on the roadside recently and he picked Neurofen boxes. He believed young people have serious issues if they are mixing drink and drugs. He complimented the Laboratory on the magnificent service they provide. As a regular user of the Transfer Station in Killarney he asked that it would be retained.

Cllr. Gleeson said the amount of littering is as bad now as it was 20 years ago and but for the work of volunteers the roadsides would be a disgrace. The 'Adopt a Road' scheme is wonderful and is a success. Fr. Murphy made an enormous contribution to Kerry towns who won the All Ireland Tidy Towns Competition on three occasions and he will be named Kerry Person of the Year later that day. He congratulated him on this great honour which he justly deserves. The need for a new burial ground in Killarney is well documented over the years and he met with a senior official in the National Parks and Wildlife Service recently to pursue the exchange of land in the National Park with Killarney Town Council for the provision of a new burial ground. He was informed that this matter was referred to the Attorney General over a year ago and no one has attended to it yet. It is hoped that it would be assigned to a staff member this year. The Green Flag Award Scheme is excellent for both primary and secondary schools and he asked that the issue of disposing of chewing gum would be addressed for second level students. In conclusion Cllr. Gleeson requested that a letter would issue to the NPWS asking them to erect a sign for Muckross Abbey graveyard.

Cllr. J.J. Culloty welcomed the provision of funding for disabled toilets in Killarney. He referred to the Transfer Station at Coolcashlagh and asked that it would not be privatised as it is used extensively by the general public. He thanked KWD for their involvement with the Spring Clean in 2013.

Cllr. A. McEllistrim asked how much development levies are available for the construction of relief roads.

Cllr. P. McCarthy referred to the refuse collection service and said a number of people contacted him over Christmas pointing out that their account was overdue by just two days yet their bins were not collected. He called on the Manager to raise this issue with the company involved.

Cllr. B. O'Connell concurred with the views expressed by Cllr. McCarthy and said some discretion should be allowed.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue said the provision of €861,000 for Enforcement Costs appears high. 451 cases were investigated and a quarter of these were trivial or minor in nature. He expressed concern that the Council is being used to investigate such cases. If a person wants to make a complaint they should have to give their name. Enforcement Notices were only served in 25% of cases. The Planning Department should not be allowed to be used by individuals to get back at their neighbour. Cllr. O'Donoghue expressed disappointment that there was

just one prosecution for littering and added that littering is a scourge in our county particularly at Bottle Banks.

In response to queries raised Ms. McAllen said the €2.5m provided in the Budget is for the landfill and the four transfer stations. It is intended to mothball the landfill and the licence will be in place for three years and it may be possible to re-open it. We have an income stream of €1.2m for these services (excluding Landfill Levy). The Property Management Section is busy across all Divisions and we have a rental income that must be managed. Ms. McAllen undertook to revert to members with a report on the development levies on hand. The new Laboratory Management System will allow it to be put on a firm commercial footing. The funding provided for playgrounds is intended to provide three new playgrounds and maintain the existing ones.

Mr Ring said the Building Control Regulations will impact on architects and engineers more than on the Council. He did not believe that the amount of littering is as bad as it was and said it has improved over the years. It is very difficult to secure a prosecution however cameras have been successful in deterring illegal dumping. The Council has committed to retaining the Recycling Centres. The retention of the Killarney Refuse Service is a matter for Killarney Town Council for the present but a decision will be made based on the viability of the service. It is intended that the Laboratory will become more professional in relation to standards and some private work will also be undertaken. It is hoped to retain the workload from Irish Water and from the River Basin Districts.

