

**Comhairle Contae Chiarraí
Kerry County Council**



**Tuarascáil Bhliantúil
Annual Report**

2024

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Membership of Kerry County Council

There are thirty-three County Councillors representing the five Municipal Districts of Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne, Kenmare, Killarney, Listowel and Tralee.

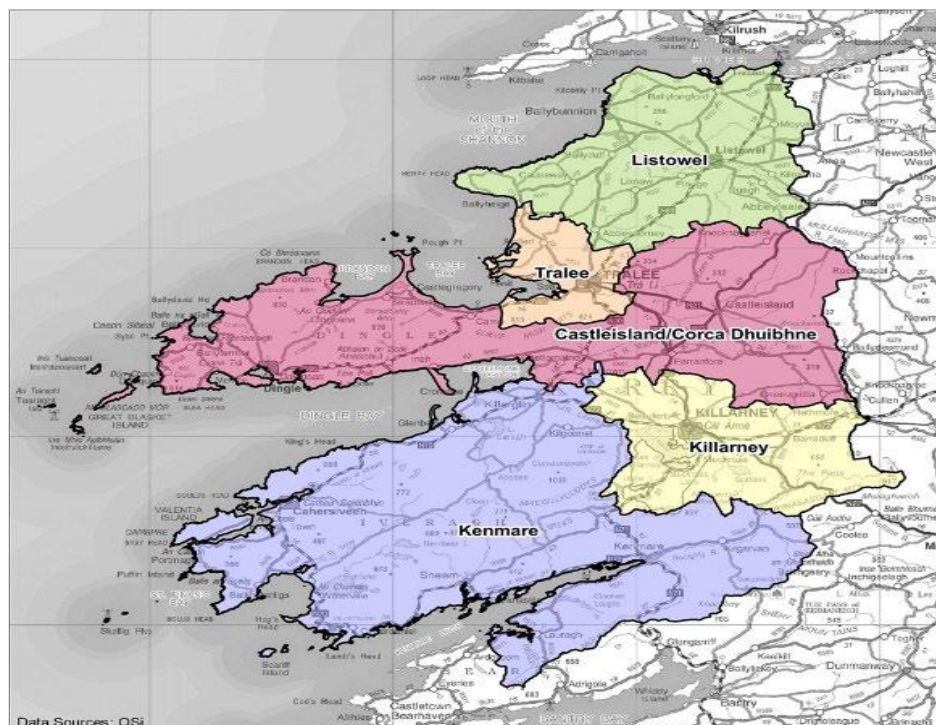
Council elections are held every 5 years, and a new Council was elected in June 2024 and will remain in office until 2029.

During 2024, the Cathaoirleach was Cllr. Jim Finucane who served until June 2024. At the Annual Meeting of Kerry County Council following the Local Elections in June 2024, Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald was elected as Cathaoirleach for a twelve-month term to June 2025.

During 2024, the Leas-Cathaoirleach was Cllr. Johnnie Wall who served until June 2024. At the Annual Meeting of Kerry County Council following the Local Elections in June 2024, Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald was elected as Leas Cathaoirleach for a twelve-month term to June 2025.

Municipal Districts

The county is divided into five Municipal Districts (administrative areas) across the county with the Councillor membership of these Municipal Districts set out as follows Tralee (7 members) Killarney (7 members) Castleisland / Corca Dhuibhne (7 members) Listowel (6 members) Kenmare (6 members).



Elected Members January - June 2024

Municipal District of Tralee

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris, Barrow West, Ardfert (Sinn Féin)
Cllr. Jim Finucane, 33 Ashe St., Tralee (Fine Gael)
Cllr. Cathal Foley, Ballinorig South, Tralee (Sinn Féin)
Cllr. Sam Locke, 81 Spa Road, Tralee (Non-Party)
Cllr. Terry O'Brien, Tonevane, Tralee (Labour)
Cllr. Mikey Sheehy, 66 Cluain Ard, Ballyvelly, Tralee (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Johnnie Wall, 8 Ballinorig Estate, Tralee (Fianna Fáil)

