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**MIONTUAIRISCÍ CRUINNITHE BHUISÉID DE COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHIARRAÍ,
A THIONÓLADH AR-LÍNE/FÍORÚIL AGUS I SIAMSA TÍRE, TRÁ LÍ, AR AN LUAN,
29 SAMHAIN 2021**

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
ONLINE AND IN SIAMSA TÍRE, TRALEE, ON MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2021**

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

Tom Barry	Robert Beasley	Michael Cahill
Patrick Connor-Scarteen	Brendan Cronin	Charlie Farrelly
Deirdre Ferris	Jim Finucane	Breandán Fitzgerald
Fionnán Fitzgerald	Seamus Fitzgerald	John Francis Flynn
Cathal Foley	Michael Foley	Michael Gleeson
Donal Grady	Jackie Healy-Rae	Johnny Healy-Rae
Maura Healy-Rae	Niall Kelleher	Michael Kennelly
Sam Locke	Dan McCarthy	Jimmy Moloney
Marie Moloney	Norma Moriarty	Terry O'Brien
Niall O'Callaghan	Bobby O'Connell	Michael O'Shea
Mikey Sheehy	Aoife Thornton	Johnnie Wall

IN ATTENDANCE/I LÁTHAIR

Ms. M. Murrell, Chief Executive	Mr. C. O'Sullivan, Dir of Rds, Transp'n & Marine
Mr. J. Breen, Director Water Services	Mr. M. O'Donoghue, Director Housing
Mr. C. O'Connor, Director Corp. Servs.	Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance
Mr. M. Scannell, Dir. Job Cr/Sust. ED	Mr P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator
Ms. D. Griffin, SO Corporate Support	Mr. O. O'Shea, Press Officer
Ms. C. Fitzgerald, SO Corporate	Mr. J. Kennelly, SE Roads
Mr. F. Hartnett, A/SE Housing	Ms. C. Roberts, Fin. Mgmt. Acct.
Ms. K. Moriarty, A/SEO Finance	Mr. G. O'Brien, A/SEO Environment
Mr. J. McCarthy, AO Finance	Ms. J. Brosnan, AO Finance
Mr. P. O'Connor, AO Finance	Ms. C. O'Leary, AO Finance
Ms. T. Browne, AO Finance	Ms. S. Sheridan, SSO Finance
Mr. R. Tangney, SO Finance	Ms. L. Breen, SO Finance
Mr. J.J. Canty, SO Finance	Mr. B. Doolan, ASO Finance
Ms. R. Kelly, CO Finance	

The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m.

Cathaoirleach Jimmy Moloney took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the Budget Meeting of Kerry County Council.

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, said a roll call would now be taken to ensure members can hear and see proceedings.

Present for the Roll Call:

Cllrs. Tom Barry, Robert Beasley, Michael Cahill, Patrick Connor-Scarteen, Brendan Cronin, Charlie Farrelly, Deirdre Ferris, Jim Finucane, Breandán

Fitzgerald, Fionnán Fitzgerald, Seamus Fitzgerald, Cathal Foley, Michael Foley, Donal Grady, Jackie Healy-Rae, Maura Healy-Rae, Niall Kelleher, Sam Locke, Dan McCarthy, Marie Moloney, Norma Moriarty, Terry O'Brien, Niall O'Callaghan, Bobby O'Connell, Michael O'Shea, Mikey Sheehy, Aoife Thornton, Johnnie Wall, Cathaoirleach Jimmy Moloney (30)

Absent for the Roll Call:

Cllrs. John Francis Flynn, Johnny Healy-Rae, Mike Kennelly (3)

Protocols for Meetings

Mr. P. Corkery, Meeting Administrator, referred Elected Members to the Protocols for Remote Meetings of Kerry County Council. He gave an overview of the protocols, highlighting that attendees are to have their speakers muted until the Cathaoirleach invites them to speak, to use the 'raise hand' function to indicate that they wish to speak. As per Standing Orders recording/photographing the meeting is prohibited. Roll Calls are taken to ensure Members can see and hear proceedings. If the Cathaoirleach indicates an Elected Member is to speak they are to turn on their camera. He welcomed members of the press to today's meeting. He highlighted the routes to Fire Exits should they be required.

29.11.2021.01 Cathaoirleach's Report on the Budget CPG Meeting 20 July 2021

The Cathaoirleach's Report on the Budget CPG Meeting held on 20 July 2021 was noted.

29.11.2021.02 Consideration of the Local Authority Budget for the Local Financial Year ending 31 December 2022

The Chief Executive advised members on the Draft Budget prepared for Kerry County Council for the financial year ending 31st December 2022 in accordance with the Local Government Act 2001 and the Local Government Reform Act 2014, together with regulations, circulars and guidance issued under the auspices of both Acts for consideration by the Members at the Budget Meeting fixed for Monday, 29th November 2021. This report outlines the provisions of the Draft Budget 2022.

Presentation of the Statutory Budget for adoption by Members concludes the three stage Budget process for 2022. The first stage required Members, following public consultation, to consider adoption of the local adjustment factor for the 2022 rate of Local Property Tax (LPT) at the Budget Strategy meeting of the 26th July 2021. The second stage of the Budget process required consideration of the Municipal District Allocation for 2022 at the Municipal District Budgetary Plan meetings held on 11th and 12th November 2021. The third and final stage of the Budget process commences during the prescribed Budget period at the Annual Statutory Budget Meeting of 29th November 2021.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 presented unprecedented challenges, Kerry County Council has continued to ensure that service delivery is maintained across the County throughout this period.

The Council continues to have a major role in leading out the economic and community response across the various sectors, given the impact of COVID over this period. A Community Framework was formed to coordinate the inter-agency response to the

community's needs. This Framework is an effective model for the Council to embrace and implement into the future. Structures were established with the Kerry Economic Stakeholder Forum at the outset of the pandemic, to develop initiatives to support tourism, retail, and the wider business sector during the re-opening and recovery phases.

Recently Members adopted the County Kerry COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan to support and guide the county through the challenges of the next phase of the pandemic and to help stimulate and support economic recovery and activity in the County.

The Plan is a multi-stakeholder response to the economic impact of COVID-19 and reflects the significant capital and programme investment that is committed from national and local government. It focuses on several key themes including Digital Transformation, the Transition to a Low Carbon Economy, building on Kerry's natural resources and the necessary training and education to support these structural changes. It also concentrates on the challenges of regenerating towns and villages, the overall marketing of the county in relation to attracting investment, talent and visitors and the development of tourism, culture, heritage, and amenities to support the quality of life in the county both for its resident and visiting populations. The Plan identifies 189 actions that will be pursued by the Council in 2022 and subsequent years.

Primary Considerations Budget 2022

Draft Budget 2022 is framed in the context of the continuing uncertainty in relation to COVID-19 and the prevailing economic challenges and associated financial risks. This matter will be kept under constant review by Council management throughout 2022 and in this context it may be necessary to revisit the Budget allocations, Members will be kept updated in this regard.

The outturn position for 2021 will be contingent upon receiving supports to losses in Local Income streams, for example Car Parking, and COVID related expenditure incurred; final confirmation of individual amounts allocated to Local Authorities are awaited at this time.

Draft Budget 2022 is set in the context of the advancement of a number of substantial national and local policies, such as the Climate Action Plan, new County Development Plan, Housing For All Action Plan, Rural Policy, Active Travel Policy, Greenway programme, Sustainable Transport plans etc. This Budget has been aligned to support a number of these programmes and local initiatives in the short and medium term to ensure that additional funding opportunities available through these initiatives are maximised.

There are significant and unavoidable organisational wide cost increases which have to be taken into consideration. In as far as possible, these increases have been built into existing Budgets – resulting in tighter budget allocations for departments for 2022.

The additional 7.5% raised by the Local Property Tax this year was critical to the funding of the own resource element of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and Rural Regeneration and Development Fund grants both approved and applied for in the County and is reflected in the Draft Budget 2022. The funding of the own resource element of these grants will require a commitment from this and future Budgets given the scale of the grant funding received for these and future projects.

Members will note that the County Council has an unprecedented capital programme for the development of the County – with over €1.4 billion of schemes progressing through design, planning and delivery phases. Plans are underway by the Council to deliver a €40m investment under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund programme, and substantial Rural Regeneration and Development Funded schemes are at both the planning and delivery stages. Furthermore, the Council will continue to deliver a large programme of projects funded by the Town & Village and the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme aligned to our Rural Policy.

The capital programme includes significant investment into the road network across the County including further development of plans announced for Tralee – Killarney Inter Urban Link, delivery of the Listowel By-Pass, continued investment in the N86 Tralee Dingle and NTO Ring of Kerry Route, the Rathscannell (Dale) Road and the Clash to Ballymullen Relief Road. Work continues in the advancement of the overall €30m Greenway programme for the County. The capital programme includes the 'Housing For All' programme which sets out the target of 1,423 units for the next five years. The Government's recently published Climate Action Plan 2021 will guide the development of Kerry County Council's Climate Action Plan at a local level, to help reduce the risks and impacts of climate change across communities. A commitment has been made of €7.5m to fund the retrofitting of the County Public Lighting infrastructure, due to commence in 2022 and works to advance the Active Travel investment of €5.6m will be progressed during 2022. In addition, Mobility Plans will be delivered for the County towns. The Council is at this time working with business, communities, tourism and education stakeholders to further promote the County. This is a critical role for Kerry County Council in the promotion of economic opportunities throughout the County.

To summarise, the primary considerations which impact on the preparation of this Draft Budget include:

- Maintaining service delivery levels.
- Long-term impact of the pandemic on the Council's core Commercial Rates Base and very limited buoyancy in rates income in the context of COVID-19, Rates harmonisation (concludes in 2022) and the Rates Revaluation process.
- Provision of support required for the economic recovery of the County aligned to the Economic Recovery Plan.
- Significant and unavoidable organisational wide cost increases which have to be taken into consideration, presenting a tighter budget for the departments for 2022.
- Implementation of increased efficiencies and cost reduction in service provision.
- Provision of own resource funding to support the significantly expanding Capital Works program and provision of local infrastructure.
- A continued need to support tourism infrastructure, arts facilities and leisure complexes, all of which have experienced reductions in income.
- Financial support for own resource funding for Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and Rural Regeneration and Development Fund grant funding received and applied for.
- Draft Budget 2022 reflects the maximisation of income and the collection of monies for 2022; collections and charges will be kept under review throughout the year.

Draft Budget 2022

Income

The Draft Budget 2022 provides for expenditure of €177.23m. The proposed budget expenditure is funded as follows: -

Sources of Income	Draft Budget 2022
Grants and Subsidies	€63.15m
Rates	€47.59m
Local Property Tax Allocation	€14.85m
Rents & Loans (inc. RAS)	€13.49m
Irish Water recoupment	€13.16m
Parking Charges and Fines	€ 3.23m
Transfer Station and Refuse Charges	€ 2.71m
Other Recoupable Income	€ 5.17m
Other Misc Income	€13.88m
Total	€177.23m

Commercial Rates

Kerry County Council has reflected income for the collection of Commercial Rates of €47.59m for Draft Budget 2022. The harmonisation process continues and 2022 represents the 8th year of the 8-year harmonisation period agreed with Members since Budget 2015. The 8-year harmonisation period has gradually resulted in a single Annual Rate on Valuation of 79.25 for 2022 for all LEAs. The Rates Revaluation process as scheduled has commenced and will continue into 2022, revised valuations will come into effect for rate demands in 2023.

Draft Budget 2022 reflects the long-term negative impact of the pandemic on the Council's core Commercial rates base. In conjunction with this there is very limited buoyancy in the rates income within the valuation base generally. This is a serious consideration not only in the context of this Budget but also in the context of future financial planning. In addition, the current Commercial Rates Months Waiver Scheme does not provide funding for Vacant properties. The current rate of relief for vacant commercial rated properties in Kerry County Council is 100%.

Housing

Kerry County Council, through its Housing Programmes (including new construction, refurbishment/ maintenance programmes and energy retrofitting programme) has a major impact on the construction industry, being a significant driver of activity in this sector at present in Kerry. In addition, the improvement grant schemes, and other schemes generate construction and construction related activities with additional works in the refurbishment and improvement of housing stock (both public and private) across the County.

Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland

It is a key objective of the State to increase Housing supply and ensure that everyone in the State should have access to a home to purchase or rent at an affordable price, built to a high standard and in the right place, offering a high quality of life. The Government's Housing for All plan sets out ambitious targets for new residential Social Housing development by Local Authorities to meet current and future social housing need.

Kerry County Council has been notified of a target of 1,423 new units under Council construction programmes (Kerry County Council and Approved Housing Bodies programmes) in the Programme out to 2026. This programme forms a key and significant part of overall activity in this sector of the economy.

Housing remains a significant priority and activity levels in the Housing area continue at very high levels albeit the 2020 and 2021 Programmes have been significantly impacted by COVID- 19 and specifically Public Health Restrictions and the suspension of construction activities for various periods.

Additionally, the Council works in partnership with Approved Housing Bodies to deliver units as part of the overall Capital Programme. Details of the ongoing Capital Programmes are outlined in the regular reports considered at full Council and at Municipal District Meetings. A number of Council projects originally scheduled for delivery in 2021 have been delayed due to COVID-19 public health restrictions and the suspension of construction activities early in 2021 but are on target for delivery in early 2022.

While the delivery of Housing services to persons requiring emergency accommodation and to those who are homeless continues to be very challenging, significant progress has been made in 2021. The position continues to be a significant portion of expenditure in this area. It is recouped under established arrangements, however the Council does support this service area further with staff resources and the use of some Council properties for emergency accommodation interventions. This service remains under constant review.

This Council has a portfolio of land originally purchased for the construction of housing. The Council is obliged to service the loans on these lands from the Revenue Budget. The Council consulted directly with the HFA during 2021 and negotiated a further interest-only payment arrangement for matured land loans for 2022. Future Housing construction programmes will require the acquisition of additional lands to facilitate ongoing programmes.

In addition, the Council will avail of schemes such as the Energy Efficiency Schemes and economic stimulus measures as previously advised to members to improve Kerry County Council's extensive housing stock. This will be updated to Members at Municipal District Meetings over the course of 2022.

Roads, Transport and Safety

There have been significant announcements recently on Government policy in relation to future transport investment. The revised National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030, published in October 2021, sets out the Government's priorities in expenditure on transport, having regard to the likely impact of specified measures on climate and environmental outcomes. The Department of Transport's priorities for investment are also outlined in the "*National Investment Framework for Transport Infrastructure*", details of which were presented to Council at its meeting in May 2021.

These documents outline that regional connectivity and facilitating compact urban growth are Government priorities and this will be reflected in the funding for roads going forward. The NDP details considerable investment will also be identified for Active Travel with prioritisation then focussed on Public Transport and then Private Transport. The budget for National Roads will also consider the balance of maintenance,

optimisation and improvement of existing road stock before decisions can be approved for new projects.

It is acknowledged in the Government strategies, that the regional and local road network requires significant annual funding to ensure resilience to the impacts of climate change and access for rural communities to critical services such as education, healthcare and employment.

The highest priority for investment in regional and local roads is to maintain the asset through the protection and renewal of the existing network. Maintaining this network in good condition is of the utmost importance to the social fabric and economy of the country. In addition to maintaining the network in good repair a number of targeted improvement schemes have been identified for progression during the course of the NDP.

The 'Our Rural Future' Rural Development Policy launched in 2021, also contains a number of commitments in relation to transport in rural and regional areas. It commits to the provision of improved and accessible public transport services for people of all ages and abilities, the piloting of new transport initiatives in rural areas and exploring the potential integration with other state funded transport services. This will be managed by the National Transport Authority (NTA), with public transport service providers.