Mr. McMahon informed members that a 25 year permission is granted for wind turbines and a Bond must be put in place for the removal of the turbines. Each developer is required to put a Bond in place to ensure if the turbine is not removed the funds are available to do so. Mr McMahon then referred to queries on quarries and said substitute consent would not arise unless the status of the quarry is not in order. There were two cases in Kerry where An Bord Pleanála dealt with applications for substitute consent and these were refused. It is now up to the Planning Authority to close them. Notice has been served and one quarry is closed and is making progress. The second one is closed but no great progress has been made. If necessary the case can be taken to the Circuit Court. A Bond is not released in a hurry and every effort is made to get all outstanding works completed before the Bond is released. There were 123 minor cases investigated while 328 further cases were not trivial or minor in nature and these must be dealt with. However he emphasised that there is a cost involved in going to Court and the Court is not sympathetic to awarding costs to the local authority and these costs must then be funded from our revenue budget.

Division F Recreation and Amenity

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 134 to 144 of the Manager's Report and Pages 24 and 25 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division. Expenditure of €4.7m is provided for in the division representing 4.76% of overall expenditure. Transfers from Capital to Revenue of €95,000 are made in this area. The

provision in the Budget for Library Service Operations is €2.291m which is .0.5% of a reduction on the 2013 allocation. Libraries have become extremely busy over the past number of years and are well utilised by the public. The core service of adult and children's book lending continues to increase.

Kerry Library works at many levels with communities throughout the county, ranging from the 96 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. The library website www.kerrylibrary.ie facilitates 24/7 access to the library catalogue and a range of online resources, including national and international newspapers and the newly acquired online language courses. Public internet sessions and WiFi is available at all 9 branch libraries. Provision of €270,000 is made for the Purchase of Books, CD's etc.

An allocation of €354,000 is provided for our Beaches. The bulk of this cost relates to Beach Cleaning which is an area which would benefit from assistance from local community groups. Kerry County Council retained 12 Blue Flags during the 2013 season. The weather conditions during the summer were very good resulting in excellent water quality at all our beaches. It is anticipated therefore that the county will achieve its original 13 Blue Flags in 2014. The provision made in the budget will allow for the continuation of the Blue Flag Programme in 2014.

Provision of €80,000 is made for Community Grants. This allocation covers the contributions made to various local organisations which promote sports and recreational events in the county. 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 2014.

Provision of €251,000 is made for the Administration of Arts Programme. Our Arts Activity programme is supported by the Arts Council and other partner agencies to secure financial input and value for money.

The allocation includes a provision of €90,200 in respect of salaries and administration of the Arts Office. This allocation also provides for a sum of €38,000 in respect of administration of the Arts programme, eg Artists in Residence etc. This area is co-funded by Arts Council's allocation.

Contributions of €60,000 to Voluntary Groups including, for example, Siamsa Tíre, Samhlaíocht Chiarraí, St John's Theatre and Arts Centre, Teach Amergin etc. The Manager's Report outlines the extensive work programme in this area.

Division G Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 145 – 150 of the Manager's Report and Pages 26 – 27 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division. The expenditure of €5.22m in this area represents 5% of the Council's expenditure.

Provision of €688,000 is made for the Operation and Maintenance of Piers/Harbours, Fenit. Kerry County Council has responsibility for the operation and promotion of Fenit Harbour. Liebherr Container Cranes Ltd, who are a major user of this facility, has completed the construction of a major fabrication hall at their facility in Killarney and proposes in the future to also construct a fabrication hall at the pier head in Fenit. This increase in economic activity will help guarantee the operation and viability of Fenit Harbour into the future.

The Council received capital funding of €750,000 for improvement works on the pier in 2013 from the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport. This allowed for strengthening works on the main pier.

An allocation of €25,000 is provided to cover requirements that may arise for coastal protection works around the coastline. There are unfunded emergency works carried out in Inch of €936,000 which remain on our books.

A sum of €108,000 is provided for Veterinary Service while €149,000 is provided for the Operation of the Dog Warden Service. The number of licences to the end of [September](#) has reduced marginally from 13,053 in 2012 to 12,980 for the corresponding period in 2013. The on the spot fine has increased from €30.00 to €100.00 as of the 1st June 2013.