Municipal District of Killarney

Cllr. Brendan Cronin, Rathcommane, Ballyhar, Killarney (Non-Party)
Cllr. Martin Grady, 5 Ardshanavooley, Killarney (Non-Party)
Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae, Main Street, Kilgarvan (Non-Party)
Cllr. Niall Kelleher, 29 High Street, Killarney (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Marie Moloney, Coolick, Kilcummin, Killarney (Labour)
Cllr. Niall 'Botty' O'Callaghan, Kilbreen Beg, Killarney (Non-Party)
Cllr. John O'Donoghue, Fuschia Grove, Gortdromakerrie, Muckcross, Killarney (Kerry Independent Alliance)

Municipal District of Listowel

Cllr. Tom Barry, 50 Feale Drive, Listowel (Sinn Féin)
Cllr. Robert Beasley, 'Puicín', Doon Rd., Ballybunion (Sinn Féin)
Cllr. Michael Foley, Main Street, Ballylongford (Fine Gael)
Cllr. Mike Kennelly, Coolaclarig, Listowel (Fine Gael)
Cllr. Jimmy Moloney, 11 Cherrytree Drive, Listowel (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Aoife Thornton, Finuge, Lixnaw (Fine Gael)

Municipal District of Kenmare

Cllr. Michael Cahill, Rossbeigh, Glenbeigh (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen, 5 Main St., Kenmare (Fine Gael)
Cllr. John Francis Flynn, Upper Tullig, Caragh Lake, Killorglin (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae, Main Street, Kilgarvan (Non-Party)
Cllr. Dan McCarthy, Kilcurrane East, Kenmare (Non-Party)
Cllr. Norma Moriarty, Main Street, Waterville (Fianna Fáil)

Municipal District of Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne

Cllr. Charlie Farrelly, The Carnegie Building, Upper Main Street, Castleisland (Non-Party)
Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald, Dingle Heights, Ballinaboula, Dingle (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald, Ballyfinogue, Rathanny, Tralee (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Séamus Cosáí Fitzgerald, Droichead Bán, Glens, Daingean Uí Chúis (Fine Gael)
Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae, Sandymount, Kilgarvan (Non-Party)
Cllr. Bobby O'Connell, 15 Main Street, Castleisland (Fine Gael)
Cllr. Michael O'Shea, Chapel Lane, Milltown (Fianna Fáil)

Elected Members June - December 2024

Municipal District of Tralee

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris, Barrow West, Ardfert (Sinn Féin)
Cllr. Sam Locke, 81 Spa Road, Tralee (Non-Party)
Cllr. Terry O'Brien, Tonevane, Tralee (Labour)
Cllr. Mikey Sheehy, 66 Cluain Ard, Ballyvelly, Tralee (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Paul Daly, 25 River Walk, Oakpark, Tralee (Sinn Féin)
Cllr. Anne O'Sullivan, Ballydwyer, Ballymacelligott, Tralee (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Angie Baily, Rathanny, Tralee (Fine Gael)

Municipal District of Killarney

Cllr. Brendan Cronin, Rathcommane, Ballyhar, Killarney (Non-Party)
Cllr. Martin Grady, 5 Ardshanavooley, Killarney (Non-Party)
Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae, Main Street, Kilgarvan (Non-Party)
Cllr. Niall Kelleher, 29 High Street, Killarney (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Marie Moloney, Coolick, Kilcummin, Killarney (Labour)
Cllr. Niall 'Botty' O'Callaghan, Kilbrean Beg, Killarney (Non-Party)
Cllr. John O'Donoghue, Fuschia Grove, Gortdromakerrie, Muckcross, Killarney (Kerry Independent Alliance)

Municipal District of Listowel

Cllr. Tom Barry, 50 Feale Drive, Listowel (Sinn Féin)
Cllr. Michael Foley, Main Street, Ballylongford (Fine Gael)
Cllr. Mike Kennelly, Coolaclarig, Listowel (Fine Gael)
Cllr. Jimmy Moloney, 11 Cherrytree Drive, Listowel (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Liam 'Speedy' Nolan Main Street, Moyvane (Independent)
Cllr. Michael Leane, Kirby's Bar, Main Street, Ballyheigue (Fianna Fáil)