The impact of these policies may influence the level of grant funding in 2022, details of which will only be available in early 2022.

Significant investment into the road network across the County will progress over 2022. This coupled with the major capital investment to primary roads access to the County including the Macroom and Adare by-passes signals a major boost to the economic development of the County, through improved connectivity with the designated cities in the region.

The Draft Budget 2022 figures for the Roads Grant Schemes are prepared on the original 2021 National and Non-National road allocations from the Department of Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

In 2021, the grant allocation from the Department for the non-national roads was €29.55m, an increase of €4.21m on the previous year. The allocation included €952,829 for drainage works, which was targeted for works on the local secondary and tertiary road network, €343,502 for Climate Adaptation Works, and €865,000 under the Community Involvement Scheme, which allowed for the improvement of 17 local roads. The Department of Rural and Community Development also provided a grant allocation of €1,187,099 for Local Improvement Schemes in Kerry in 2021. The Council recruited additional outdoor staff in 2021, across the Municipal Districts, and invested further in our Machinery Yard, for the delivery of the increased work programme.

Kerry County Council also secured funding under the Specific Improvement Grant scheme, which allowed for the commencement of the Rathscannel (Dale) Road and the Clash to Ballymullen Relief Road, which facilitates the construction of the new Gaelcholaiste Chiarraí, and to advance improvements on the Tralee- Fenit route; Tralee Northern Relief Road and Listry Bridge. Further funding is being sought to progress these schemes in 2022, as well as the design of future relief roads in Dingle /Daingean Uí Chúis, Killarney and Kenmare.

Additional funding of €806,675 was granted by the Department of Transport in June, under the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Works, which allowed for works at 21 locations, which had been subject to flooding and to address the risk of future damage to the road infrastructure. The National Transport Authority provided grant funding of €5.65 m towards Active Travel measures and a dedicated design team is being established to deliver this programme, in line with Government policy on addressing climate change. The Council completed the Flesk Cycleway and planning consent was secured for the further development of cycleways in Killarney, which will be constructed in 2022.

Water Services

Kerry County Council continues to provide Water Services in Kerry, operating as an agent of Irish Water under a Service Level Agreement. The services provided in the Service Level Agreement include operation and maintenance of water supply, drinking water compliance, non-domestic meter maintenance, water conservation and leakage reduction, operation and maintenance of wastewater plants and networks, new water and sewer connections and non domestic meter reading. The water services section continues to perform very highly in meeting Key Performance Indicators as reviewed at regular quarterly meetings with Irish Water.

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

Planning and Forward Planning

The review of the Kerry County Development Plan is well underway with the Draft County Development being considered by the elected members and the subsequent publication of the Draft Plan for public consultation and submissions in December. This review, which is a two-year process, is once again being delivered in-house, and will set out a vision for the future of this County in a sustainable manner, for the benefit of all the people of Kerry and those visiting the County. The Plan involves substantial supportive environmental documentation and statistical analysis all of which has been carried out within the Department. The Plan will be finalised in 2022.

Work on the Local Area Plans continued in 2021 with the adoption of the Dingle Local Area Plan. The remaining Local Area Plan for East Iveragh will commence in quarter one 2022 and be completed within the year. In the context of the Revenue Budget under Development Management, significant cost savings are achieved by the in-house review of these plans. The Fenit Masterplan will be published and finalised in 2022 and work will commence on additional masterplans previously identified.

As the economy improves, this unit will play a key role in responding to increasing activity in planning applications, with a particular focus on achieving the requirements of *'Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland'*. The Council will continue to review its internal reporting structure and submissions to ABP to ensure that policy implemented at local level is approved, where appeals are submitted.

Unfinished Housing Estates

Substantial progress continues to be made in addressing issues identified in unfinished housing estates across the county. The proactive approach adopted by the Council's Housing Estates Unit has resulted in issues being resolved in the more problematical estates. Significant resources have been allocated to the unit over the past number of

years and this ongoing cost is again provided for in the 2022 allocation. Ongoing inspections identify where additional works are required to be carried out.

The Housing Estates Unit will continue to pursue the non-payment or resolution of bond claims still outstanding and, in this regard, has lodged 34 claims with Financial Institutions and Insurance Companies seeking payment of the proceeds of bonds to complete outstanding works in unfinished estates. Good progress is being made in resolving outstanding bond claims with our larger Bond Holders. A substantial number of AIB Bond claims have been paid over the last number of years, having agreed a resolution process with them. Kerry County Council will continue to work with all Financial Institutions and Bond Companies in pursuit of outstanding Bond claims.

Taking in Charge of Estates

The Housing Estates Unit manage a very active “Taking in Charge” programme. A total of 7 estates have been formally taken in charge to date in 2021. It is expected that a further batch of estates will be advertised for taking in charge before the end of 2021. In addition to the above, Kerry County Council currently has 56 “Taking in Charge” applications on hand. Many of the remaining estates to be taken in charge are historic estates where there is no bond in place. The formal approval of Irish Water is also required before Kerry County Council can proceed with the “Taking in Charge” process in accordance with the MOU agreed in 2015.

Tourism, Economic and Community Development

COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact both on the Economic, Community and Social life of the County and Kerry County Council has had a major role in co-ordinating the community and economic response across the various sectors. The Council continues to have overall responsibility for co-ordinating the community response to Covid-19, collaborating with other state agencies and the wider community and voluntary sectors. During 2021 the Council and its partners delivered a number of programmes through the Government Plan “Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19”, through the Healthy Ireland Fund, Kerry Sports Partnership, healthy living campaigns, staying connected, physical activity, community food, creativity and positive ageing.

County Kerry COVID19 Economic Recovery Plan 2021

Kerry County Council continues to lead a co-ordinated response to the economic challenges experienced as a result of the pandemic. The Council, in conjunction with the Kerry Economic Stakeholder Forum, developed the County Kerry Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan 2021. The plan is aligned to national, regional, and local policy. The Pillars for Economic Recovery and Growth were developed through engagement with multi-stake-holder groups including Munster Technological University (MTU), Kerry Education and Training Board (KETB), KerrySciTech, the Kerry Tourism Industry Federation (KTIF) and the Kerry Chamber Network, along with key deliverables to support the delivery of the plan.

The Plan outlines the opportunities for the County in advancing major infrastructure development and to respond to the major challenges and opportunities of transitioning to a low carbon and digital economy, the development of the associated skills base, the regeneration of our towns and villages and an integrated marketing campaign for the County as a destination both for visitors, investment and as a skills destination. The Plan also incorporates the work of the Employment Creation & Retention working Group incorporating the medium and longer-term strategies for bolstering employment opportunities in the County.

The delivery of the 189 actions identified in the Economic Recovery Plan will be pursued in 2022 and subsequent years. A report will be presented to Council annually on the progress in relation to the plan.

Business Advisory and Tourism groups were also established within the structure to develop initiatives to support tourism, retail, and the wider business sector in this challenging period.

Kerry County Council has a key role in marketing the County for both inward investment, job creation, attraction, and retention of skills as well as the promotion of the County as a visitor destination. A renewed focus is being given to the opportunities of working remotely either in the home or in the various Hubs developed in the County and a promotion of these opportunities will continue in 2022. The Council has supported the development of a Web portal and associated marketing for the County in partnership with Kerry Sci-tech and Kerry Tourism Industry Federation to provide a modern platform for marketing the County both from a tourism and business perspective. A detailed marketing and branding campaign is being developed in support of this marketing drive. This work is ongoing and will be finalised in 2022.

Tourism

Tourism continues to be a key economic driver for the County. The Council will continue to work with Fáilte Ireland in the development, implementation, and delivery of the Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDP) in the coming year including the finalisation of the Dingle VEDP, the development of the North Kerry VEDP, Killarney Gateway Town Project, Tralee Destination Town and the existing VEDP for the Skellig Region and Kenmare Beara Peninsula areas. The review of the Tourism Strategy commences for the County over the course of 2022 and will focus on positioning Kerry as a sustainable tourism destination.

The delivery and marketing of the Greenways in North Kerry will be a vital component in unlocking the tourism potential of North Kerry as well as continuing the improvement of infrastructure in support of tourism activity including the Failte Ireland Platforms for Growth facilities at three blue flag beaches, the Bray Head Signal Tower, and facilities and improvements across our blue flag beaches.

Urban & Rural Regeneration/Town & Village Renewal/Fáilte Ireland Funds/ORIS/CLÁR

The Council has been very successful in the development of projects under the suite of grant schemes available that continue to benefit all areas of the County. The development of these proposals with the Municipal Districts and local communities explore opportunities that are appropriate to the scale and requirements of these settlements and rural areas. The regeneration of town and village centres is a key driver in both National and local Policy and is enshrined in both the Draft County Development Plan and the County's Economic Recovery Plan.

A major programme is underway to manage the development of the County's strategic opportunity sites, resulting in significant investment of €34m grant funding being secured, from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, for urban regeneration programmes, under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund in Tralee and Killarney and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund in Cahersiveen, in addition to the fund previously secured under the European Regional Development Fund for the Island of Geese site in Tralee.

The grant funded works, under the ERDF, on the Island of Geese site will be completed in 2022, with ongoing partnership negotiations in the future development of this site. The funding received will allow for the progression of the development of on-going public realm improvements in Tralee, advancement of the Áras Phadráig Masterplan, development of public realm design for Killarney and the Cahersiveen Town Regeneration project. RRDF applications for Listowel and Killorglin are currently being assessed by the Department. The potential of the Sara Lee and Fels Point sites will also be further advanced in 2022.

Greenway Development

During 2021 the construction of the Tralee-Fenit and Listowel -Kilmorna Greenways have progressed, despite the impact of COVID-19 restrictions earlier in the year, and the construction of these projects will be a priority for completion in 2022. An Bord Pleanála approved the CPO and planning application for the South Kerry Greenway in 2021 but progress on these schemes has been impacted by legal challenges, which are still being considered by the Courts.

Community Development

The Community Development Unit through the LCDC in partnership with the Local Development Sector is delivering LEADER transitional programme for the County and in the development of Kerry's next Local Development Strategy which will form the basis for the next LEADER Programme. The delivery of both the LEADER and SICAP funding under the administration of the Community Development Unit ensures greater visibility over the funding streams and greater value for money. Newer projects such as the Healthy Kerry Framework & Age Friendly initiatives will positively impact young and old, while the continued support and strengthening of the relationship with the PPN Networks is a crucial linkage between this Council and community groups around Kerry.

The review of Local Economic and Community Plan will be undertaken in 2022. Guidelines on the development of the Plan have recently been published and there is significant statistical research required which has already commenced. The finalised Local Economic and Community Plan will be brought to Council for adoption in 2022.

Environmental Services

The Budget Allocation for 2022 provides for the costs of operating the five Transfer Stations/Civic Amenity Sites in the County at Killarney, Milltown, Kenmare, Cahersiveen and Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramháíola Chorca Dhuibhne. This includes the costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the facilities, the costs of the transport and disposal of the waste deposited and the cost of operating the recycling facilities at the Transfer Stations. Significant improvements have been carried out in recent years by Kerry County Council at our landfill site at Muingnaminnane in accordance with our obligations under our EPA waste licence. The impact of aftercare costs associated with our waste infrastructure and necessary upgrading works in our civic amenity sites and bring banks will require further investment during 2022 to ensure high quality customer service.

Provision of €0.944m is retained towards the maintenance of 157 Burial Grounds Countywide and includes provision for additional expenditure in respect of the costs associated with the Burial Ground Development Programme which for 2022 includes the development of a Columbarium Wall for Rath Burial Ground in Tralee. This also includes €55,000 as an allocation to community organisations in recognition of their

ongoing involvement and valuable assistance in maintaining our burial grounds, and also includes increased loan charges provision to support Burial Ground Development Countywide.

Fire Services

The current COVID-19 pandemic continues to present particular challenges to the essential and critical services provided by the Kerry Fire Service. A high-level response to business continuity has been put in place for training and response purposes and will be required to continue into 2022. The retained and whole-time firefighters stationed in the 10 fire stations around Kerry, receive continuous training to the highest standards. In addition, there are fire safety programmes rolled out to communities and schools around the County, which link with Fire Safety week and other national fire safety programmes such as our Fire safety at Christmas messaging. With the impact of COVID-19 meaning that people are spending more time at home, the Fire Service have amended and targeted messaging regarding fire safety in the home as well as assisting commercial premises in advice regarding fire safety as they reopened post COVID-19. As the construction industry gets fully operational again our building control section is seeing substantial increased applications activity.

Climate Action & Energy Reduction

The Government has recently launched the Climate Action Plan 2021. This plan sets out an ambitious target of a reduction of 51% in national greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This Climate Action Plan comes on the back of the enactment during the year of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act. This legislation commits, in law, to a move to a climate resilient and climate neutral economy by 2050. The Programme for Government also commits to a 7% average yearly reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade, and to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. The new Act also provides that local authorities must prepare a Climate Action Plan, within 18 months of the commencement of the Act. This legislation and the Climate Action Plan recently published will be a key driver of future work programmes and preliminary work has commenced on the development of a Plan for the County, as well as the development of a Green Campus Plan for our facilities, incorporating EV charging points and a move to change some of our vehicles to renewable fuels.

The Council reports annually on its energy consumption to SEAI. This data is then used to determine the Council's performance with regard to the 33% energy efficiency improvement target that had been set for all Local Authorities by 2020. The verified results for the 2020 reporting cycle are not yet published by the SEAI. However, to date the Council are currently on track to exceed the 2020 target with a recorded 42.9% energy saving submitted for verification. The Council is committed to achieving further energy savings through the upgrade of its lighting network, with a contractor being appointed for the Southern Region in early 2022, upgrade in our buildings, and modernising our fleet in order to build on the savings to date and achieve the 50% energy efficiency savings as set out in recent legislation.

Library Services

Kerry County Council has 9 full time libraries, 2 Mobile units, a dedicated Local History and Archives section and provides a range of free online services. The service provision is underpinned by the national Strategy for Libraries 2018-2022 which seeks to develop libraries as the 'go-to' places for a range of public services. In addition to the core book lending service, Kerry Library provides block loans and classroom novels

to schools, children's and active aged services, literacy support and services to all communities.

2021 continued to be a major challenge for libraries nationwide, due to COVID-19 restrictions all libraries closed at short notice in March 2020 and since then services have been restored but not yet to full pre pandemic level, which in turn has impacted upon footfall and overall library usage. In line with national policy, a number of service models were activated including 'Contact & collect' and 'Browse & borrow'. Usage trends have shown a substantial continued increase in the usage of our online resources which include e-books, e-magazines, e-comics, e-learning courses, e-audio, e-languages and e-newspapers. All continue to be available free of charge with access through the website www.kerrylibrary.ie .

Kerry Library has been proactive in the delivery of nationally supported library programmes such as Right to Read (awarded a national Right to Read Award again for 2021), Work Matters and Healthy Ireland @ the Library. All are now primarily delivered online and supplemented by the provision of quality book stock and our experienced and trained library staff.

Miscellaneous Services

The amount provided in this Draft Budget 2022 for the General Municipal Allocation is €1.707m. This is comprised of the €0.75m for Municipal District allocation and is for the purpose of supporting Community Support/Community Initiatives, Town Development Projects and provides for an allocation for Strategic element which seeks to maximise the opportunities provided by alternative sources of funding. In addition, the Councillor Specific Municipal Operations District allocation of €0.957m is maintained.

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

An increased allocation is made to cover the costs associated with the operation of the IT Department to take account of essential upgrade works on the Council's IT infrastructure to maximise the levels of protection available due to the increased risks associated with cyber security threats. This requires a continuing investment in hardware and software to ensure that the integrity of the Council's systems are protected and secure, together with additional training for staff and elected members in relation to cyber security. There will be a continuing focus on cyber security and data protection obligations during 2022 with a targeted programme of security and privacy related projects advanced during the year.