Provision of €3m is made for the payment of Higher Education Grants and this is a reduction of €2m on the previous year. No new grants were processed in 2013 as this function has now been transferred to the City of Dublin VEC which has been chosen as the single awarding authority for student grants going forward. During 2013, 95% of ongoing students had their first grant instalment paid by mid 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.

Division H Miscellaneous Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 151 – 156 of the Manager's Report and Pages 28 – 30 of the Budget Tables for details of this Division. Expenditure for 2014 of €9.1m in this Division is supported by transfers from Capital of €819,000. One of the main expenditure headings here is Refunds and Irrecoverable Rates. Provision of €2,975,000 is made under this heading. The allocation provided is in respect of irrecoverable rates in cases of vacant properties or settlements negotiated with rate payers. The Council will continue to liaise with any rate payers that are experiencing financial difficulties and this amount is to cater for settlements arrived at in these cases. The Council, however, will continue to

make every effort to pursue all collectible rates and every effort will continue in 2014 on the collection of outstanding arrears. 50% approx. of this figure relates to vacant properties. The vast majority of settlements are partial settlements based on the submission of appropriate documentation such as Trading Accounts. We work closely with our customers particularly in the current climate with write offs last year of over €3m.

Provision of €333,000 is made for Coroner Fees and Expenses and this includes an increase of €13,000. The enactment of legislation transferring this service from Local Authorities is very overdue.

The overall Budget allocation for Local Representation and Civic Leadership is €1.54m. The Town Councils have been instructed by the Department to provide for 5 months payments to councillors therefore, this area provides for an additional 6 members for the latter 7 months of 2014 following unification with Town Councils.

Provision of €1,178,000 is made for Motor Taxation Operation. The Drivers Licences function transferred from Motor Taxation Office to the RSA on 25th October 2013. During 2013, Motor Tax processed an estimated 10,000 new 'off the road declarations' by year end 2013 a function previously carried out by the Gardaí.

The approximate, number of transactions dealt with in 2013 by the Motor Tax office is 150,000 with a value of approximately €17.5 million. Approximately 60% of these transactions were dealt with over the counter, with 40% processed by post. In addition, approximately 95,000 transactions were processed on-line by the National Vehicle Registration unit in Shannon, County Clare. The Killarney Area Service Centre also processed approximately 6,000 transactions on-line at the end of 2013.

Central Management Charge

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 157 – 166 of the Manager's Report and Page 32 of the Budget Tables for details on the Central Management Charge. Headings in this Division have experienced a reduction on last year's allocation and are shared out across all Divisions using a national share out parameter approach. Provision of €1,505,362 is made for the Maintenance and Upkeep of Corporate Buildings. This Budget includes caretaking, security and maintenance costs for Áras an Chontae and other corporate offices in Tralee, the Area Services Centres in Castleisland, Killorglin, Killarney and the Motor Tax/Water Services complex. Provision is made for €1.756m for Information & Communication Technology while provision of €0.999m is made for HR and Training and a provision for the Finance function of €1.732m. Provision of €6.6m is made for Pension and Lump Sum payments and finally €0.335m for non payroll costs of the administration and running of Area Offices.

Cllr. N. Foley complemented the positive work done on amenities/open spaces. She also complemented the staff of the Libraries and the two mobile libraries. She welcomed the late opening hours two nights a week. She commended the schools block loan scheme where novels are loaned to schools for a period of time. She acknowledged the work of Mr John Breen, Mr Tommy O'Connor and all the staff of the Library together with Arts Officer Kate Kennelly. In particular she welcomed the Kerry Music Partnership Programme and the Artist in Residence Programme. She asked that a particular year would be designated for schools where the Arts Department would liaise with schools. Cllr. Foley referred to Ports and acknowledged the work done by, and the future plans of, Liebherr at Fenit Port. She requested clarification on the outstanding loans for coastal protection works carried out at Inch in 2007 and asked why was the Council not reimbursed for these works.