Municipal District of Kenmare

Cllr. Michael Cahill, Rossbeigh, Glenbeigh (Fianna Fáil) Elected Dail Eireann Nov' 24
Cllr. Tommy Cahill Rossbeigh, Glenbeigh (Fianna Fáil) Co-opted December 2024
Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae, Main Street, Kilgarvan (Non-Party)
Cllr. Dan McCarthy, Kilcurrane East, Kenmare (Non-Party)
Cllr. Norma Moriarty, Main Street, Waterville (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Podge Foley School Road, Killorglin (Independent)
Cllr. Teddy O'Sullivan Casey, Gortlicka, Dromoughty, Kenmare (Fine Gael)

Municipal District of Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne

Cllr. Robert Brosnan, Gabhlán Thoir, Lispole, Dingle (Sinn Féin)
Cllr. Charlie Farrelly, The Carnegie Building, Upper Main Street, Castleisland (Non-Party)
Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald, Dingle Heights, Ballinaboula, Dingle (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald, Ballyfinogue, Rathanny, Tralee (Fianna Fáil)
Cllr. Tommy Griffin, Shanakeale, Keel, Castlemaine (Fine Gael)
Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae, Sandymount, Kilgarvan (Non-Party)
Cllr. Bobby O'Connell, 15 Main Street, Castleisland (Fine Gael)

Elected Members Organisational Structure



Senior Management Team

Chief Executive

Moira Murrell (to 16th June 2024)

Martin O'Donoghue (from 17th June 2024)

Director of Services

Economic and Community Development

Niamh O'Sullivan

Municipal District Manager, Tralee

Acting Director of Services

Housing (from 5/7/24), Integration, Water Services

John Kennelly

Municipal District Manager, Listowel

Director of Services

Roads & Transportation

Frank Hartnett

Director of Services

Corporate Services

Christy O'Connor

Municipal District Manager, Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne

Director of Services

Housing (to 4/7/24) Human Resources

Martin O'Donoghue

Municipal District Manager, Kenmare

Director of Services

Planning, Environment and Emergency Management

Paul Neary A/DoS (to 29/9/24)

James Nolan (from 23/9/24)

Director of Finance

Angela McAllen

Municipal District Manager, Killarney

County Solicitor

Rosemary Cronin

Meetings of Kerry County Council in 2024

Our democratically elected Council is the policy-making arm of the local authority. They represent their communities and act as a democratic forum for the representation and articulation of local interests which provides important civic leadership in County Kerry. Elected members are also selected as members of other boards and committees of a wide number of other public agencies that operate regionally and locally. Some key reserved functions they perform include adoption of the annual budget, statutory Development Plans, policies and byelaws.

Key responsibilities of Council are to determine policies to ensure the effective delivery of services to the people of Kerry. During 2024, the following were adopted by Council:

January 2024 Council Meeting

Kerry County Council Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

January 2024 Council Meeting

Kerry Library Development Plan 2024-2028

May 2024 Council Meeting

Kerry County Council Annual Report 2023

September 2024 Council Meeting

Kerry Arts Development Strategy 2024-2034

September 2024 Council Meeting

Kerry County Council Strategic Policy Committee Scheme

November 2024 Council Meeting

Kerry County Council Annual Budget 2025

December 2024 Council Meeting

Kerry County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029

Special Events of Kerry County Council in 2024

Official opening of the N69 Listowel Bypass by An Taoiseach, Mr Simon Harris TD on August 19th 2024.

Official opening of Ballyseedy Wood Amenity Trail by the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD. on Friday, 16th August, 2024.

Corporate Policy Group (CPG)

The Corporate Policy Group (CPG) is a committee of the Council consisting of the Cathaoirleach of the Council and the Chairperson of the five Strategic Policy Committees:

- Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht SPC
- Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Community SPC
- Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Planning SPC
- Housing SPC
- Roads, Transport and Marine SPC

The CPG links the work of the different SPCs and provides a forum where proposed items for council meeting agendas and policy matters are discussed. The CPG also monitors the performance of the local authority and plays a key role in the budgetary process.

Section 133 of the Local Government Act requires the CPG to contain a member from each Municipal District.