The Council's success in relation to applications under the Digital Innovation Fund again showcases the quality of proposals being developed within the council and the positive engagement with local communities in developing proposals.

Draft Budget 2022 includes loan charges provision for the repayment of the loan due for the Killorglin Area Services Centre. This project represents a large urban town renewal project and is an example of the continued investment required in projects of this nature.

The Local Government Operational Procurement Office, Killarney

This Council is established as the National Procurement Office to host procurement initiatives on a shared service basis on behalf of all local authorities and other state agencies. Draft Budget 2022 reflects the income and expenditure arising from this initiative. The cost for this office is fully recouped from the Local Government Sector in 2022.

Capital Investment Plan

The Council will continue to invest in the infrastructure of the County aiming to maximise grant funding. The Capital Programme for the three-year period 2022-2024 prepared in accordance with Section 135 of the Local Government Act, 2001, is set out in Schedule 1 at the end of the Chief Executive's Report on Draft Budget 2022 and commented upon in the course of the details of each of the Division Budgets. The Capital Programme must have regard to the General Government Balance (GGB) requirement and the available resources, which have diminished in recent years due to limited borrowing capacity and development contributions. The Housing Capital Programme will lead to significant capital activity over the period. The Council will continue to ensure that all sources of capital funding, including government and EU grants, are fully explored and maximised.

Development Contributions

A statement regarding the amount of Development Contributions on hands, the estimated income expected for 2022 and an indicative statement of the proposed application of the funding available is included in Schedule 2 at the end of the Chief Executive's Report on Draft Budget 2022.

Acknowledgements

The Chief Executive expressed appreciation to the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Jimmy Moloney, to Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen, the previous Cathaoirleach, the Members of the Council, the Corporate Policy Group and the Strategic Policy Committees for their support, co-operation and application during the year.

The Chief Executive paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of all Council staff to the County over the 2021 period. She thanked Angela McAllen, Head of Finance, Kathleen Moriarty, Senior Executive Officer, Caitriona Roberts, Financial Management Accountant and the Finance Team for their professionalism and work ethic in planning and delivering a Draft Budget in a most difficult year.

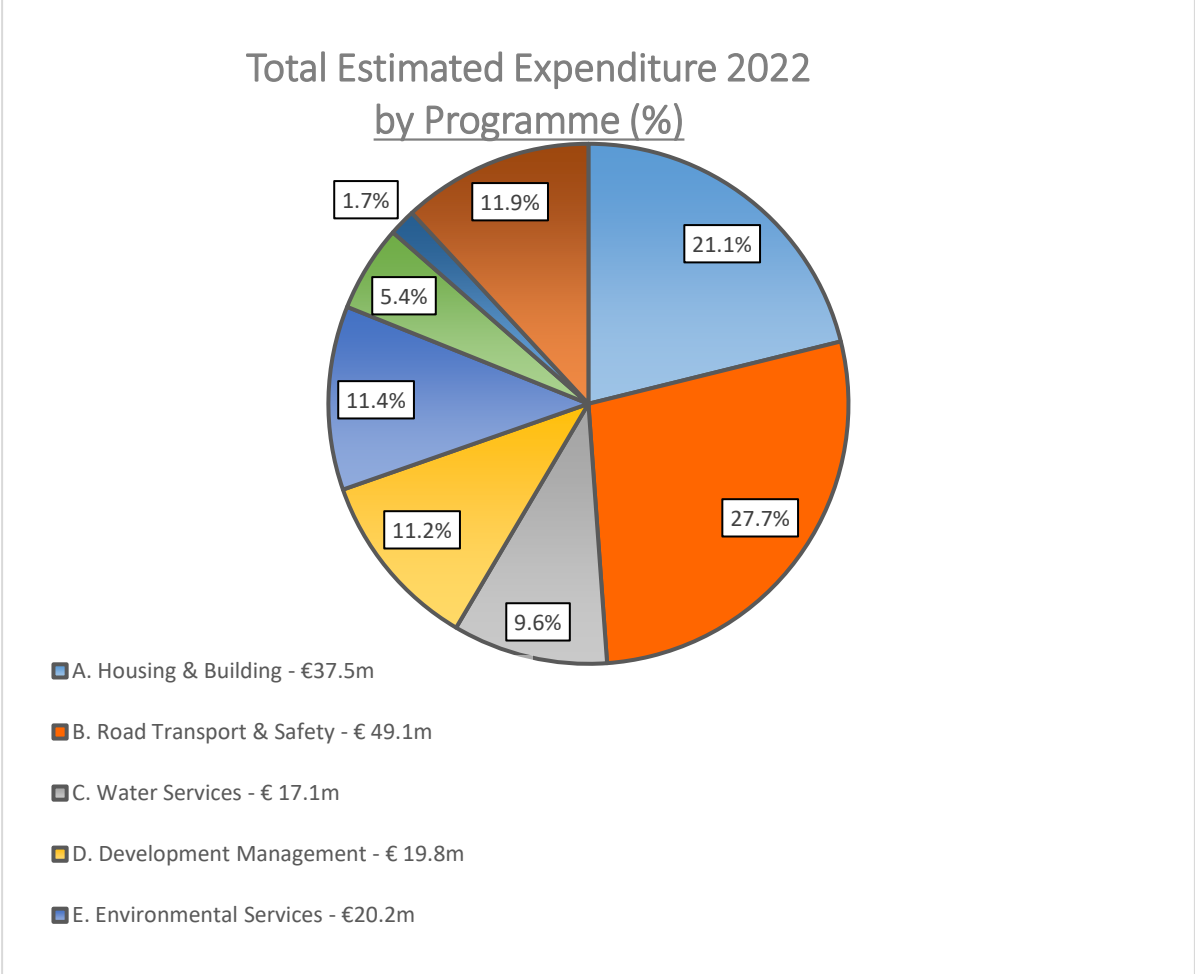
The Chief Executive recommended the Budget for adoption.

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

Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance, referred members to pages 15-48 of the Chief Executive's Report which outlines an overview and service delivery plan for directorates linked to the budget as presented today. The Summary of Directorate Service Priorities for 2022 set out the principal services and their objectives and priorities for delivery in 2022. Each Directorate Report identifies the principal services to be provided, priorities for the delivery of these services and the performance standards to be met in the delivery of these services, including those performance indicators prescribed by NOAC. These are consistent with the overall objectives for the Corporate Plan.

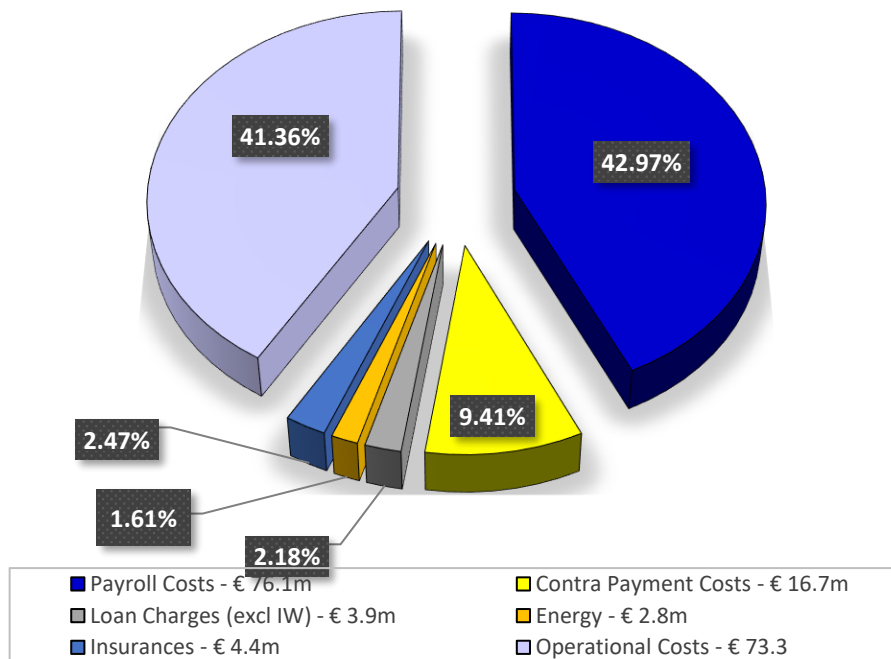
Head of Finance referred Elected Members to page 51 of the Chief Executive’s Report. The expenditure proposed amounts to €177,226,373. This represents 4.1% increase on the projected outturn for 2021. As usual, the 2022 expenditure reflects an estimated provision for Road Grant related works as the Council has not received any notification of Road Grants from the Department of Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland for 2022 to date. The actual expenditure on the Road Works Grants Programmes will be based on the allocations to be notified later.

The accompanying diagram shows the distribution of the proposed expenditure amongst the divisions for 2022. The combined expenditure of the Divisions titled Housing and Building, Road Transport & Safety, Water Services and Environmental Services accounts for 70% approx. of the Council’s overall Revenue Budget in 2022.



Head of Finance referred to the Graph on page 52 of the Chief Executive’s Report ‘Expenditure – Key Expense Elements 2022’ which reflects the breakdown of that expenditure. Payroll percentage continues to have the highest percentage at 43% and if you take the recouped payroll into account this figure reduces to 34%. The graph also indicates the very limited discretionary expenditure available given overall fixed costs to the Council for loan charges, energy and insurance. Many of the operational costs can be considered fixed also.

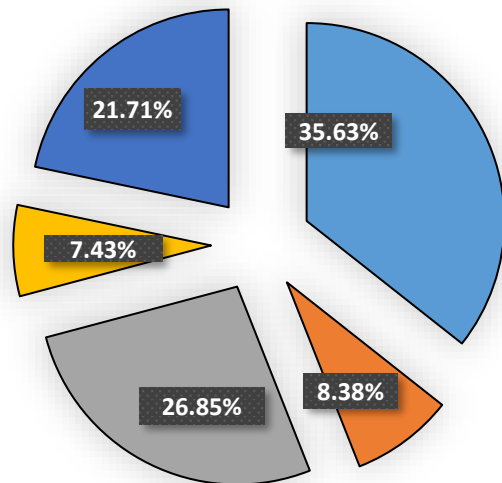
Expenditure - Key Expense Elements 2022



REVENUE INCOME

The funding for the Council's 2022 Budget which determines, of course, the level of expenditure, is sourced as outlined below:-

Estimated Sources of Income 2022 (%)



- 1. State Sector Grants for Specific Purposes - €63.1m
- 2. Local Property Tax - €14.8m
- 3. Commercial Rates - €47.6 m
- 4. Irish Water Income - €13.2m
- 5. Other Local Income - €38.5m

The graph illustrates the breakdown of continued reliance of both locally sourced income - Rates, Local Property Tax, Other Local Income of 57% and also State Grants of 36%.

Head of Finance referred Elected Members to page 56 of the Chief Executive's Report. The following is a summary of the main income streams included in Draft Budget 2022:

STATE SECTOR GRANTS FOR SPECIFIED PURPOSES	<u>€63,152,773</u>
	€
Housing & Building	17,927,465
Road Transport & Safety	28,470,800
Water Services	2,206,428
Development Management	6,563,775
Environmental Services	720,788
Recreation & Amenity	505,321
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	783,500
Miscellaneous Services	5,974,696
Total	<u>63,152,773</u>

The Housing & Building and Road Transport & Safety grants have both increased on 2021 level.

LOCAL INCOME

RATES ON COMMERCIAL PROPERTY €47,593,600

Provision must be made for the full rates demand. This provides for the last year of harmonisation. The Rate Demands for 2022 will issue with the harmonised rate. Any additional buoyancy in this area is limited given this and the revaluation process for the County of Kerry currently underway.

C0701 - IRISH WATER RECOUPMENT €13,159,163

A0101 - HOUSING RENTS €13,135,047

This sum represents income expected from housing tenants, inclusive of rents paid in respect of RAS and Social Leasing rents. Every effort is being made by the Housing Rents team to work with tenants effected by the Covid-19 Restrictions, utilising all resources including pro-active debt management and payment plans.

A0801 - HOUSING LOAN REPAYMENTS €357,592

The Housing Department is experiencing any difficulties in relation to repayments.

B0903 - PARKING FINES AND CHARGES €3,233,800

D0201 - PLANNING APPLICATION FEES/CHARGES €725,000

The income included is reflective of current and anticipated activity in this area.

D0801 - FIRE SAFETY CERTIFICATES, DISABILITY ACCESS CERTIFICATES & INSPECTION FEES €291,000

E0101 - USE OF WASTE DISPOSAL SITES €1,820,000

The cost per tonne for disposal of waste over the weighbridge at our Civic Amenity Sites is €400, as with all charges this will be kept under review during the year. The cost to dispose of a single bag of waste is €5 and the disposal of 6 bags is €27.50.

E0201 & E0202 - RECYCLING FACILITIES	<u>€616,128</u>
E0901 - BURIAL FEES This budget provision has been maintained at the 2021 rate.	<u>€300,000</u>
E1101 - CHARGES FOR ATTENDING AT FIRES This budget provision has been maintained at the 2021 rate.	<u>€302,000</u>
G0404 & G0405 - DOG LICENCE, HORSE & POUND FEES	<u>€332,600</u>
H1102 - CHARGES ON NON-PRINCIPAL PRIVATE RESIDENCES (NPPR) There is a reduced amount in this area.	<u>€625,000</u>

Cathaoirleach Jimmy Moloney and all Elected Members complimented the Chief Executive and Head of Finance on their presentations, and staff involved for compiling the Budget Report.

Division A – Housing & Building

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 11-13 of the Budget Tables and Pages 62-77 of the Chief Executive’s Report for details on this Division.

The Summary of Directorate Service Priorities for 2022 sets out the principal services and their objectives and priorities for delivery in 2022. The Directorate Report identified the principal services to be provided, priorities for the delivery of these services and the performance standards to be met in the delivery of these services, including those performance indicators prescribed by NOAC. These are consistent with the overall objectives for the Corporate Plan and have been brought to Council.

Pages 62-63 of the Chief Executive’s Report outline the extensive capital programme underway.

Page 65 sets out the Housing Revenue budget.

Maintenance/Improvement of LA Housing Units (A01)

Maintenance of LA Units (A0101) (Housing Services) €3,359,000

As this programme is one of the Council’s main priority areas, a special effort has been made to increase the budget allocation in this area in 2022; an increased allocation of €107,000 to this area. On 1st January 2021, Kerry County Council had a housing stock of 4,321 units. This is a very sizeable stock, requiring significant resources to maintain. In the period January - September 2021, a total of 2,713 individual repairs were carried out.

A sum of €1.5m is included in the 2022 Budget for the purpose of carrying out pre-letting works to vacant properties. The Council’s Voids Management Programme has been very active in recent times. 52 units were completed and returned to social housing use.

Page 65-66 outlines procurement initiatives used, utilising national frameworks developed by the Procurement Centre in Killarney to ensure best value for money is achieved.

Maintenance & Management of Traveller Accommodation (A0102 & A0103) (Housing Services) **€320,000**

Estate Maintenance (A0104) (Housing Services) **€122,000**

This allocation provides funding for a number of areas:

- This funding allocation is used to make a contribution to the running costs of Residents Associations in enhancing the general overall appearance of estates. This approach has proven to be very successful with residents in our estates.

The Council is actively involved with 52 residents' associations. Engagement with the different groups and associations is ongoing and strong relationships have been maintained during this difficult period.

Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer (A02)
Assessment of Housing Needs, Allocations and Transfer (A0201) **€882,000**

This allocation is in respect of the administrative cost of employing housing investigation officers and administrative support staff engaged in offering housing advice, liaising with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), the HSE, other relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies, assessing housing need and making recommendations on the allocation of individual tenancies.

During 2021, Kerry County Council proceeded with sourcing an on-line Choice Based Letting System (CBL). A suitable provider has been identified and it is hoped to have the CBL system fully operational by the end of Quarter 1, 2022. Page 67 outlines the scheme.

Debt Management and Rent Assessment (A0301) (Housing Services) **€1,067,000**

This allocation covers costs associated with the collection of rent and tenant purchase annuities and the implementation of the differential rent assessment scheme. The Council continues to work with tenants to assist them in the management of their rent payments and offer a variety of payment methods.

While details of the reform measures are not yet known, a full rent assessment for the entire county is now planned for 2022 following details of the measures under Housing for All.

Any tenant, whose income has been adversely affected by Covid-19, has been dealt with on a case-by-case basis following direct engagement with the Rents Team. The Council continues to work very closely with the Kerry Money Advice and Budgeting Service (KMABS) in this area.

Housing Estate Management & Tenancy Management (A0401 & A0402) (Housing Services) **€362,000**

Homeless Grants, Other Bodies & Homeless Service (A0501 & A0502) (Housing Services) **€2,440,000**

The provision of Homeless Services continues to be extremely difficult and challenging. 90% is recouped from the DHLGH Homeless allocation to the Southwest Region.

Significant progress was made during 2021 in advancing specific strategies for Kerry County Council's Homeless Service which are outlined on page 71.

The Housing Department are very active in homeless prevention and continue to provide assistance where possible.

Support to Housing Capital Programme (A06)	
<u>Technical and Administrative Support (A0601)</u> (Housing Services)	<u>€1,135,000</u>
<u>Loan Charges (A0602)</u> (Housing Services)	<u>€402,500</u>
<u>RAS Operations (A0701)</u>	<u>€7,222,000</u>
<u>Long-Term Leasing / Availability Agreements (A0702)</u>	<u>€3,347,000</u>
<u>AHB Payment & Availability Agreements (A0703)</u>	<u>€5,789,000</u>
<u>Loan Interest and Other Charges (A0801)</u>	<u>€1,763,000</u>

Mortgage Loans

Activity on mortgage loans has increased substantially due to the introduction of the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan. Since its introduction in February 2018 to 30th September 2021, the Council has received 318 applications. Page 74 outlines the status of these applications.

Land Purchase Service

As in previous years, since 2014, provision has been made for interest only payment of land loans.

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

<u>Housing Support Grants (A0901, A0903 & A0905)</u>	<u>€2,569,000</u>
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The Mobility Aids Scheme, Housing Adaptation Scheme for Persons with a Disability and Housing Adaptation Scheme for Older Persons schemes are funded through an exchequer contribution of 80% of scheme costs and requires a Local Authority contribution of 20%.

At 8th November 2021, the Council has paid out €2.26 m under the 3 schemes in 2021. Kerry County Council recognises the immense benefit to be gained from these schemes as living conditions of eligible elderly and disabled household members in the county are improved. While Covid-19 restrictions and the availability of suitable contractors has impacted on activity in this area during 2021, the Council hopes to draw down the full allocation for 2021 before the end of the year.

<u>Housing Assistance Payment Programme (HAP) (A1299)</u>	<u>€440,702</u>
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Efficiencies Achieved During 2021 within the Housing Directorate are outlined on page 77 which fed into the budgetary process.

Cathaoirleach Jimmy Moloney advised that the Housing Capital programme will be discussed in detail at the upcoming Housing for All meeting.

Cllr. Niall O' Callaghan called on Kerry County Council to lobby the Government for a rates waiver for 2022, particularly for the hospitality sector. The recent Covid Restrictions announcement by Government have caused huge problems for next year. He acknowledged that the income for parking permits is reduced and that the Council has budgeted for this reduction. He raised concerns regarding the cost of call out fees for the Fire Service, they can be very excessive for businesses who are already paying both commercial and water rates and wages. Private residences pay a call out charge of €100 and it should be the same fee for businesses.

Cllr. Donal Grady echoed the comments of Cllr. Niall of Callaghan regarding the call to waiver commercial rates for 2022. In relation to Housing, he said he will be voicing his concerns in more detail at the upcoming Housing for All meeting. The provision of housing appears to have been put on the long finger. These houses were needed yesterday. He acknowledged the efforts of the Housing Department but called on the Council to co-operate with the three main AHB (Approved Housing Bodies). In addition, he requested that the Council employ temporary Housing staff to accommodate staff shortages during Covid. He raised concerns regarding the Peter McVerry Trust apartments in Killarney, where residents have voiced concerns to him of not feeling safe inside the building. In relation to the cost of Fire Service call out fees for business, he advised that the charge is dependent on the type of incident attended and all businesses are supposed to have insurance to cover the cost.

Cllr. John Francis Flynn welcomed that there will be no commercial rate increase in 2022. He stated that the recruitment of apprenticeships is vital. If Kerry County Council and the approved Housing Bodies take a lead, they will play a crucial part in providing housing stock. He acknowledged the lack of availability of builders and trades people and asked that this would be reflected in the budget for 2022.

Cllr. Robert Beasley welcomed the call by Elected Members for a commercial rates waiver for 2022. It is vital for businesses across the County, particularly for Tourist dependent towns. The announcement of another Covid-19 variant is deeply worrying for communities and businesses. The shortage of skilled workers is causing huge problems in all aspects of the business sector. He called on the Council to introduce an apprenticeship scheme.

Cllr. Aoife Thornton asked for an update on the completion of the R556 Dale to Rathscannell, the works were due to be complete by the end of this year and now it appears to be 2022. She asked for an update on the opening of the Agritech Centre at MTU, public funds were used to fund this facility. She asked for clarification from National Government if additional funding will be received for the LEADER programme. The Council has ring fenced strategic funding to finance LEADER projects. She asked for an update on the Service Level Agreement between Kerry County Council and Irish Water. In conclusion she asked that additional resources be made available for the Town Park in Listowel.

Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae echoed the call by Elected Members for an additional commercial rates waiver for 2022. She asked for confirmation if there is a shortfall on the rates. In regard to the Housing Budget she noted that 2,713 housing repairs were

undertaken in 2021 but asked for an update on the number of repairs not carried out, She asked will the housing Maintenance budget accommodate the cost of housing maintenance in 2022.

Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald stated that Kerry is primarily a tourist County and the call for a commercial rates waiver for 2022 is vital. The provision of Housing Grants is very important and asked if there is provision to speed up the turnaround time for this grant. He asked that the Council continue to lobby the Government for funding for the N86.

Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae said that many of the issues he wanted to raise that have been done by his colleagues. The cost of inflation is having a huge effect on the Council, there has been an increase of 30% cost on machinery yard and will have a devastating effect if this continues.

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris welcomed the document. She expressed concerns regarding the increasing cost of materials and the effect it will have on the maintenance and repair of housing stock. In the Tralee Municipal District there are 35 vacant properties, but funding is only available to repair 5 voids. In addition, she said the Council needs to consider the implementation of rates on vacant properties. There is no incentive for landlords to see these properties occupied. The Council should be attracting businesses into the town centres. It will help other businesses keep their doors open. She made reference to a vacant property where the owner received a tax rebate of €300,000. This income would have been very welcomed into the Council budget.

Cllr. Charlie Farrelly expressed concerns regarding the reduction in LEADER funding. The funding has been allocated in dribs and drabs. He noted the LCDC will bring a report to Full Council meeting. In regard to Housing Estate Maintenance, he asked that the allocation be increased to €150,000.

In response Cathaoirleach Jimmy Moloney advised that where an increase is proposed to funding, a saving will have to be implemented elsewhere in the budget.

Cllr. Michael O' Shea concurred with contents expressed by Elected Members regarding the call for a rates waiver given the introduction of a new Covid-19 variant. In relation to the increase in cost to Insurance premiums, he said he believed that there is a number of serial Insurance claimants in the County, that amount to substantial costs to the County. He again called on the Council to provide details of all claims paid out by Kerry County Council. It is public money and can't understand why the information can't be provided. He asked for further clarity on the matter. He asked that the Milltown Masterplan would be completed in the near future.

Cllr. Sam Locke thanked management for compiling this document. In addition, he thanked Council staff in their efforts to help businesses since they have reopened. He called on the Government to provide more finance for social housing. It is hard to believe that there are people homeless in this day and age. In regard to estate maintenance, it is vital the Council provides funding to these communities. Much of the work carried out is by volunteers and their efforts can be seen by the level of recognition this County has received past and present at Tidy Town's competition.

Cllr. Michael Cahill complimented all involved in the processing of the Business Restart Grant scheme. The grants were processed at phenomenal speed, and this must be commended. He requested a breakdown on the figures provided for the homeless services. In relation to Housing Grants, he said it is one of the best services provided

by Kerry County Council, it allows people to live in their own homes. He called on the Housing Department to recommence housing inspections and to accommodate both housing grant applications and maintenance repairs. He asked that the Council consider introducing an awards scheme for Local Authority Estates for 2022. In relation to the Greenway, he called on the Council to apply for additional funding from the Department. The Greenways will be crucial for the economic recovery of Kerry and provision be made to link all the Greenways across the County.

Cllr. Marie Moloney concurred with the comments expressed regarding Kerry County Council's decision to not increase the rate of valuation. In relation to the Transfer Stations, she stressed it is vital that the cost to use this facility is kept at a minimum. She asked that a map of all Kerry County Council land holdings would be made available at the upcoming Housing for All meeting. Lands that aren't available for construction should be sold. She referred to Housing Loan scheme and said the approval process is too long. In relation to Part 5 Housing, there currently are no schemes and asked what is the alternative? She called on the Council to liaise with the H.S.E regarding the acquisition of St. Finians to provide a land bank for Social Housing in Killarney.

Cllr. Norma. Moriarty concurred with previous comments regarding calls for a rates waiver for 2022. In addition, she supported the comments of Cllr. Michael Cahill regarding the Housing grants. In relation to the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) funding of €15.5m, she advised that Kerry County Council has done exceptionally well. The LEADER funding is exhausted, a cohesive argument will have to be submitted to the Department to increase this funding.

Cllr. Mikey. Sheehy echoed the comments of previous speakers regarding the call for a rates waiver for 2022. In relation to the Tralee to Fenit Greenway, he welcomed the extension of the Greenway from Cockleshell to the Spa. The Greenway will be a community asset and asked for clarification from National Government that funding will be provided to maintain these assets. We want the Greenway and surrounding areas to remain in good condition. In regard to the reduction in parking fees, the introduction of smart parking is the way going forward, it allows the public access to parking and contactless payment. This will help bring business back into the town.

Cllr. Terry O' Brien asked for clarity regarding rates on vacant units.

Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen welcomed the Council's decision to not increase the rate of valuation. He welcomed the Housing report and said the target to construct or acquire 1,423 properties by 2026 is very welcomed. Many people cannot afford their rent which is coinciding with a shortage of accommodation. He welcomed the various grant schemes announced for the County and said that a lot of this funding is down to the efforts of the Community Department and Chamber Alliance.

Cllr. Johnnie Wall supported the call for a rates waiver for 2022. He said that vacant premises have stripped development in our towns. In relation to housing maintenance, he called on the Council to employ staff to carry out repairs to the Council's housing stock rather than getting contractors which is currently providing very difficult to do.

The Chief Executive responded to the Queries as follows:

- She advised that Kerry County Council is very committed to introducing an apprenticeship program. The provision of an apprenticeship scheme will be done in consultation with the Unions.
- The Kerry Agritech Centre is up and running with a number of staff working in the centre. In addition, she advised that the virtual chambers are now operational. The visit to the centre will be worthwhile.
- In relation to Covid restrictions, she advised that measures have been introduced to keep staff safe, such as extended working hours, blended working, with staff working remotely and additional office space to allow staff maintain social distancing. The transmission of Covid-19 isn't an issue in Kerry County Council due to the structures in place. Kerry County Council's safety committee will continue to meet regularly to assess safety concerns. She commended the efforts of the outdoor staff who have worked exceptionally well when carrying out inspections.
- The Chief Executive confirmed that there is no shortfall in the rates because of the rates waiver scheme. The Rates Revaluation process as scheduled has commenced and will continue into 2022, revised valuations will come into effect for rate demands in 2023.
- In relation to vacant properties, the Chief Executive advised that a number of interventions are required to address vacant properties. In conjunction with the URDF funding the Council will use this funding to address dereliction in the town. She undertook to bring a program from the Strategic Policy Committee back to Full Council in 2022.
- In relation to the provision of Housing she advised that the Council has a substantial Housing program. She acknowledged that there is still a body of work to be undertaken and rejected comments that the Council has not delivered on social housing.
- In relation to a request to increase funding for Estate Management, the Chief Executive advised that any increase in funding will result in a savings elsewhere.
- Following concerns raised on the Homeless Service, the Chief Executive advised that Kerry County Council can't solve the homeless problems in isolation. The Council will continue to work closely with Peter McVerry Trust. She confirmed that the number of people homeless in the County has reduced.
- In regard to St. Finan's she acknowledged that this is an important site. Kerry County Council will continue to engage with the Land Development Agency, any development should come from the remit of the Land Development Agency. She undertook to revert to the Members with any further developments.
- In regard to the introduction of smart parking, the Chief Executive acknowledged there is a volume of work to be undertaken to introduce smart parking into towns.
- In regard to Insurance claims, the Chief Executive advised that she has already dealt with this matter on a number of occasions. This is the advice Kerry County Council has been given. Kerry County Council's premium payment has reduced, and this is down to the provision in place by the Irish Public Bodies.
- The Chief Executive confirmed that Fire Service charges in place are fixed charges.

Ms. Angela McAllen Head of Finance advised Members that provisions have been made for parking charges in budget 2022. She advised Members that the increase in fuel and electricity will impact on the cost to provide public lighting. Kerry County Council is participating in the National Public Energy Retrofit project. This project

involved changing all the outdated public light in the Council's stock to energy efficient LED fittings. This will result in a cost saving to public lighting.

Mr. Martin O'Donoghue Director of Service stated that the provision of Homeless Services is a very complex issue. In some instances, further accommodation avenues are required. Some families availing of the Homeless services are not in a position to be offered housing.

In relation to concerns raised at the Peter Mcverry Trust accommodation in Killarney, Mr. Martin O' Donoghue undertook to bring any issues to the organisation.

In regard to the introduction of an apprenticeship Programme, he advised that the Government has committed to the introduction of an apprenticeship scheme. There is a meeting due to be held this week to discuss the role out of the scheme. He advised that the role out of an apprenticeship scheme will not solve the Housing voids problem. Some properties require specialised works and need to go to tender process.

In relation to Housing voids and maintenance he advised that this area has been under review at national level. It is intended that an approach to these services will change in the future with a move from response maintenance to a planned preventative maintenance approach. He undertook to update Members where further information is available.

In relation to funding for housing extensions, this funding forms part of the same budget as Housing Grants. There is better value for money in the provision of Housing Grants. In regard to the approval of Housing loans, this is a very complex issue. All Housing loans must be approved by the Housing Agency. Kerry County Council has minimum discretion on any loans that have been refused.

Cllr. Sam Locke said that the provision of Homeless Service is a very important issue and there are there are number of issues that require further clarity.

Break

The meeting adjourned for a ten-minute break at 12.30 p.m. The meeting resumed at 12.40 p.m.

Division B – Roads, Transportation & Marine

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 14-16 of the Budget Tables and Pages 78-94 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Pages 78-83 outline the extensive capital programme including Active Travel and Greenways.