Cllr. J. Finucane commended the Library Service which is an enormous resource particularly for the unemployed. FÁS was amalgamated with the Kerry Training and Development Board and libraries should be used for education. There is a number of key staff at Fenit Harbour and he PROPOSED that the office at Fenit would be the headquarters for the Wild Atlantic Way in Kerry. Kerry has 22% of the Wild Atlantic Way and it is important to have a strong presence. He PROPOSED that a letter would issue to Minister Shatter in relation to removing responsibility for Coroner's Costs from local authorities and he asked that this would be circulated to all local authorities in the country. It is nonsensical that these costs should have to be borne by the local authority and they should either be the responsibility of the Department of Justice or the HSE.

Mr J.D. Flynn pointed out that the Corner's Bill is on the order of business in the Dail.

Cllr. M. Gleeson supported the views expressed by Cllr. Finucane.

Cllr. Beasley paid tribute to the County Librarian, Mr Tommy O'Connor and all the staff of the Libraries and said there is an excellent selection of new books available in all libraries. He thanked the Chair of the Community, Culture and Tourism SPC Cllr. Johnny Healy Rae who was very helpful. The mobile library service is excellent and provides an excellent service to schools etc and he hoped this would continue. He recently contacted the County Library regarding Role Books in a school that were over 150 years old and within 10 days these Role Books were handed over to the Local History Section of the County Library where they will be preserved. Cllr. Beasley paid tribute to Ms. Kate Kennelly, Arts Officer who does an excellent job with limited resources. He asked what is the remit of Dog Wardens. On occasion sheep are mauled and the Dog Wardens can do very little about it.

Cllr. M. Gleeson said obesity is becoming the new health hazard. The best way to counteract it is by regular exercise. But regular exercise needs proper footpaths, walkways and decent cycleways. But we don't have them to any great extent. With proper long-term planning between all the agencies it would quickly

become clear that spending on coronary care and diabetes would greatly reduce if proper exercise facilities existed. But the finance for such planning does not exist and is unlikely to exist because incompetence and indifference are at the very core of our national lack of focus.

Cllr. J. Healy Rae complimented Mr John Breen and Mr Tommy O'Connor on the excellent service provided in our Libraries including mobile libraries. He expressed disappointment that additional funding is not available for Arts Grants as these grants are very small. He also expressed his disappointment that greater funding is not made available to Teach Airgeadais and Siamsa. Cllr. Healy Rae acknowledged the work of Ms. Kate Kennelly, Arts Officer. In conclusion Cllr. Healy-Rae said a sum of just €25,000 is provided for Piers and Harbours outside of Fenit and this is totally inadequate.

Ms. McAllen said the sum provided in the Budget for Piers and Harbours is €241,000 and she accepted that it was not adequate but it was the best we could do given the current financial constraints.

Cllr. J. Healy Rae said Piers and Harbours are being damaged constantly but funding for coastal protection works has not been provided.

Cllr. G. Wharton Slattery commended the Library staff and said libraries are like community centres and they are fantastic facilities, in particular, for the unemployed. She expressed her disappointment at the level of funding provided for the Arts Office and said it was a pity additional funding could not be provided as the Arts Grants are very small. She referred to the proposal to develop a website for Ballyseedy Wood and asked if this would be a stand-alone site or would it be a link on the Kerry County Council website. She requested that members would be kept up-to-date on the outcome of the application for funding for the Tralee Fenit walkway.

Cllr. B. Cronin expressed his gratitude to Mr Tommy O'Connor and all the Library staff for providing such an important service to the community. It is imperative that the archives at St Finian's are acquired and preserved and he asked that this would be pursued. He welcomed the continued support for the Arts Office who do tremendous work. He agreed with the views expressed by previous speakers in relation to Corners Fees. He **SECONDED** the proposal made by Cllr. Finucane and said it is ridiculous that this local authority is burdened with these costs. Cllr. Cronin referred to the provision in the Budget for the maintenance of office accommodation and asked what would be the position regarding the Tralee, Killarney and Listowel Town Council offices when they are amalgamated with the County Council.