Corporate Policy Group (CPG) – June to December 2024

| Councillors | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald | Cathaoirleach |
| Cllr. Terry O'Brien | Chair of Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Community SPC |
| Cllr. Sam Locke | Chair of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Planning SPC |
| Cllr. Michael Cahill | Chair of Housing SPC |
| Cllr. Teddy O'Sullivan-Casey | Chair of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht SPC |
| Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae | Chair of Roads and Transportation SPC |
| Cllr. Jimmy Moloney | Cathaoirleach Listowel MD |
| Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae | Cathaoirleach Killarney MD |

Corporate Policy Group (CPG) – January to June 2024

| Councillors | |
|----------------------|--|
| Cllr. Jim Finucane | Cathaoirleach |
| Cllr. Michael O'Shea | Chair of Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Community SPC |
| Cllr. Michael Foley | Chair of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Planning SPC |
| Cllr. Johnnie Wall | Chair of Housing SPC |
| Cllr. Brendan Cronin | Chair of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht SPC |
| Cllr. Mike Kennelly | Chair of Roads and Transportation SPC |
| Cllr. Norma Moriarty | Cathaoirleach Kenmare MD |

Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

The Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) of Kerry County Council comprise elected members and representatives from many sectors to facilitate and ensure an input into strategic policy from outside bodies and groups with an interest in a particular area. Meetings of the SPCs discuss broad policy and strategy issues which are brought before full council for consideration.

The Council has five SPCs - Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Community; Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Planning; Housing SPC; and Transport SPC.

Strategic Policy Committees – June to December 2024

Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht SPC

| Councillors (5) | Sectors Represented (4) | Representatives |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Cllr. Teddy O’Sullivan Casey Chairperson | Agriculture/Farming | Kathleen Herlihy |
| Cllr. Paul Daly Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald Cllr. Bobby O’Connell Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae | Community/Voluntary | Derry Murphy |
| | Environment/Conservation | Caitriona Fallon |
| | Social Inclusion | Bridget Quilligan |

Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Community SPC

| Councillors (7) | Sectors Represented (6) | Representatives |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Cllr. Terry O’Brien Chairperson | Business/Commercial | Collette O’Connor |
| Cllr. Angie Baily Cllr. Michael Leane Cllr. Jimmy Moloney Cllr. Niall Botty O’Callaghan Cllr. Norma Moriarty Cllr. Podge Foley | Development/Construction | John F. Flynn |
| | Community/Voluntary | Tomás Stack |
| | Tourism | Bernadette Randles |
| | Údarás na Gaeltachta | Dónal Ó Liatháin |
| | Trade Union | Kevin O’Malley |

Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Planning SPC

| Councillors (6) | Sectors Represented (4) | Representatives |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cllr. Sam Locke Chairperson | Business/Commercial | Stacey McSweeney |
| Cllr. Deirdre Ferris Cllr. Michael Foley Cllr. Dan McCarthy Cllr. John O'Donoghue Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald | Agriculture/Farming | Jason Fleming |
| | Environment/Conservation | Anne Marie Fuller |
| | Social Inclusion | Joey O'Connor |
| | Marine | Vacant – To Be Agreed |

Housing SPC

| Councillors (6) | Sectors Represented (4) | Representatives |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Cllr. Michael Cahill Chairperson | Development/Construction | Sean Clifford |
| Cllr. Robert Brosnan Cllr. Martin Grady Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae Cllr. Marie Moloney Cllr. Mikey Sheehy | Approved Housing Bodies | James O'Halloran |
| | Community/Voluntary | Jennifer O'Sullivan |
| | Social Inclusion | Catherine Lenihan |

Roads and Transport SPC

| Councillors (6) | Sectors Represented (5) | Representatives |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae Chairperson | Business/Commercial | Con Duggan |
| Cllr. Tom Barry Cllr. Brendan Cronin Cllr. Niall Kelleher Cllr. Mike Kennelly Cllr. Liam 'Speedy' Nolan | Agriculture/Farming | Diarmuid McCarthy |
| | Community/Voluntary | Alan O'Connell |
| | Environment/Conservation | Ger Scollard |