Public Lighting - Operating Costs (B0501) *(Roads, Transportation & Marine)*

€2,081,000

Public lighting infrastructure within the Council for 2022 is estimated at €2m. Efficient energy management and energy procurement ensures that maximum value for money and efficient energy use is maintained, in an area where costs are increasing worldwide. The strategy is to minimise costs by using energy efficient lighting and, to this end, Kerry County Council is participating in the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP) – South West Region. This project involves changing of outdated

public light fittings in the Council's stock to more energy efficient LED fittings and is due to be rolled out in 2022.

Road Safety Engineering Improvements (B07)

School Wardens (B0801) **€208,000**

Publicity and Promotion Road Safety (B0802) **€7,000**

A review of the existing Road Safety Plan and development of the next plan covering the period 2022-2026 has commenced. Each year, the Road Safety Calendar Competition, which is undertaken in national schools countywide, is one of the most successful activities in the Council's road safety promotion campaigns and is launched by An Cathaoirleach in December.

Car Parking (B09)

Maintenance and Management of Car Parks (B0901) **€445,700**

Support to Roads Capital Programme (B10)

Administration of Roads Capital Programme (B1001) **€1,682,000**

These are all reflected in the Roads Own Resource Table on page 94 and represents a significant portion of the Budget and includes the Councillors allocation of €957,000 maintained at previous years.

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

The own resource allocation in Roads enables Kerry County Council to continue to attract grant funding throughout the year. As previously advised to Members the plant and machinery account is reflected in the Revenue Budget again for 2022 and is reflected as self-financing for budget 2022. Page 93 outlines a number of efficiencies and value for money initiatives taken by the Operations Department in 2021. Continuing into 2022 to maximise this budget allocation.

Summary – Overall Local Contribution to the Roads Programme 2022

Expenditure Heading	€
B03/B04 Non-National Road Maintenance	3,048,880
H09 Councillors Specific District Operation Fund	957,000
B05 Public Lighting	2,038,750
B06 Traffic Management	15,000
B08 Road Safety and Education	211,500
B09 Car Parking	1,555,200
Salaries & Admin Support Headquarters, Municipal & Area Offices	3,515,140
Public Liability Insurance Net Contribution Rds Memorandum	1,657,750
Outdoor Staff - Net Contribution Rds Memorandum	359,550
Share Out Central Management Charges Pensions	2,524,880
Share Out Central Management Charges - Other	3,624,960
Loan Charges - Local Roads/ Active Travel/ Plant & Machinery	432,950
Total Expenditure Net of Grant Support	19,941,560
Less Other Income	
Parking Fines and Charges	3,233,800
Superannuation	705,324
Other Income	681,946

Division C – Water Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 17-18 of the Budget Tables and Pages 95-97 of the Chief Executive’s Report for details on this Division.

Irish Water Operations

Kerry County Council continues to provide Water Services in the county as agents of Irish Water operating under a Service Level Agreement. For 2022, the following service areas are covered under the SLA:

C01	Water Supply	€8,466,715
C02	Waste Water Treatment	€3,541,605
C03	Collection of Water/Waste Water Charges	€254,954
C06	Support to Water Capital Programme	€1,230,316
C07	Agency and Recoupable Services	€305,848

This division also provides for:

Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences (C04)

Operation & Maintenance of Public Conveniences (C0401) €779,000

Kerry County Council owns and operates public conveniences at 33 locations throughout the county. In 2021 construction commenced on a new public convenience serving the village of Ardfert and is due to be open to the public in 2022.

The operational arrangements for these facilities are varied. Seven 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 work of these local groups and provision is made in Budget 2022 to continue with this cooperative approach.

Rural Water Programme (C05)

Page 96 and 97 provide for headings under the Rural Water Programme.

Cllr. Bobby O’Connell called for the provision of a road sweeper in the Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District to support the work of the Tidy Towns groups and council staff. If a dedicated road sweeper cannot be provided, he asked that more access be provided to a road sweeper from another area.

Cllr. Michael Cahill said given the importance of the Ring of Kerry road it should have a good road surface and lining, and specialised hedge cutting should be carried out on cliff edges; the Transport Infrastructure Ireland must provide adequate funding for same. In relation to the Local Improvement Scheme, the Hardship and Emergency Scheme is hugely important and requires additional funding in 2022. A programme is also required for public lighting, the provision of access to beaches and car parks. Huge investment is required in Irish Water to provide services within the county in order that developments can progress, and the county can recover from the COVID pandemic.

Cllr. Tom Barry asked for an update regarding plans for the Public Convenience in Listowel as the lease on same is due to expire.

Cllr. Marie Moloney expressed concern that people cannot upgrade their septic tank as inspections have not been carried out by the EPA. She asked that works progress on Kilcummin sewerage scheme as soon as possible and that on completion of works the roads be reinstated and resurfaced by Irish Water. Water Services staff of Kerry County Council must be retained; it would be a huge loss to the county if they were to transfer to Irish Water.

Cllr. Norma Moriarty called for Irish Water to progress taking in charge of estates. Main thorough fares must be properly funded; many sections of the Ring of Kerry road require upgrading. Proper public lighting must be provided at schools, particularly at those on main roads that are under the remit of Transport Infrastructure Ireland. A lot of work is required regarding the retention of Community Involvement Schemes. Regular reminders regarding driving on the left hand side of the road must be built in to our road design via signage and road markings.

Cllr. Sam Locke said Irish Water must carry out repairs on water mains that are continuously experiencing blockages. Delays are also being experienced in repairing broken water mains.

Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen said black spots at road junctions around the county must be addressed with additional measures put in place. The Kenmare Inner Relief Road Phase II must be progressed, and Active Cycle Ways must be rolled out to towns across the county. Kenmare Waste Water Scheme must be progressed as a priority to assist development in the town.

Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae said the extension of the Kenmare Sewerage Scheme is required urgently. Irish Water must also consider water supply to Kenmare to ensure there are no water outages during the summer. The Kenmare Inner Relief road must be finalised as a priority. The N71 Kenmare to Kilgarvan must be resurfaced as a priority.

Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae asked if the 2021 Winter Maintenance programme allocation will allow for additional roads to be treated. He asked for an update regarding the number of roads on the Local Improvement Scheme list following the completion of 17 roads this year and if any other funding source could be identified to progress this scheme. He asked when the programme to change over to LED public lighting will be completed. He asked how many new types of machinery/fleet were purchased for €316,000 and how much will be spent on new plant in 2022. He asked how many School Wardens are employed across the county and is there provision in the 2022 Budget for additional School Wardens, e.g. for Gneeveguilla National School. He supported Cllr. Bobby O'Connell's request regarding a road sweeper for Castleisland. Consideration must be given to the provision of a budget for off street parking in Castleisland town centre.

Cllr. Séamus Fitzgerald said it is hoped funding will be provided in the next round of funding for the next phase of the N86 and the Dingle Inner Relief Road. A Feasibility Study has been carried out for the Dingle to An Clochán Trail 32km Greenway. Given that Government has earmarked funding for Greenways, it is vital that Kerry County Council give this Greenway immediate priority.

Cllr. Robert Beasley called for additional funding to address the condition of secondary and tertiary roads in North Kerry. He commended the work done to date on the Rathscannell Road and welcomed that it will be open in the coming weeks. The

provision of footpaths to scenic areas has been neglected and funding to address same would be welcome. He called for the return of the Hardship and Emergency Fund for the Local Improvement Scheme and that the Durapatcher would be used more often in North Kerry.

Cllr. Charlie Farrelly welcomed improvements to roads, especially in the Castleisland area. He supported Cllr. Bobby O'Connell's request regarding a road sweeper for Castleisland. He asked if the Traffic Warden in Castleisland will be working a 39-hour week in 2022. There is a need for additional parking in Castleisland town. Kerry County Council must work with Irish Water to progress projects; a lot of work has been done since the June Council Meeting which Irish Water attended.

Cllr. Michael O'Shea called for the upgrade of the secondary route from Tralee Mountain to Farmers Bridge on to the N22. As there are 800 roads on the Local Improvement Scheme list, he asked if there is merit in seeking approval for Kerry County Council to take some of those roads in charge, particularly those roads with a high density of houses. He called for a School Warden to be assigned to Milltown primary school. He said there should be a broader scheme available to people who want to upgrade their septic tank.

Cllr. Aoife Thornton welcomed the commitment to the R556 Dale road and works done and sought clarification regarding the road opening date in December 2021. She asked if there is a time duration on the Irish Water Service Level Agreement. She asked if a portaloos could be provided when Greenways are open. She welcomed the announcement of RSS funding of €1m for Kerry, with approximately €200,000 for North Kerry and commended Kerry County Council for work done on the applications.

Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald agreed with Cllr. Séamus Fitzgerald's comments regarding the N86 adding that it is very important to complete these works. He asked that Kerry County Council continue to pursue completion of the Dingle Inner Relief Road. He called for a connection between Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne and the Greenways. A case must be made for the reinstatement of Scéim na Bóithre Áise and for funding from central Government for the maintenance of cycleways along roadways.

Suspension of Standing Orders

The Cathaoirleach indicated it was approaching 1.30 p.m. and it would be necessary to suspend Standing Orders.

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Deirdre Ferris, SECONDED by Cllr. Aoife Thornton, it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue

Cllr. Donal Grady called for the provision of additional public conveniences in Killarney, particularly near the taxi ranks.

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris welcomed the deadline for the provision of a public convenience at Ardfert. As Kerry is benefitting greatly from the staycation market, there must be continued enhancement and development of public conveniences. She welcomed the provision of €0.5m for the Cockleshell walkway which was announced today. This 13.5km walk/cycle way will provide a safe link for people to traverse the town of Tralee. She acknowledged the provision of €1m for drainage works; properties can experience flooding of their property particularly after resurfacing of a road. In relation to the Local

Improvement Scheme, a redirection of funding/more capital funding is required to address the numbers on the waiting list.

Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae noted that works will not commence on the retrofitting of public lighting until late 2022, even though tenders have been received and she sought clarification on this. She welcomed works done to date at Poulgorm Junction and asked for an update regarding further works to be done. She asked why the safety scheme on the N22 Glenflesk has not been identified within the programme for 2022. She asked for an update regarding the design for Listry Bridge and if provision has been made in Budget 2022 for same. She referred to the works to be done between the Gap Cross and the Golden Nugget and asked for a specific deadline regarding the provision of a pedestrian crossing for Fossa School. She supported the call from Cllr. Marie Moloney regarding the reinstatement of the road at Kilcummin following works on the Kilcummin Sewerage Scheme.

Cllr. Cathal Foley queried the adequacy of the level of funding, €7,000, provided for publicity and promotion of road safety. He asked if the 1.5m safe distance for passing signage will be enhanced. It is hugely important for cyclists and pedestrians who are vulnerable road users.

Cllr. Niall Kelleher supported calls regarding the Local Improvement Scheme and the Medical Hardship cases being reinstated. A full reassessment of the School Wardens in the county is required. He called for the installation of solar waste bins which would allow for increased collection of waste. He supported Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae's comments regarding Poulgorm and Glenflesk Village. He acknowledged the infrastructure works carried out in Rathmore and asked that financial provision be made for landscaping works to be done. He commended the work done by Mr. C. Mangan, SEE Water Services, and said, while not a decision of the Elected Members, he is fully opposed to Kerry County Council staff moving to Irish Water.

Cllr. Brendan Cronin said the Local Improvement Scheme affects the whole county with hundreds on the waiting list and he agreed with the sentiments expressed regarding the Medical Hardship Scheme. It is important to note that Kerry County Council is dependent on national funding being provided to finance this scheme and a call must be made for additional funding. He acknowledged the substantial drainage works done in the Killarney Municipal District and the positive improvements following those works. In relation to Irish Water, the Mid-Kerry Water Supply Scheme still presents problems. He acknowledged projects that have been completed and the work done by Kerry County Council staff. He asked how many Private Well Grants have been sanctioned in the last twelve months. He called for the provision of a pedestrian crossing at the Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty entrance to Killarney House. Listry Bridge is vital for connectivity and in its current condition is inadequate for the traffic of the day. He called for every effort to be made to address this matter.

Cllr. Terry O'Brien welcomed funding announced for works on the Cockleshell-Spa walkway; it would be great if it could also be connected to Blennerville.

Mr. J. Breen, Director of Services, responded to queries from Elected Members as follows:

- In relation to Septic Tank Grants, page 96 sets out in detail that there are three grants available. The original grant required EPA inspection. Two new grants have been made available. The means test has been abolished. 7 grants were paid in 2020 and 4 in 2021. The grant is no longer solely dependent on the EPA inspection.

- The Service Level Agreement with Irish Water is due to expire at the end of 2025.
- A number of solar waste bins are being acquired via the Litter Infrastructure Support Grant Scheme.
- Private Well Grants; page 96 sets out the details. 96 grants have been paid to date this year; the grant increased to €6,000 this year and funding is available. Funding is also available for internal lead piping replacement in a dwelling.

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

- It is expected that Road Grants will be announced early next year. Reports were presented to the May and September meetings. The road sweeping regimes have been increased recently, there are no plans to invest further. With revised boundaries, resources were realigned.
- An application has been made for funding and issues have been raised with Transport Infrastructure Ireland regarding the Ring of Kerry.
- The Hardship and Emergency Scheme was on the basis that there was no funding at all for a period of time for the Local Improvement Scheme. Hardship and Emergency cases are considered when funding is available and it is on the basis that another scheme is dropped from the list for that year.
- Road safety at schools: a scheme was launched last year through the Department of Education targeted at schools. Kerry County Council's Road Safety Officer is working with the schools and that will continue.
- The Winter Maintenance Programme does not provide for additional roads to be added to it. Kerry County Council will be engaging with Transport Infrastructure Ireland to seek additional funding for winter maintenance.
- The LED Lighting Programme is a regional contract by five Local Authorities in Munster and is about to be signed. It is hoped the works will roll out early in 2022 with the programme for Kerry scheduled to commence in Q4 2022.
- Kerry County Council has 15 School Wardens and is working with schools regarding Junior School Warden services if there is a need for it.
- Relief Roads at Kenmare and Dingle: a submission has been made to the Department to develop Feasibility Studies for those schemes.
- Listry Bridge: Kerry County Council has sought further funding for same. Feasibility Studies have been submitted and this will be followed up with the Department.
- Dingle – An Clochán loop walk: Kerry County Council is engaging with Transport Infrastructure Ireland in relation to Greenways. Transport Infrastructure Ireland has been tasked, in 2022, to develop a national policy regarding a national cycle network in rural areas. Kerry County Council will be developing its own strategy in line with the national strategy and there is a case to be made for a significant number of Greenways in the county. Priorities for funding will have to be determined nationally.
- Dale Road: It is hoped to open this road by the end of the year with a temporary surface; this will have some restrictions and it will be closely monitored. Substantial completion is expected by the end of April 2022 which will require closure of the road again.
- Poulgorm Bridge: The Road Design Office is working with the Department to progress this scheme and it is hoped to progress in 2022.