Cllr. T. Ferris said she wished to be associated with the compliments paid to staff of the various Departments. She referred to NPPR and the provision of €174,000 and said she misunderstood that earlier in the day. She referred to the allocation for the maintenance of the Register of Electors, which is down slightly on previous years, and asked if this could not be done more logically. Cllr. Ferris

then referred to the Local Election costs and said it amazed her, given the level of unemployment in the county each time there is a Local Election school teachers and civil servants in full-time employment are employed when the unemployed could be brought in for a days work. 25% of the funding could be used to train unemployed people to do this work. She PROPOSED that a minimum of 25% of those employed for the Election would be registered unemployed. The rates of Representational Payment and Annual Allowance for elected members are set nationally but €122,000 is provided for members' attendance at conferences when members are only guaranteed to hold office until 22nd May. She PROPOSED that members would only be allowed to use 50% of the Budget for attendance at Conferences. The general maintenance budget for roads and housing is reduced and members are not doing themselves any favours if they do not reduce the conference budget of €122,000.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue said it is bizarre that local authorities still have to bear the cost of Corners Fees. The Corners Bill was drafted in 2007 and has not yet been passed. It is unfair to impose these costs on local authorities. The provision in the Budget of €1.5 million for the maintenance of offices appears high and in the context of the amalgamation of Tralee, Killarney and Listowel Town Councils with Kerry County Council he asked if these offices could be utilised with a view to reducing the amount paid in rent. He asked how much rent is paid for offices in Tralee. The Library Service represents excellent value for money. Cllr. O'Donoghue said it is important that archives remain in a local area and are not transferred to the County Library. In relation to beaches excellent work has been carried out around the county but he asked when work is being undertaken that local machinery would be hired. Cllr. O'Donoghue referred to Piers and Harbours and said there are a number of abandoned boats and in particular a trawler in Caherciveen and these need to be dealt with.

Cllr. D. Healy Rae referred to the new Driver Licensing system whereby people must attend at Manor West to have their photograph taken. This is very unfair as people from as far away as Valentia, Ballydesmond and Lauragh find it difficult to travel to Tralee to do this. He acknowledged that this function was removed from local authorities. Cllr. Healy Rae referred to the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme and asked how many staff will leave under this Scheme and what would be the impact on services. He referred to ponding of water on roadsides and said it can have a very serious impact and could cause accidents.

Mr J.D. Flynn referred to the query on the staff employed for the Count and said the County Registrar is responsible for the European Count while he will probably be responsible for the Local Election Count. It is not possible to conduct a Count without highly experienced staff and it will be more difficult in May as there will be 8 and 9 seat constituencies. He would not take on unemployed people for the Count. He did not want to find himself in a Recount where things could go wrong. €231,000 is paid for rent in Tralee and we secured a 27% reduction in the past year. A 17% reduction has been negotiated on other leases. It was necessary to

move as many staff as possible from prefabs and there was no capacity for them in County Buildings.

Cllr. G. Wharton Slattery acknowledged that unemployed people may not be experienced in the Count but said many of them are very intelligent and she asked if there was any way they could be trained to take part in the Count.

Mr. G. O'Brien informed members that a vote would then be taken on the adjustment to the Budget in relation to LPT on local authority houses as follows:

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. J. Finucane, SECONDED by Cllr. T. O'Brien that we the members of Kerry County Council hereby resolve that the Draft Kerry County Council Budget as presented by the County Manager for the local financial year ending 31st December, 2014 be and is hereby amended as follows:

Table F: Housing & Building

Goods and Services – Rents from Houses to be reduced by €201,510

Goods and Services – Other Income to be increased by €201,510

A vote was taken on this proposal which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Beasley, Brassil, Buckley, Connor-Scarteen, Counihan, Cronin, Culloty, Ferris, Finucane, Foley, Gleeson, Griffin, D. Healy-Rae, Leahy, McCarthy, McEllistrim, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Donoghue, Purtill, Sheahan, Wharton Slattery and Fitzgerald **(23)**

Against: None **(0)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

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

14.01.13.02 Adoption of the Local Authority Budget for the Local Financial Year ending 31st December, 2014.

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, the Local Government (Financial Procedures and Audit) Regulations 2002 and the Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations, the Draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2014 as presented by the County Manager and as set out in Tables A and B, be and is hereby adopted with the amendment contained in the previous Resolution.