Strategic Policy Committees – January to June 2024

Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht SPC

| Councillors (5) | Sectors Represented (4) | Representatives |
|--|--------------------------|------------------|
| Cllr. Brendan Cronin Chairperson | Agriculture/Farming | Tommy Culloty |
| Cllr. Robert Beasley Cllr. Patrick Connor-Scarteen Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald Cllr. Michael Cahill | Community/Voluntary | John Prendergast |
| | Environment/Conservation | Keith Phelan |
| | Social Inclusion | Declan Evans |

Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Community SPC

| Councillors (7) | Sectors Represented (6) | Representatives |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cllr. Michael O'Shea Chairperson | Business/Commercial | Vacant |
| Cllr. Jim Finucane Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae Cllr. Norma Moriarty Cllr. Terry O'Brien Cllr. Niall Botty O'Callaghan | Development/Construction | Michelle O'Sullivan Darcy |
| | Community/Voluntary | John O'Sullivan |
| | Tourism | Bernadette Randles |
| | Údarás na Gaeltachta | Dónal Ó Liatháin |
| | Trade Union | Kevin O'Malley |

Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Planning SPC

| Councillors (6) | Sectors Represented (4) | Representatives |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Cllr. Michael Foley Chairperson | Business/Commercial | Anne Marie Fuller |
| Cllr. John Francis Flynn Cllr. Cathal Foley Cllr. Donal Grady Cllr. Jimmy Moloney Cllr. John O'Donoghue | Agriculture/Farming | Patrick O'Driscoll |
| | Environment/Conservation | Vacant |
| | Social Inclusion | Tony O'Hanlon |

Housing SPC

| Councillors (6) | Sectors Represented (4) | Representatives |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Cllr. Johnnie Wall Chairperson | Development/Construction | Sean Clifford |
| Cllr. Deirdre Ferris Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae Cllr. Marie Moloney Cllr. Bobby O'Connell Cllr. Mikey Sheehy | Approved Housing Bodies | James O'Halloran |
| | Community/Voluntary | Vacant |
| | Social Inclusion | Anne Marie Fuller |

Roads and Transport SPC

| Councillors (6) | Sectors Represented (5) | Representatives |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Cllr. Mike Kennelly Chairperson | Business/Commercial | Ken Fitzgerald |
| Cllr. Tom Barry Cllr. Séamus Cosáí Fitzgerald Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae Cllr. Dan McCarthy Cllr. Sam Locke | Agriculture/Farming | Noel Murphy |
| | Community/Voluntary | Keith Phelan |
| | Environment/Conservation | Vacant |

Civic Receptions 2024

A Civic Reception is the highest public honour Kerry County Council can bestow on an individual or group who have excelled in their field or who have brought great success or distinction to their own community, organisation, or to the county.

Civic Reception 2024

Civic Reception for Astellas Ireland on Monday, 25th March 2024, in recognition of their confidence in Kerry in developing a new €330m facility in Tralee.

Civic Reception for Ms. Kathleen Mary Courtney Hochul, Governor of New York held on Sunday, May 19th, in honour of her visit to Kerry and in recognition of the enduring relationship between the people of Kerry and New York.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT REPORTS

CASTLEISLAND-CORCA DHUIBHNE

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald

Cllr. Bobby O'Connell

Mr. Christy O'Connor

Ms. Breda Mulryan

Ms. Annemarie Lynch

Cathaoirleach 2024-2025

Cathaoirleach 2023-2024

Municipal District Manager

Municipal District Engineer

Municipal District Officer

There were 9 meetings of the Castleisland/Corcha Dhuibhne Municipal District: in 2024, six Ordinary Meetings and three Special Meetings.

There are 7 elected members in the Castleisland/Corcha Dhuibhne Municipal District, prior to the Local Elections in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Charlie Farrelly, (Non-Party), Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Séamus Cosáí Fitzgerald, (Fine Gael), Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae, (Non-Party), Cllr. Bobby O'Connell, (Fine Gael), Cllr. Michael O'Shea, (Fianna Fáil)

Following the Local Elections held in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Charlie Farrelly, (Non-Party), Cllr. Breandán Fitzgerald, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Fionnán Fitzgerald, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Robert Brosnan, (Sinn Féin), Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rae, (Non-Party), Cllr. Bobby O'Connell, (Fine Gael), Cllr. Tommy Griffin (Fine Gael)

INTRODUCTION

The Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District (MD) covers a wide geographical area and includes the main towns of Castleisland, Milltown and Dingle amongst many villages also. The Municipal District is represented by seven elected members.