- Glenflesk Safety Scheme: The Road Design Office is working with the Department to progress this scheme and it is hoped to progress in 2022.
- The Gap Cross Feasibility Study has been approved and will go through a Part VIII planning process. It is hoped it will go to construction by the end of 2022.
- Road Safety Measures Budget of €70,000: The majority of measures are delivered nationally. Kerry County Council has a Road Safety Group with funding for local initiatives. In relation to signage for cyclists, a submission has been made to the Department for signage regarding 1m/1.5m distancing.
- Áras Phádraig Programme funding: There is an own resource element to this funding. It highlights the issue that Kerry County Council must be in a position to avail of grants in delivering such programmes.
- The Traffic Warden service is being reviewed and is currently being provided within existing resources; Castleisland will be considered within that context.
- Fleet replacement: Two significant items of equipment were purchased last year. Kerry County Council is currently in the process of considering the replacement of a further two trucks and is committed to replacing lighter goods vehicles with EVs. The replacement of a significant amount of the fleet with EVs/hydrogen is not feasible at this point in time. There are significant changes in the market which will be monitored.
- Greenways: The Transport Infrastructure Ireland are taking over as the approving authority for Greenways. They will not be directly involved in delivery or maintenance of projects. Transport Infrastructure Ireland will provide the funding, development policy and guidance in relation to Greenways. Maintenance of Greenways will be the responsibility of the Local Authority as is the case with the road network.
- Dredging of Fenit: Last year extensive dredging was carried out at the mouth of Fenit Harbour. That work must be done every 3-4 years for shipping requirements. The marina has not been dredged for ten years. It will be reviewed next year and it will be brought before the Elected Members.

Division D – Development Management

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 19-21 of the Budget Tables and Pages 98-121 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division. Capital Programme set out on Schedule 1 at the rear of report.

There are a number of headings in this programme:

1. Planning and Sustainable Development

Forward Planning (D01)

Statutory Plans and Policy including Local Area Plans (D0101) €741,000

This includes the County Development Plan and other works to be carried out in 2022 will include the completion of the new Planning Policy framework for South Kerry/ East Iveragh Areas and Masterplan for Fenit.

Planning Control (D0201) €2,157,000

Provision for an estimated 1,600 planning applications will be received countywide during 2021, compared to 1,300 during 2020.

Enforcement Costs (D0301) €1,080,000

Activity in this area remains constant, the table on page 100 reflects the volume of new complaints.

Enforcement Activity Levels <i>(Annualised projection based on 01/01/2021 to 30/09/2021 activity)</i>	2021
Total number of New Complaints files opened	644
Warning letters served	415
Enforcement Notices Served	48
Legal Proceedings initiated	16

Unfinished Housing Estates**Taking in Charge of Estates**

A total of 7 estates have been formally taken in charge to date in 2021. It is expected that a further number of estates will be advertised for taking in charge before the end of 2021. In addition to the above, Kerry County Council currently has 56 "Taking in Charge" applications on hand.

2. Tourism Development (D05)**General Economic Promotion (D0501) €1,053,000**

This allocation includes costs of the Council's Tourism Unit and work programme.

County Kerry Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2016 – 2022

Provision has been made for development of a new strategy in conjunction with key stakeholders and in line with national policies.

Greenway Marketing Plan

The work programme is detailed on page 103-106 covering areas to promote tourism in Kerry.

Visitor Experience Development Plans/Destination Experience Development Plans**Marketing Kerry**

Developing and delivering a collective marketing campaign for tourism growth is a key priority for the county.

Festivals and Events

Supports to Festivals and Events through the various funding streams.

Adventure/Activity Tourism**Astro-tourism****Cultural and Heritage Tourism****Tourist Facilities Operations (D0502) €199,000****General Community & Enterprise Expenses (D0601) €5,537,000**

A large element of this expenditure is recoupable. Pages 108-111 cover the work programme.

- Co-ordinating the work of the Kerry Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Co-ordinating and overseeing the LEADER Programme
- Co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2018 – 2022 (SICAP).
- Co-ordinating the implementation of the Age Friendly Strategy for the County
- Coordinating the Implementation of the Healthy Kerry Framework (2021-2027)
- Supporting the work programme of the Kerry Public Participation Network.
- Administering the following community support initiatives: Kerry Community Awards; Pride of Place; Comhairle na Óg.

Pride of Place

The Pride of Place Awards is an all-island event. The focus of Pride of Place is on people coming together to change and improve daily lives in their communities. It is about showing respect and inclusion for every sector. Local authorities are invited to nominate entries on an annual basis. The Council's entries to Pride of Place for 2021 were:-

- KASI, community resilience category.
- The Reeks District project, community
- Chorca Dhuibhne/Dingle 2030.

Building Control (D08)

Building Control Inspection & Enforcement Costs (D0801 & D0802) **€376,000**

Page 111 outlines activity in this area which has increase on 2020 levels.

Economic Development and Promotion (D0905)

€2,863,250

Economic Development Unit (EDU)

- Support the Kerry Economic Stakeholder Forum.
- Engage with state agencies to coordinate economic development and promotion of the County to potential investors.
- Engage with county stakeholders to develop the County Enterprise Marketing Plan.
- Business Development Planning for the future of opportunity sites across the County.

An extensive work programme is outlined on page 113 which will also incorporate work plans aligned to the County Kerry Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan 2021.

Urban and Rural Regeneration Development Funds

Developing substantial Urban and Rural Regeneration Development Fund submissions with Directorates and Municipal Districts. Various infrastructural schemes over the past years are outlined on page 114-115.

Digital Strategy

In 2022, an allocation of €222,000 will support advancement of the digital strategy for the county and ensure the delivery of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) in the County. The unit made successful applications to DRCD for the Digital Innovation Programme.

Local Enterprise Office (D0906)

€1,784,000

This unit continues to deliver on the Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Ireland in relation to grant and training support for micro business in the county.

Objectives and Priorities for 2022

Dealing with Covid-19 impacted businesses and mitigating the impact of Brexit for client businesses will be a key focus for 2022.

Key Programmes of Work to be delivered in 2022 including:

- Delivery of On-Line Trading Vouchers to 120 clients.
- Provide mentoring support services to 200 businesses.
- Delivery of new Covid-19 recovery support schemes as appropriate.

Heritage & Conservation Services (D1101 & D1103)

€348,000

Heritage/Conservation Office - Projects/Achievements in 2021 are outlined on page 119-120.

Key Projects for 2021/2022 are outlined on pages 120-121.

Architecture Kerry

Vernacular Heritage of the Dingle Peninsula

Ashe Memorial Hall Conservation Project

Archaeology Department – Projects/Achievements

Key Achievements 2021 include:

- Mid-Kerry Portal Tombs Project
- Community Monuments Fund 2021

Division E – Environmental Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 22-24 of the Budget Tables and Pages 122-144 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

The operations of this section are diverse and specialised, ranging from technical laboratory analysis to clean-up of illegal dumping sites and educational campaigns. All elements contribute to ensuring our environment is maintained to the highest standards. The provision of veterinary services, including the operation of the dog pound, and the management of the county's burial grounds are also coordinated through the Environment Section.

Waste Management

Operation, Maintenance of Civic Amenity Sites and Aftercare of Landfill (E01)

Cost Summary - Budget 2022

Description	E0101 Operational Cost – including Site Staff	E0101 Loan Charges, Land Purchase and Facility Development Aftercare	E0199 Service Support
	€	€	€
North Kerry Site	605,682	179,770	-
North Kerry Site – Aftercare		100,000	-
Coolcaslagh	371,938	10,000	-
Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne	197,038	39,418	-
Caherciveen	227,362	-	-
Kenmare	291,636	-	-

Milltown	409,156	9,500	-
Service Support	-	10,500	326,487
TOTAL COSTS	2,102,812	349,188	326,487

Civic Amenity Sites Operations (E0101)

€2,452,000

The budget allocation for 2022 provides for a portion of the cost of operating 5 Civic Amenity Sites - Killarney, Milltown, Kenmare, Caherciveen and Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne. The costs associated with the 5 licenced Civic Amenity sites include operation and maintenance of the facilities, transport of waste and the disposal cost of waste to a private waste operator and treatment of effluent off-site, as well as administration costs. The cost of operating the recycling facilities at each location is not included in this allocation as it is shown separately under (E02).

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

Works carried out between 2016 and 2020 have reduced the volume of leachate on site and Kerry County Council will continue to look at options, such as on-site treatment and disposal options, to reduce our costs in this area going forward.

Provision for loan charges of €219,188 is included in the allocation pertaining to capital development works at the North Kerry Landfill and the development of Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne.

Recovery and Recycling Facilities Operations (E02)

Recovery and Recycling Facilities Cost Summary - Budget 2022

Description	E0201	E0202		E0299
	Recycling	Bring Centres	Loan Charges, Recovery and Recycling	Service Support
	€	€	€	€
Coolcaslagh	137,344	-	-	-
Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne	119,489	-	13,139	-
Caherciveen	104,873	-	-	-
Kenmare	134,642	-	-	-
Milltown	145,652	-	-	-
Bring Bank Network	-	431,861	-	-
Service Support	-	-	-	274,400
TOTAL COSTS	642,000	431,861	13,139	274,400

Bring Centres Operations (E0202)

€445,000

This is an increased allocation for 2022. The Environment Section maintains around 100 Bring Banks. 2021 saw a significant increase in the usage of our Bring Bank Network around the county. The co-operation of 41 Community Groups to participate in our "adopt a bring bank" scheme helps to prevent dumping and to enhance the site. In 2022, the Council will commence a programme of upgrading the lifting mechanisms on our Bring Banks, with all Bring Banks expected to be upgraded over a five-year programme which commenced in 2021.

Provision is also made for **Provision of Waste Collection Service (E04)** as is provision for **Litter Management (E05)**.

Litter Warden Service (E0501)**€228,000**

The Council employs 3 full-time Litter Wardens, county-wide, on a permanent basis. Assistance is also provided on a part-time basis by the Traffic/Litter Wardens in the towns of Daingean Uí Chúis, Cahersiveen, Castleisland, Killorglin, Killarney, Kenmare and Listowel and by the 5 Municipal District Enforcement Officers.

The **Litter Management Plan 2021-2023** was adopted at the July 2021 Municipal District Meetings.

Litter Control Initiatives (E0502)**€148,000****Environmental Awareness Services (E0503)****€165,000**

This area provides for a broad range of initiatives which address issues on waste management, energy conservation, water protection and other issues related to sustainable living. These services may also include raising awareness of sustainable living, community resilience and climate change.

Examples of the many environmental awareness raising activities undertaken for 2021 include:

- Provision of Signage and Dog Foul bag dispensers in Public areas.
- In 2021, 23 schools renewed their flags on Water Conservation, Energy Conservation, Travel and Biodiversity and Global citizenship with the assistance of our Environmental Awareness Officer. The Council currently has 156 Green Flag Awards for both Primary and Secondary Schools and hope to increase this number during 2022.
- Blue Flag Beaches and Green Coast Award Schemes.
- The Council continued to work closely with Tidy Town groups during 2021.

Street Cleaning (E06)**Contribution to Street Cleaning Service (E0601)****€2,211,000**

This provision is for the operation of the street cleaning service in various towns throughout the county. The level of service that can be provided, having regard to the available budget, will be set out in the Annual Schedule of Municipal District Work Plan. This amount is a significant provision from our own resources each year.

The hard work of the county's Tidy Towns volunteers is also acknowledged.

Monitoring of Waste Regulations (incl. Private Landfills) (E0701)**€271,000****Operation and Maintenance of Burial Grounds (E0901)****€944,500**

There are currently 158 burial grounds in the county. Kerry County Council continues to work closely with community organisations who 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 cooperation, with such groups, builds and strengthens the Council's relationships with local communities.

The Council is currently working with approximately 60 community groups. A provision is made in the 2022 Budget for continued support to community groups, in recognition of their ongoing involvement.

Burial Ground Capital Works

Progress has been made on a number of developments which are outlined on page 131.

Operation Costs Civil Defence (E1001)

€275,000

Civil Defence supports the front-line emergency services and assists our local communities. It supports the frontline emergency services in dealing with severe weather, flooding, major accidents and searches.

Like everyone has, Kerry Civil Defence adapted its services and operations on the ground during the Covid-19 Pandemic in relation to training and operational volunteers who were available to attend duties.

During 2022, Civil Defence will endeavour to maintain volunteer's activities by supporting communities.

Derelict Sites (E1004)

€139,900

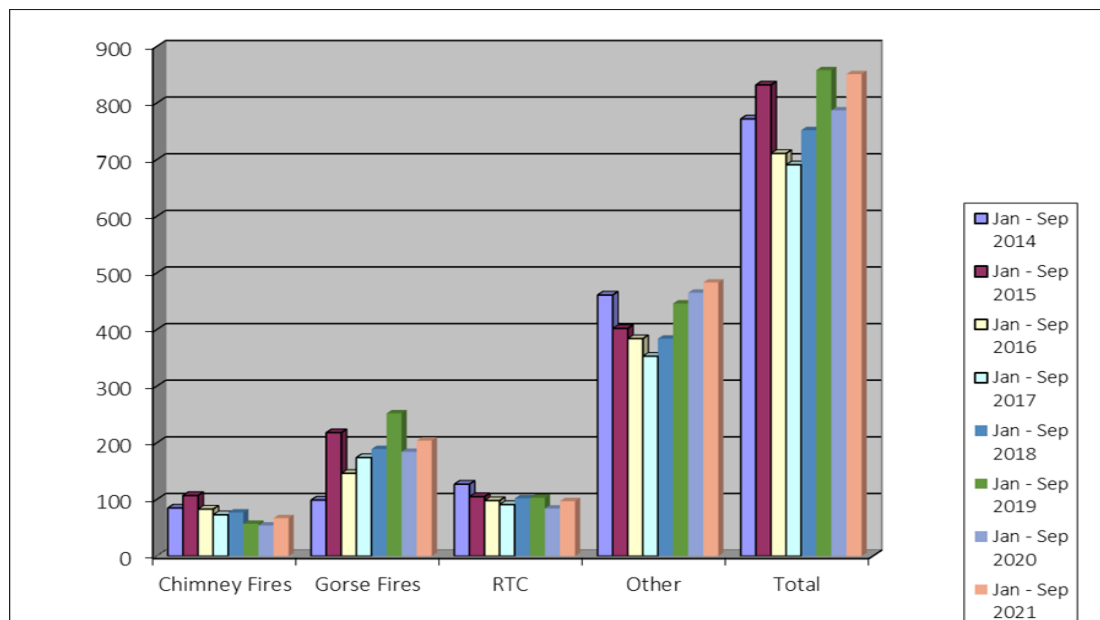
Water Safety Operation (E1005)

€566,000

The allocation includes costs of lifeguard stations and other costs associated with this programme. The Council will continue to provide a Lifeguard Service in 2022 at all our Blue Flag beaches where the Blue Flag Criteria or a Water Safety Risk Assessment requires us to do so. Voluntary Rescue Services at Ballybunion, Ballinskelligs, Ballyheigue, Banna, The Cashen, Derrynane and Killarney, together with Irish Water Safety and R.N.L.I., will again receive financial support in 2022.

Operation of Fire Service (E11)

The Council operates 10 fully equipped Fire Stations throughout the county and has responded to 851 incidents up to the end of September 2021. The following graph illustrates activity over the past number of years.



Operation of Kerry Fire Service (E1101)

€5,288,000

This is an increased allocation. The operation of the Kerry Fire Service is estimated to cost €5,288,000 for 2022. The provisions in this allocation are outlined on page 136. Kerry Fire Service Department's contribution to the Munster Regional Communication Centre (MRCC) in 2022 is also included here at a cost of €272,186.

Fire Services Training (E1103)

€715,000

This is an increased allocation for 2022.

Fire Prevention and Education (E1202)

€213,500

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

As part of this programme, the Fire Services Department, in cooperation with the Community Services Department, arranges for the procurement, distribution and installation of smoke alarms in the homes of vulnerable members of the community throughout the county, free of charge.