Cllr. B. O'Connell SECONDED this proposal.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Brassil, Buckley, Connor-Scarteen, Counihan, Cronin, Culloty, Finucane, Foley, Gleeson, Griffin, Leahy, McCarthy, McEllistrim, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Donoghue, Purtill, Sheahan, Wharton-Slattery and Fitzgerald **(20)**

Against: Cllrs. Beasley, Ferris and D. Healy-Rae **(3)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

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

14.01.13.03 Determination of the Annual Rate on Valuation for the Local Financial Year ending 31 December, 2014.

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, the Local Government (Financial Procedures and Audit) Regulations 2002 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 2014, 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. The Annual Rate to be levied shall be €80.35.

Cllr. B. O'Connell SECONDED this proposal.

| TABLE A - CALCULATION OF ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| Summary by Service Division | Summary per Table A | | | | | |
| | Expenditure | Income | Budget net Expenditure 2014 | | Estimated Net Expenditure Outturn 2013 (as restated) | |
| | € | € | € | % | € | % |
| Gross Revenue Expenditure & Income | | | | | | |
| Housing and Building | 15,847,207 | 15,826,988 | 20,219 | 0.1% | 668,068 | 1% |
| Road Transport & Safety | 28,161,861 | 16,438,757 | 11,723,104 | 29.6% | 12,187,541 | 25% |
| Water Services | 15,025,749 | 14,266,827 | 758,922 | 1.9% | 10,731,382 | 22% |
| Development Management | 7,077,750 | 1,705,845 | 5,371,905 | 13.6% | 5,568,776 | 12% |
| Environmental Services | 13,608,808 | 3,437,389 | 10,171,419 | 25.7% | 9,140,850 | 19% |
| Recreation and Amenity | 4,705,741 | 430,905 | 4,274,836 | 10.8% | 4,294,999 | 9% |
| Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare | 5,220,185 | 4,492,982 | 727,203 | 1.8% | 877,923 | 2% |
| Miscellaneous Services | 9,128,039 | 2,567,827 | 6,560,212 | 16.6% | 4,599,539 | 10% |
| | 98,775,340 | 59,167,520 | 39,607,820 | 100% | 48,069,078 | 100% |
| + County Charge | | | | | | |
| - County Charge | | | 6,330,698 | | 6,394,644 | |
| Provision for Debit Balance | | | | | | |
| Adjusted Gross Expenditure & Income (A) | 98,775,340 | 59,167,520 | 33,277,122 | | 41,674,434 | |

Budget Meeting

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| | | | | | | |
| Financed by Other Income/Credit Balances | | | | | | |
| Provision for Credit Balance | | | | | | |
| Local Government Fund /General Purpose Grant | | 9,877,123 | 9,877,123 | | 18,374,432 | |
| Pension Related Deduction | | 2,350,000 | 2,350,000 | | 2,400,000 | |
| Sub - Total (B) | | | 12,227,123 | | 20,774,432 | |
| Amount of Rates to be Levied C=(A-B) | | | 21,050,000 | | | |
| Net Effective Valuation D | | | 261,979 | | | |
| General Annual Rate on Valuation C/D | | | 80.35 | | | |

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. Beasley, Brassil, Buckley, Connor-Scarteen, Counihan, Cronin, Culloty, Ferris, Finucane, Foley, Gleeson, Griffin, Leahy, McCarthy, McEllistrim, O'Brien, O'Connell, O'Donoghue, Purtill, Sheahan, Wharton-Slattery and Fitzgerald **(22)**

Against: Cllr. D. Healy-Rae **(1)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

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

14.01.13.04 Report on the Capital Programme 2014 – 2016

Cllr. B. O'Connell PROPOSED that the County Manager's Report on the Capital Programme 2014 – 2016 as incorporated into the Report on the Budget be noted.