During the year, 9 meetings were held with the elected members of the Municipal District. As well as the 6 Ordinary MD Council meetings, there were 3 Special Meetings held to approve the 2024 Community Support Fund, the Annual General Meeting and the Draft Budgetary Meeting 2025. There were 2 briefings held in 2024 regarding Section 179(a) Planning for 34 Residential Units Ballybeg, Dingle/SMT Report on Briefing.

The work programme of the Municipal District involves working with the elected members, Chamber Alliances, Tidy Towns Groups, Development Associations and Community and Voluntary Groups towards the development of our Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Amenities to support the quality of life for both residents and visitors in the towns and villages across the Municipal District.

GRANT FUNDING WAS APPROVED FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS IN THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT in 2024:-

CLÁR GRANTS 2024

CLÁR provides funding for small scale infrastructural projects in rural areas that have suffered significant levels of population decline. CLÁR is part of the Government's Project Ireland 2040 Rural Development Investment Programme. Below are details of the successful projects in the Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District that received funding in 2024 and will be developed in 2024/2025

| Community Group | Project | Funding approved |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Brosna Community Development Association | Provide a public amenity area to include outdoor exercise area, community walkway, car parking and ancillary site works in Brosna Village | €50,000 |
| CLG Lios Póil | Construction of a walking path with sensory garden features encircling CLG Lios Póil playing field | €49,511 |
| Milltown GAA | Major upgrade and safety works to facility car park to include sensory and biodiversity garden open to the whole community | €50,000 |
| Castlemaine Playground Committee in conjunction with St. Josephs NS | Provide a public playground in Castlemaine Village for school children and the local community with a range of play equipment with inclusive features | €50,000 |
| Castlegregory Celtic FC | The development of a safe new access & carpark for Castlegregory Celtic FC's pitch | €49,500 |

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND 2024

Grant funding of €42,000 was allocated to 53 Community Groups in the Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District.

The fund in 2024 targeted funding under five categories of support:-

1. Connected, Inclusive & Resilient Communities
2. Community Tidy Town Initiatives, Amenity Projects & Environmentally Sustainable Projects
3. Community Economic Innovation
4. Community Based Tourism, Festivals and Events
5. Community Road Safety Initiatives

LOCAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME 2024

The Local Enhancement Programme which included capital funding ring-fenced for Women's Groups provided support to community groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities and to purchase equipment. 30 groups in the Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District were awarded funding in 2024 totalling €40,393.39.

Festival & Participative Event Funding 2024:

The Festival & Participative Event Funding allocated by Fáilte Ireland to support festivals and participative events in Kerry provided support to 6 groups in the Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District in 2024 totalling €14,395.

| Festival/Event Name | Approved Amount |
|--|------------------------|
| Comórtas Peile Páidí Ó Sé Football Tournament | €1,918 |
| Féile Lughnasadh 2024 (Milltown) | €2,031 |
| Dingle Literary Festival / Féile Liteartha Chorca Dhuibhne | €3,008 |
| Patrick O’Keeffe Traditional Music Festival | €2,482 |
| Dingle Adventure Race | €1,579 |
| Dingle Food Festival | €3,377 |

KENMARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cllr. Michael Cahill | Cathaoirleach 2024-2025 |
| Cllr. Norma Moriarty | Cathaoirleach 2023-2024 |
| Mr. Martin O'Donoghue | Municipal District Manager |
| Mr. Pádraig Teahan | Municipal District Engineer |
| Ms. Maria West | Municipal District Officer |

During 2024 five ordinary Municipal District Meetings were held, the first Annual Meeting and six special Municipal District Meetings were held and there were eight Briefings to the elected members on various matters outside of these meetings.

There are six elected members in the Kenmare Municipal District.