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

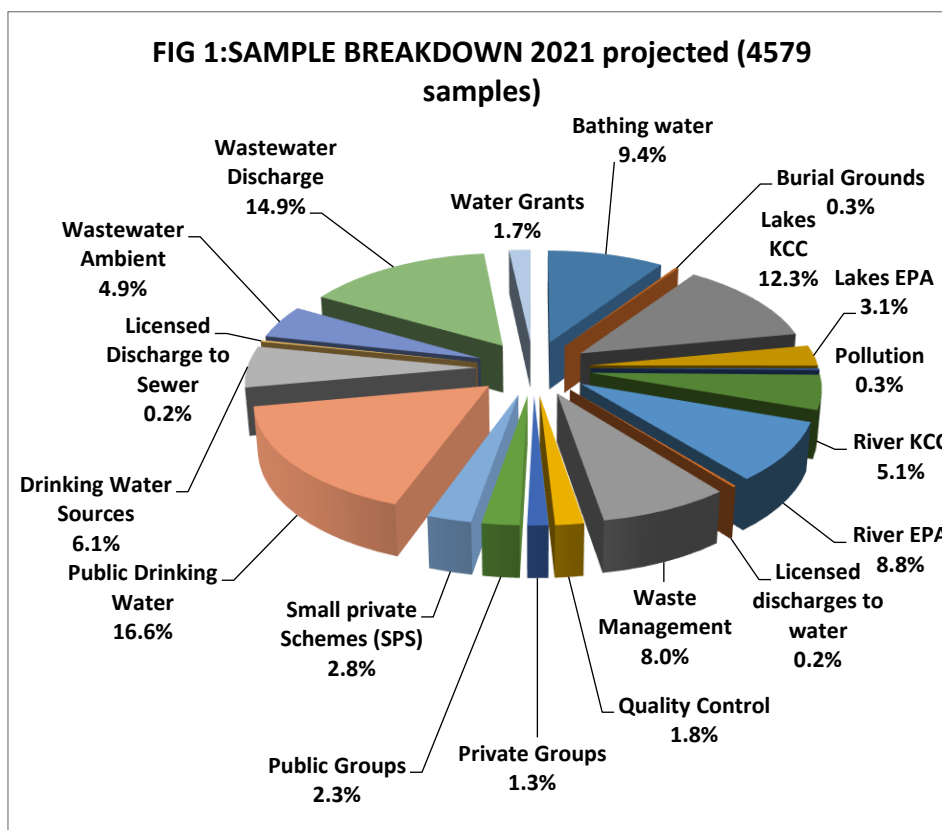
The Council carries out a broad range of activities in the area of **Water Quality, Air and Noise Pollution (E13)**

Water Quality Management (E1301)

€702,000

Operation of the Council Laboratory

In 2021, the laboratory is set to process at least 4,500 samples, involving approximately 51,000 tests. The graph on page 139 illustrates the types of sampling.



Kerry County Council's Laboratory attained its accreditation, and it is planned to have a further two parameters formally added to our scope in 2022 by the accreditation board.

Climate Change & Flood Management (E1501)

€426,000

Climate Change will, in the future years, affect all of Kerry County Council's service divisions and will be incorporated into each area of operation in the Council. The

challenges of Climate Change are becoming everyday evident and will affect each and every one of us and the communities in which we live, work and recreate. The level of ambition required to address its effects is not to be underestimated.

Preliminary work has commenced on a Climate Action Plan for the county, which will be progressed in 2022 following on from the Government's publication of the Climate Action Plan 2021.

Energy

The Council has made significant progress in the area of energy conservation in recent years. It utilises renewable energy in the form of wood pellet, wood chip, solar thermal, photovoltaic, heat pumps, high efficiency boilers and lighting and energy management practices to reduce expenditure and improve energy efficiency.

Initiatives and achievements in this area are listed on page 142-143.

Energy Targets for 2022 are listed on page 143, including:

- Maintain ISO50001 certified Energy Management System.
- Examine requirements of upcoming legislation to determine the obligations on Kerry County Council in terms of future, strategies and targets.
- Continue to work with other stakeholders in the county in the areas of energy efficiency and sustainability.

The **Flood Management – Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment & Management (CFRAM)** is also provided for here.

Division F – Recreation and Amenity

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 25-26 of the Budget Tables and Pages 145-154 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Leisure Facilities Operations (F0101) **€403,600**

Contribution to External Bodies Leisure Facilities (F0103) **€60,000**

This provision contains support for Ballybunion Swimming Pool and it also includes a contribution for financial support to Tralee Sports and Leisure Centre.

Library Service Operations (F0201) **€2,679,300**

Kerry Library operates 9 full time branch libraries throughout the county. The service is underpinned by the Libraries National Strategy 2018-2022. During 2021 the use of online library services increased significantly with e-books, e-magazines, e-learning courses, e-audio books, e-languages and e-newspapers all available free of charge via the library website www.kerrylibrary.ie.

In 2021 usage of library services is increasing – up to the end of September, 118,063 items have been borrowed from Kerry Libraries with 74,568 individual visits by members of the public.

Library Programmes

Kerry Library continued to deliver, albeit online, the nationally supported library programmes, each supplemented by the provision of quality book stock, trained library staff and availability of national funding. These include:

- (i) the Right to Read literacy support programme
- (ii) Work Matters at the Library delivered an online Careers Workshops series

- (iii) Healthy Ireland @ your Library allows libraries to provide a wide range of health-related book stock, online resources and an online lecture series across the service.
- (iv) Age Friendly programme. Service provision, including both library material and infrastructure requirements, for older people is reviewed on an ongoing basis at these libraries.

Right to Read Award

For the third year in a row, Kerry Library was the recipient of a national Right to Read Award.

Government funding to provide a number of **Library Supports for Marginalised, Socially Excluded and Disadvantaged Communities**.

Installation of Sensory Walls at Caherciveen, Castleisland, Listowel & Tralee Libraries; availability of C-Pen readers to assist those with reading difficulties such as dyslexia.

Listowel Library has added a 'Cubbie' Sensory Hub unit to its range of services. This will offer a user experience for children, teens and adults with sensory impairments. In addition, Kerry Library also provided adult literacy initiatives.

Local History & Archives Service (F0202) €105,100

A number of important donations were received during the year.

Purchase of Books, CDs etc. (F0204) €280,000

Parks, Pitches and Open Spaces (F0301) €1,470,900

Playgrounds (F0302) €141,000

The Council manages and maintains 41 playgrounds throughout the County. Further upgrades to existing playgrounds are planned to increase the universal access appeal in the next 12 months.

Beaches (F0303) €516,000

The cleaning and collection of litter on Blue Flag Beaches is a function that is carried out in each area by the Municipal District Area staff.

Beach cleaning includes materials, insurance, plant/machinery and salaries. Support will be given to active community groups who assist in beach cleaning.

This service also contains a provision for funding of Municipal District Enforcement Officers.

Community Grants (F0401) €37,000

This allocation is in respect of a contribution towards Kerry ETB to support Kerry Life Education.

Recreational Development (F0404) €207,850

Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership (KRSP) is funded on an annual basis.

Administration of Arts Programme (F0501 & F0502) €713,100

The Arts Service works to develop arts and creative practice in Kerry. This includes support to artists, art festivals and events, venues, organisations, agencies, communities, schools, as integral elements of our living culture. Its work programme is supported by the Arts Council, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and Creative Ireland. Budgets are maximised through leveraging national funding, where possible, to support the Arts sector.

Objectives and Priorities 2022

The new Arts Strategy 2022 – 2027 will be developed in 2022.

Strategic objectives, targeting key development needs, will be addressed through the following 2022 work programme and also manages:

Artist Bursaries & Awards, Arts Act (2003) Grant, Contributions to Voluntary Organisations

Music Generation Kerry (MGK)

Bealtaine Workshops

Arts Council co-funded Arts Programme - Culture Night

Film Kerry which promotes Kerry as a location for film

Museums Operations (F0503)

€518,700

During the year Kerry Museum maintained and grew collections and also took the opportunity to develop its online engagement, which has increased significantly over the past six years. With the assistance of funding from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, the Museum has begun to create a digital library of images of objects from the collection. The images will be used to underpin a planned series of online displays, exhibition and interactions.

Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 27-28 of the Budget Tables and Pages 155-158 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Maintenance of Land Drainage Areas (G0101)

€100,000

Operation and Maintenance of Piers/Harbours (G0201)

€356,800

The Council has responsibility for the operation of 59 piers. This allocation also part-funds projects approved by the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine for repairs and improvement works under the Fishery Harbours and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme. In 2021, the Council co-funded repair works in the following pier locations: Dooneen Pier, Dún Chaoin Pier and Knightstown Breakwater.

Operation & Maintenance of Piers/Harbours, Fenit (G0203)

€962,800

The Council has responsibility for the operation and promotion of Fenit Harbour. This budget also accounts for the maintenance of Fenit Marina and Fenit Lighthouse. A dredging campaign took place and was completed in May 2021.

Planned Protection of Coastal Regions (G0302)

€228,000

Provision of Veterinary Service (G0401)

€215,900

Operation of Dog Warden Service (G0404)

€254,900

The allocation provides for 4 Dog Wardens and 1 Pound Keeper, together with the cost of operating the Council Dog Pound and Shelter in Tralee.

Division H – Miscellaneous Services

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 29-31 of the Budget Tables and Pages 159-165 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Administration of Rates (H03)

Administration of Rates Office (H0301)

€586,000

Refunds and Irrecoverable Rates (H0303)

€9,390,000

The allocation provided by the Finance Directorate is in respect of provision of refunds for Vacant and to let properties, derelict and disused properties, exempted properties and irrecoverable rates. The long-term impact of the pandemic on the Council's core rate base will result in an unfortunate increase in vacancy and business closure. The allocation for 2022 is increased to reflect an anticipated increase in this category.

In relation to **Rates on Vacant Properties** the Rates Revaluation process currently underway will ensure that in 2022, the current Rate Book will be reflective of the business and commercial sector in Kerry. It will streamline the listing of commercial properties and accounts to give an improved, up to date categorisation of properties, it will also identify derelict properties and delist these properties from the Rate book and revalue partially vacant properties in order to reflect the current commercial usage of the property.

This process will give the Council an updated, improved analysis of vacant and available for to let properties throughout the county, in particular the large towns, to provide data to enable initiatives and interventions to be developed under the 'Our Rural Future' Development Policy and the proposed 'Town Centre First' policy. These proposals will be presented to the Economic Development Enterprise and Community SPC for review during 2022. It is recommended therefore that current position remains the same for vacant properties pending the outcome of the Revaluation process.

Coroner Fees and Expenses (H0501)

€233,000

Local Representation/Civic Leadership (H09) costs are detailed on page 161 and page 162 and incorporate Moorhead which is recouped for 2022.

General Municipal Allocation (GMA) / Community Support Fund (H0909)

€1,707,000

The Councillor allocation for Specific Operations of €957,000 has been maintained at €29,000 per Councillor. This is provided from the Council's own resources for discretionary works. The allocation of €957,000 includes a number of schemes and grants processed by the Community Department and the Municipal District Officers for communities.

Motor Taxation Operation (H1001)

€829,100

The Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) is a national shared service which is recoupable.

Division J – Central Management Charges

Ms. McAllen referred members to Pages 33 of the Budget Tables and Pages 166-175 of the Chief Executive's Report for details on this Division.

Maintenance & Upkeep of Corporate Buildings (J0101)

€2,517,712

This budget includes caretaking, security and maintenance costs for Kerry County Council's buildings across the county. In 2021, significant work was carried out as part of Kerry County Council's work in addressing staff and public safety during the Covid-19 pandemic. All works to Corporate Facilities continue to be designed, managed and constructed in-house by the FMU.

Corporate General Policy (J0201)

€2,015,458

Contribution to Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Freedom of Information

Media, Communications and Customer Relations

Insurances/Risk Management

The overall estimated insurance cost provided by the Council for 2022 is €4.378m, a reduction on the previous year.

Oifig na Gaeilge

Isteach sa dréacht búiséad, tá an méid airgead don Oifigeach Gaeilge agus an Oifigeach Forbairt Gaeilge nua agus deiseanna do féilte agus don phobal Gaeltacht. Mar is eolas díobh tá breis airgead ann mar gheall ar an post nua, Oifigeach Forbairt Gaeilge atá ann anois.

Tá stráitéis leis an rialtas mar gheall ar an Gaeltacht as seo amach agus táimid i gComhairle Chontae Chiarraí, freisin ag spreagadh agus at tabhairt cabhair chun dul chun cinn ár Gaeltachta sa Contae seo i gCorca Dhuibhne agus Uibh Ráthaigh.

Táimid, gach aon blian, ag déanamh níos mó leis an Oifig Gaeilge mar shampla ag cur isteach ar dréacht Plean Forbairt an Contae, an plean Eacnamaíochta an contae agus an plean Tuairisóireacht an Contae, agus cabhair agus spreagadh an Gaeltacht.

Ag freastal ar agus ag caint go minic leis an Coimisinéir Teanga mar gheall ar ár bpolasaí agus pleananna.

Ag féachaint ar agus ag cur i bfeidhim Strátéis an rialtas an Teanga Gaeilge dhá mhíle is a deich go dtí dhá mhíle is a tríocha.

Ag caint leis agus ag freastal ar Roinn na Gaeltachta, Údarás na Gaeltachta agus Foras na Gaeilge ar son Comhairle Chontae Chiarraí mar gheall ar chabhair a thabhairt don teanga beo sa Gaeltacht.

Beidh on Oifig Gaeilge go mór mór ag spreagadh agus ag cabhrú leis an bpobal agus an plean baile seirbhísí sa Gaeltacht, an Turasóireacht as Gaeilge agus airgead freisin a bheith le fáil do treanáil.

Táimid ag an am seo ag obair leis an Oifigeach Forbairt na Gaeilge nua chun an Plean Baile Seirbhísí na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn i gCathair Saidhbhín.

Included in the Draft Budget is provision for salaries for Oifig na Gaeilge and the Language Development Officer and support/contributions to community events and festivals. The Government has recognised the need to plan for the future of our

Gaeltacht areas and Kerry County Council plays a key role in ensuring the protection and promotion of Irish in our Gaeltacht areas of Corca Dhuibhne & Uíbh Ráthach. The range of work for Oifig na Gaeilge continues to grow and includes the Corporate Support, for example,

- Corporate governance of the Official Languages Act, 2003; implementation of Kerry County Council's Four Language Schemes and language commitments in the County Development Plan and other key plans and policies such as the Kerry Tourism & Action Plan.
- Corporate governance of the Gaeltacht Act 2012 and the Government's 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 - 2030.
- Liaise with An Coimisinéir Teanga regarding development of our policies and other matters.
- Liaise and consult with the Department of the Gaeltacht, Foras na Gaeilge and Údarás na Gaeltachta on behalf of Kerry County Council regarding development of policies and strategies to support Irish Speaking and Gaeltacht Communities.

The Oifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge manages and implements community projects in specialist areas such as supporting Gaeltacht Language Plans, Gaeltacht Service Town Plans, Irish Language Tourism, Irish Speaking Communities and Irish language training. Supports and assistance provided includes: -

- Gaeltacht Support
 - Caherciveen Gaeltacht Service Town plan
- Our newly appointed Language Development Officer has commenced work on the community consultation element of the development of a Gaeltacht services town plan for Caherciveen.

Audit Services (J0202)

€251,354

This allocation covers costs of the Internal Audit Unit.

Communication Costs (J0203)

€902,166

This heading reflects provision for the data communications links and related services between all offices.

Information and Communication Technology (J03)

There is continued investment in I.T. The primary objective of the I.T. Service for 2022 is to develop, maintain, secure & support:

- ICT infrastructure
- Our kerrycoco.ie website
-

Maintenance of Networks and PCs (J0301)

€2,377,168

Applications (J0305)

€587,717

The ICT work programme is outlined on pages 170-171 and in particular the continued investment in cyber security to protect I.T. systems.