Cllr. B. Cronin SECONDED this proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

14.01.13.05 Approval of additional Expenditure for 2013

Cllr. M. Gleeson PROPOSED that we the members of Kerry County Council resolve that the additional expenditure for 2013 as set out in the Column titled "Estimated Out-Turn 2013" in the Local Authority Budget, as circulated, be and is hereby approved.

Cllr. G. Wharton Slattery SECONDED this proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

Retirement of Mr. T. Curran, County Manager

The Manager thanked the members for their support for the Budget. He said he was appointed County Manager in 2007 and his contract was for seven years. His contract will be up in June 2014 and he will be retiring with effect from early June. He thanked the members for their assistance and co-operation and he wished those going forward for election every success. He wished the retiring councillors well in their retirement.

On behalf of the Fine Gael Party Cllr. J. Finucane thanked the Manager for his excellent service to County Kerry. From his own experience while participating in a number of delegations the Manager was fearless when it came to dealing with senior Department officials and he did not stand back. He wished the Manager well in his retirement and whatever he will do in the future.

On behalf of the Fianna Fáil Party Cllr. J. Brassil expressed his complete surprise at this announcement. He hoped there would be a more appropriate setting at which members could pay tribute to the Manager. The Manager's love for the county was evident and he served it with great distinction and dignity. He was always willing to listen to councillors and members appreciated that. It was a

pleasure working with him and on a personal level he was very disappointed to see him go. In conclusion Cllr. Brassil wished the Manager good health and happiness for the future.

On behalf of the Labour Party Cllr. T O'Brien said the Manager had taken members by surprise. He worked very closely with him last year as Mayor and it was a very positive experience. Their visit to New York last year was a huge education for him. He marvelled at the Manager's capacity for work which was enormous and very impressive. The Manager was always very dedicated to Kerry County Council and the County of Kerry. He was always very fair in his dealings with the members. He wished him well in his retirement.

On behalf of the Sinn Fein Party Cllr. T. Ferris said it was a huge shock to hear the Manager was retiring. She would welcome an opportunity when members could pay fitting tribute to him. He has a social conscience and she wished him well in his retirement.

Cllr. B. Cronin said the Manager will be a tremendous loss to Kerry. As Director of Roads and subsequently County Manager he was a Kerryman through and through and he had the interests of the county at heart. He was Kerry's first native Manager and it was a pleasure to work with him. He wished him well in his retirement.

Cllr. D. Healy Rae said on his own behalf and on behalf of Cllr. Johnny Healy Rae, Deputy Michael Healy Rae and Jackie Healy Rae he thanked the Manager for the excellent service he has given to Kerry. He was sad to hear that he was retiring but he was grateful for the understanding and fair play he afforded to members. The Manager had an ability to understand members and he wished him well in the future.

Cllr. P. O'Donoghue on his own behalf and on behalf of the people of South West Kerry said when the Manager was appointed County Manager the people of his area were extremely proud and felt it was a huge boost for the county. People used to say to him that he was one of our own. He was a councillors' man and always listened to them and understood their needs and treated them with respect. This is a very sad day for public administration as the Manager had an abundance of ability. Cllr. O'Donoghue said he hoped the Manager will continue to work in public service. He wished him well in his retirement.

The Mayor said the Manager is hard-working and very focused. He was always looking for more for Kerry and he was very fair and helpful. He wished him health and happiness on his retirement.

The meeting concluded at 5.10pm.

Gerard O'Brien
Meetings Administrator

Mayor of Kerry