Prior to the Local Elections in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Michael Cahill (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Patrick Connor Scarteen (Fine Gael), Cllr. John Francis Flynn (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae (Non-Party), Cllr. Dan McCarthy (Non-Party) and Cllr. Norma Moriarty (Fianna Fáil).

Following the Local Elections held in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Michael Cahill (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Podge Foley, Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae (Non-Party), Cllr. Dan McCarthy (Non-Party), Cllr. Norma Moriarty (Fianna Fáil) and Cllr. Teddy O'Sullivan Casey (Fine Gael).

Cllr. Michael Cahill was elected to Dáil Éireann following the General Election held on 29th November 2024 and Cllr. Tommy Cahill was subsequently co-opted on to Kerry County Council.

Kenmare Municipal District Cathaoirligh 2024: Cllr. Norma Moriarty and Cllr. Michael Cahill.

Chamber Alliances (Killorglin, Kenmare, Cahersiveen)

Contact was maintained with representatives of the Killorglin, Kenmare and Cahersiveen Chamber Alliances throughout the year. The Chamber Alliances were active throughout 2024, and contact included information sharing, support for grant applications and governance support.

Community Meetings were held in person and online with groups including Valentia, Cromane, Cahersiveen Men's Shed, Waterville, KMEG, Renard GAA, Tuosist GAA, Tulloha National School, Sneem Community Council, Laune Rangers GAA, Killorglin Tidy Towns, CYMS Killorglin, Comhchoiste Ghaeltacht Uibh Ratháigh, Killorglin Town Park Committee,

Lickeen Sportsfield Glencar, Shanacashel Community Centre, Comhlacht Forbartha an Ghleanna, Forbairt na Dromoda Teo, Coiste Pobail Cathair Donall CLG/Caherdaniel Tidy Towns and Coiste Forbartha na Sceilge Ballinskelligs Tidy Towns.

A brief outline of the work in the three Regional Towns is as follows:

KENMARE

Peninsula Land Eco Trail Kenmare

In May 2024 this project was approved following a decision of An Bord Pleanála and the approval of the elected members of the Part 8 planning process. This project under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme was for the development of Looped Paths at the 13.7-acre site acquired by Kerry County Council in Peninsula Park Kenmare. The construction work on the project was substantially complete by year end and the Department gave approval to use some of the funding for an enhanced entrance to the park.

The Beara Way Tuosist

This project secured funding of €29,993 under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme for the further development of the Beara Way, Tuosist. The works were completed by Beara Tourism during 2024.

Purchase of St. Clare's Convent

A grant application was successful in securing €500,000 under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme towards the purchase and renovation of St. Clare's Convent, Kenmare. The building, when refurbished, will accommodate a combination of uses.

Kenmare Playground

Funding of €50,000 was approved under the CLÁR 2023 scheme for Kenmare Playground extension.

Other Community Supports

A special contribution was made towards Christmas Lights in Kenmare. The Tidy Towns Group received support both under Grant schemes and from the Area Office of Kerry County Council.

KILLORGLIN

Rural Regeneration Development Fund

Following the successful 2021 Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)

Application, work progressed on several interventions to regenerate the core of the town including the restoration of the Court House for community use.

CYMS Funding

The CYMS Group was supported to develop an application under the CLÁR programme which was successful in securing funding of €21,348.

Cromane Connected Community Centre

The Cromane Connected Community Centre was officially opened on 18th October 2024 by the then Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley, TD. This marked an exciting new chapter for the Cromane community in unveiling the centre's extensive renovations and enhanced facilities. The upgrades to the Community Centre support a range of local groups. This project was supported by Town and Village Renewal Scheme funding of €99,286.66

Other Community Supports

A special contribution was made towards Christmas Lights in Killorglin.

Meetings were held with the Killorglin Town Park Committee.

The Tidy Towns Group received support both under Grant schemes and from the Area Office of Kerry County Council.

CAHERSIVEEN

Chamber Alliance

The Chamber Alliance Group continued to work with the Municipal District office during 2024.

Kerry County Council and Cahersiveen Chamber Alliance collaborated on a CLÁR 2023 application for €50,000 for the White Strand access. These works were completed in 2024.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund

Following the successful Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) Application, work progressed on several elements of this project.