Human Resources Administration (J0501)

€2,080,846

The Human Resources work programme is outlined on pages 172-173.

Financial & Management Accounting (J0601, J0602 & J0603)

€2,446,380

This provision relates to the administration of the finance function.

Pensions & Lump Sums (J0701) **€10,005,029**

This provision has been increased as previously highlighted to Members.

Area Offices Costs (J0801) **€382,546**

Ms. McAllen said that concluded her presentation of the Revenue Budget for 2022.

The Cathaoirleach and all Elected Members complimented the Head of Finance on her presentation and thanked the Finance team for their work on the Budget.

Cllr. Michael O'Shea asked if additional staff are being recruited in the Planning Department and Forward Planning Unit to deal with development plans, e.g. the Dingle Local Area Plan. In Milltown infrastructure must be put in place to support the expansion of businesses in the industrial unit in order that they can continue to operate from the town. He acknowledged the work of the Derelict Sites Officer in addressing dereliction and asked why Kerry County Council has not used powers at its disposal to further address derelict sites.

Cllr. Aoife Thornton asked if there are any discretionary monies available to enable an increase in the allocation of €60,000 for Ballybunion Swimming Pool and the Tralee Leisure Centre, which is 14% of the support provided to Killarney. She PROPOSED that the allocation of €60,000 for Ballybunion Swimming Pool and the Tralee Leisure Centre be increased for 2022 by €20,000. She asked for the balance on the Killarney Leisure Centre loan.

Cllr. Sam Locke SECONDED this proposal.

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris said there must be a focus on marketing the Greenways that are due to open in 2022. She expressed disappointment with the allocation of €228,000 for Planned Protection of the Coast and asked if this could be expanded with grant assistance. She asked for clarification regarding who is responsible for repair works. She said she was not happy that rates rebates will not be considered when there is a problem with vacant properties in the county, particularly in Tralee. An scheme to incentivise people to open businesses must be considered.

Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald referred to page 124 of the Chief Executive's report regarding provision for loan charges of €219,188 pertaining to capital development works at the North Kerry Landfill and the development of Ionad Athchúrsála agus Dramhaíola Chorca Dhuibhne and asked for a breakdown of the figure. He said there is a need for a Civic Amenity centre in the Tralee/North Kerry area.

Cllr. Robert Beasley expressed concern regarding the delay in returning the Blue Flag to Ballybunion beach, which was not retained in April 2020. It is vital to the economy of the area that everything is done to secure the Blue Flag in 2022. The provision of car parks is an issue in many parts of the county and he reiterated his call for lands to be acquired for a car park in Ballybunion. Visitors to beaches do not have adequate parking facilities and it is posing a danger regarding access for emergency vehicles. He asked that beach cleaning continue to be provided in 2022 and on a more regular basis. He acknowledged the great work done by Tidy Towns groups and said there is a need for succession planning and getting young people involved in these groups. He

referred to coastal flooding of areas in North Kerry and said financial aid is not being provided to protect these areas; this must be examined and finance sought. He commended the great work being done by the Library service.

Cllr. Charlie Farrelly PROPOSED that monies be reallocated from the Library Service Operation provision of €2,679,300 (page 145) and allocated to increase the provision of €122,000 for Estate Maintenance to €150,000. As one of the mobile library units has not been on the road savings have been made in this area. He expressed disappointment that a firm commitment has not been provided that Castleisland will have a 39-hour Traffic Warden in 2022 and sought further information on this request.

Cllr. Niall O'Callaghan SECONDED this proposal.

The Chief Executive said this is not a valid proposal in relation to Budget 2022. The Local Authority cannot transfer an over/under expenditure from 2021 to 2022.

Cllr. Charlie Farrelly acknowledged the position regarding non-transfer of over/under expenditure. He referred to the recoupment of Councillors salary via Moorhead and asked if that recoupment could be transferred to increase the Estate Maintenance budget provision for 2022.

Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance, said the Representational Payment additional expenditure is recouped from the Department so there is no saving. There must be expenditure to recoup.

Cllr. Jim Finucane said it is crucial that rates remain unchanged. The funding of pensions must be removed from the Local Authority, representing an allocation of €10m in the budget this cannot be sustained. In relation to marketing, he asked that consideration be given to the recruitment of a specialist marketing executive to market the county. He asked for a plan to be put in place for the restoration of the Ashe Memorial Hall; it is a resource to the county and could be used as a venue for prestigious receptions. In addition, if it were upgraded, national artefacts could be transferred to the museum.

Cllr. Cathal Foley referred to the number of call outs on the Fire Service due to gorse fires and asked how many are being investigated and fines issued/costs negotiated as they demand a significant amount of time from the fire service. Also, a colossal amount of carbon is released during a gorse fire.

Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae asked for clarification that rates are not applied to vacant buildings and for clarification regarding the proposal from Cllr. Aoife Thornton.

Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald welcomed the use of Irish and the appointment of an Irish Officer in Caherciveen. He welcomed Kerry County Council's support for the Other Voices event held last weekend, which is streamed worldwide; it is publicity and marketing for the Corca Dhuibhne area. It is also important that tracks and trails are marketed.

Cllr. Michael Cahill said the Tourism Strategy, the Economic Recovery Plan, the Greenways and a marketing plan for same is very important. Festivals are an important part of the recovery of the county as many businesses rely on the income generated through festivals. He welcomed the Atlantic Cable Project and the important connections it will develop with other cities and countries. SICAP is a very important

programme and particular estates should be targeted for assistance; it would be of great benefit to the residents of estates. Rural regeneration is hugely important and the programmes in Caherciveen are welcome. He acknowledged the work done by the staff of Kerry County Council on applications submitted for funding. As many businesses as possible should be accommodated in relation to the Outdoor Dining Grants. Consideration must also be given to the provision of a Remembrance Park on Council owned lands. He noted that the cost of waste collection services has increased since Kerry County Council left the service and called on private waste collectors to be considerate in their pricing structure. He welcomed that the Repair and Lease Scheme will assist the Local Authority with the provision of accommodation. It is vital that provision has been made to address coastal erosion. At beaches, amenities such as public toilets and showers must be provided and there should be a year round Beach Caretaker. The Arts are hugely important to the county and he asked that the Local Authority give consideration to each Municipal District considering a day where artists can display their product. Kerry County Council should not be paying Coroners Fees; this is an area that needs to be addressed.

Cllr. Bobby O'Connell said in relation to creating a database of how people are disposing of their waste, there is an excellent opportunity now as the Government are recruiting enumerators and it could be part of the census questionnaire. He questioned why the Local Authority is paying for the inspection of Abbatoirs and for Coroners Fees; these fees should be removed from the Local Authority and dealt with nationally.

Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae supported Cllr. Bobby O'Connell's proposal regarding the census questionnaire.

Cllr. Norma Moriarty supported Cllr. Jim Finucane's proposal regarding a marketing executive. It should be competitively tendered for a period of two years and marketing should be undertaken in a strategic fashion.

Cllr. Mikey Sheehy supported Cllr. Norma Moriarty's proposal regarding competitively tendering for a marketing executive. Marketing is a specialised field and there is a need for bespoke marketing of the county and in particular the Greenways.

Cllr. Charlie Farrelly referred to his proposal regarding the Library Service and the saving in that area. He asked if a saving arises in 2022, whereby neither of the two mobile libraries are operating, if that saving could be redirected to the 2022 Housing Estate Maintenance budget.

The Chief Executive said this is not a valid proposal as a budget cannot be provided to a service on the basis of an unknown saving. It is intended to have the mobile library service operational in 2022 and finance used.

Cllr. Sam Locke said the funding provided to the Tralee Leisure Centre is minute for what is a relatively old centre and he would appreciate extra funding being allocated. He PROPOSED the adoption of the Budget presented.

Cllr. Aoife Thornton requested clarification regarding the term of the loan on the Killarney Leisure Centre and when the loan is due to expire.

The Chief Executive responded to queries from Elected Members as follows:

- Planning Department staffing - A number of vacancies have been filled recently.

- Derelict Sites/Regeneration – A lot of work has been done in this area and this work will continue.
- Industry in Milltown – Kerry County Council is aware of this situation and will work with this business in whatever way it can legally do.
- North Kerry Coastline – The Fáilte Ireland Destination Plan is awaited for the Tralee and North Kerry area and is one that Kerry County Council will link in with. It will provide a much needed plan for the area.
- Coastal funding is aimed towards the drawdown of national funds. In this regard, own resources must be in place to match national funds. This will be a feature of the Local Property Tax going forward to provide an own resource requirement.
- Rates – it is not proposed to change the current position regarding vacant properties. A revaluation is coming on board during 2022 which will address those properties.
- Ballybunion Blue Flag – an update was provided to Listowel Municipal District recently. Water quality results are very good, however, Kerry County Council is not the deciding authority.
- Marketing and promotion of the county – there is a need for the industry to pool together regarding the asks for the county. There are more development funding requests coming through the Local Authority.
- Ashe Hall, Tralee – A plan was submitted for funding which was not successful. The importance of this building for Tralee is recognised and funding avenues will continue to be pursued.
- There is a focus on the use of Irish in the county and this will continue going forward.
- Inspections regarding refuse disposal – plans to introduce these inspections were interrupted by the COVID pandemic.
- Leisure Centres – Killarney Leisure Centre is the only swimming pool in the ownership of Kerry County Council and on which there is a liability to ensure it is operational. A lot of work has been done to lessen the burden on the Local Authority. Killarney Leisure Centre was a Killarney Town Council initiative initially and there were conditions on the Local Authority when funding was drawn down and why there is a higher subvention. Kerry County Council does not own Tralee and Ballybunion Leisure Centres, although a subvention is provided to both.

Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance, said there is no discretionary element in the Killarney Swimming Pool allocation and there are conditions with the grant and the loan. The loan is for €3.5m over 15 years. It will run at least until 2023. It represents an asset of €8.5m on the books of Kerry County Council.

29.11.2021.03 Adoption of the Council's Budget for the Local Financial Year ending 31 December 2022

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, said a vote would now be taken on the following:

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Sam Locke, SECONDED by Cllr. Jim Finucane, that we the members of Kerry County Council hereby resolve that pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 and the Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations, the Draft

Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2022 as presented by the Chief Executive and as set out in Tables A, B and C be and is hereby adopted.

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, allowed five minutes after the Cathaoirleach had cast his vote for Cllrs. Robert Beasley, John Francis Flynn, Niall Kelleher and Terry O'Brien to cast their vote, as provided for in the Supplementary Standing Orders for the management of Remote Meetings.

The result of the vote was as follows:

For: Cllrs. Tom Barry, Robert Beasley, Michael Cahill, Patrick Connor-Scarteen, Brendan Cronin, Charlie Farrelly, Deirdre Ferris, Jim Finucane, Breandán Fitzgerald, Fionnán Fitzgerald, Seamus Fitzgerald, John Francis Flynn, Cathal Foley, Michael Foley, Donal Grady, Jackie Healy-Rae, Johnny Healy-Rae, Maura Healy-Rae, Niall Kelleher, Mike Kennelly, Sam Locke, Dan McCarthy, Marie Moloney, Norma Moriarty, Terry O'Brien, Niall O'Callaghan, Bobby O'Connell, John O'Donoghue, Michael O'Shea, Mikey Sheehy, Aoife Thornton, Johnnie Wall, Cathaoirleach Jimmy Moloney **(33)**

Against: None **(0)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

Absent: None **(0)**

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

29.11.2021.04 Determination of the Annual Rate on Valuation for the Local Financial Year ending 31 December 2022

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, said a vote would now be taken on the following:

On the PROPOSAL of Cllr. Michael O'Shea, SECONDED by Cllr. Jim Finucane, that we the members of Kerry County Council hereby resolve that pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 and the Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations, and in accordance with the Local Authority Budget for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2022, as adopted, the annual rate on valuation as set out in Table A hereunder be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the said Financial Year having regard to the Base Year Adjustment determined in accordance with Section 29 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The Annual Rate to be levied shall be €79.25.

TABLE A - CALCULATION OF ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION

Summary by Service Division						Estimated Net Expenditure Outturn 2021	
		Expenditure	Income	Budget Net Expenditure 2022		€	%
		€	€	€	%	€	%
Gross Revenue Expenditure & Income							
Housing and Building		37,480,401	36,519,502	960,899	1.5%	456,331	0.8%
Road Transport & Safety		49,102,445	34,738,849	14,363,596	23.0%	13,944,126	23.7%
Water Services		17,085,018	15,884,703	1,200,315	1.9%	1,136,143	1.9%
Development Management		19,769,488	8,535,912	11,233,576	18.0%	9,377,816	15.9%
Environmental Services		20,259,664	5,150,314	15,109,350	24.2%	14,693,583	25.0%
Recreation and Amenity		9,523,700	909,513	8,614,187	13.8%	8,416,053	14.3%
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare		2,956,644	1,799,006	1,157,638	1.9%	1,114,836	1.9%
Miscellaneous Services		21,049,013	11,246,306	9,802,707	15.7%	9,718,302	16.5%
		177,226,373	114,784,105	62,442,268	100%	58,857,190	100%
Provision for Debit Balance							
Adjusted Gross Expenditure & Income	(A)	177,226,373	114,784,105	62,442,268		58,857,190	
Financed by Other Income/Credit Balances							
Provision for Credit Balance							
Local Property Tax			14,848,668	14,848,668			
Sub - Total	(B)			14,848,668		58,857,190	
Net Amount of Rates to be Levied	(A-B)			47,593,600			
Value of Base Year Adjustment				0			
Amount of Rates to be Levied (Gross of BYA)	(D)			47,593,600			
Net Effective Valuation	(E)			600,550.16			
General Annual Rate on Valuation	D/E			79.25			

Mr. P. Corkery, Meetings Administrator, allowed five minutes after the Cathaoirleach had cast his vote for Cllrs. Robert Beasley and Cathal Foley to cast their vote, as provided for in the Supplementary Standing Orders for the management of Remote Meetings.

The result of the vote was as follows:

For: Cllrs. Tom Barry, Robert Beasley, Michael Cahill, Patrick Connor-Scarteen, Brendan Cronin, Charlie Farrelly, Deirdre Ferris, Jim Finucane, Breandán Fitzgerald, Fionnán Fitzgerald, Seamus Fitzgerald, John Francis Flynn, Cathal Foley, Michael Foley, Donal Grady, Jackie Healy-Rae, Johnny Healy-Rae, Maura Healy-Rae, Niall Kelleher, Mike Kennelly, Sam Locke, Dan McCarthy, Marie Moloney, Norma Moriarty, Terry O'Brien, Niall O'Callaghan, Bobby O'Connell, John O'Donoghue, Michael O'Shea, Mikey Sheehy, Aoife Thornton, Johnnie Wall, Cathaoirleach Jimmy Moloney **(33)**

Against: None **(0)**

Not Voting: None **(0)**

Absent: None **(0)**

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

29.11.2021.05 Report on the Capital Programme 2022–2024

Cllr. Donal Grady PROPOSED that the Chief Executive's Report on the Capital Programme 2022-2024 as incorporated into the Report on the Budget be noted.

Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae SECONDED this proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

29.11.2021.06 Approval of additional Expenditure for 2021

Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald PROPOSED that we the members of Kerry County Council resolve that the additional expenditure for 2021 as set out in the Column titled "Estimated Outturn 2021" on Table F in the Local Authority Budget, as circulated, be and is hereby approved.

Cllr. Michael Foley SECONDED this proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

Cathaoirleach Jimmy Moloney thanked the Chief Executive, Head of Finance and staff of the Finance Department for their work in compiling the Budget 2022.

The meeting concluded at 3.55 p.m.

Pádraig Corkery
Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach of Kerry County Council