Other Community Supports

A special contribution was made towards Christmas Lights in Cahersiveen.

The Tidy Towns Group received support both under Grant schemes and from the Area Office of Kerry County Council.

Broadband Connection Points Pilot

There are seven Broadband Connection Points in the Kenmare Municipal District.

- Valentia Island Community Centre
- Valentia Cable Station
- Kells Community Centre
- Coars National School
- Black Valley
- Brú Na Dromoda
- Bonane

In 2024 funding of €3,000 was contributed to the Forbairt Na Dromoda Teo towards the purchase of equipment for Broadband Connection Points for Recovery Haven to provide online cancer support remote services.

Valentia Socio-Economic Plan

Meetings were held with the Valentia Community Group in relation to the progression of priorities identified in the Valentia Island Socio-Economic Plan 2023-2028.

| <u>Rural Grants Update – Projects supported in 2024</u> | | |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| <u>Funding</u> | <u>Project Description</u> | <u>Grant amount</u> |
| Community Support Fund 2024 | 50 Projects supported | €35,000.00 |
| | Strategic CSF: | €65,000.00 |
| | Total of CSF | €100,000.00 |
| Local Enhancement Programme 2024 | 42 Projects supported | €42,426.82 |
| <u>CLÁR applications 2024</u> | | |
| CLÁR 2024 Measure 1 | Staigue Fort, Castlecove | €50,000.00 |
| CLÁR 2024 Measure 1 | Tulloha National School | €50,000.00 |
| CLÁR 2024 Measure 1 | Sneem Development Co-Op Ltd. Community Building | €42,640.31 |
| CLÁR 2024 Measure 1 | Laune Rangers GAA & LGFA | €34,536.91 |

| <u>Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2024 – Project Development Measure</u> | | |
|--|--|------------|
| ORIS 2023 | Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Visitor and Community Mobility Management Plan for Valentia | €50,000.00 |
| <u>Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2024 – Measure 1</u> | | |
| ORIS 2023 | Kerry County Council – Trail Improvements at Reenagross Woodlands Park Kenmare. | €30,000.00 |

| <u>Town and Village Renewal Scheme application 2024</u> | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| TVR 2023 | Purchase of building owned by the Sister of St Clare on the Killarney Road in Kenmare | €500,000.00 |

| <u>Completed and drawdown Rural Grants Update 2024</u> | | |
|--|---|---------------------|
| <u>Funding</u> | <u>Project Description</u> | <u>Grant amount</u> |
| Community Support Fund 2024 | 28 projects completed | €18,267.61 |
| Local Enhancement Programme 2024 | 24 projects completed | €20,437.08 |
| CLÁR 2023 | Access Improvements at White Strand Beach | €50,000.00 |
| ORIS 2022 | The Beara Way at Tuosist | €29,993.00 |

KILLARNEY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Cllr Maura Healy-Rea
Cllr Niall Kelleher
Ms. Angela McAllen
Mr. John Ahern
Mr. Matt Farrell

Cathaoirleach 2024-2025
Cathaoirleach 2023-2024
Killarney Municipal District Manager
Municipal District Engineer
Municipal District Officer

14 Killarney Municipal District Meetings took place in 2024

There are 7 elected members in the Killarney Municipal District:

Prior to the Local Elections in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Brendan Cronin (Non-Party), Cllr. Martin Grady (Non-Party), Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae (Non-Party), Cllr. Niall Kelleher (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Marie Moloney (Labour), Cllr. Niall O'Callaghan (Non-Party) and Cllr. John O'Donoghue (Kerry Independent Alliance)

Following the Local Elections held in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Brendan Cronin (Non-Party), Cllr. Martin Grady (Non-Party), Cllr. Maura Healy-Rae (Non-Party), Cllr. Niall Kelleher (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Marie Moloney (Labour), Cllr. Niall O'Callaghan (Non-Party) and Cllr. John O'Donoghue (Kerry Independent Alliance)

Glebe Commercial Waste Storage Facility

Irish Businesses Against Litter (IBAL) survey 2022 placed Killarney with a ranking of 28 out of 40 towns and cities. Glebe Car Park waste collection area was highlighted as giving a poor impression of the town. Commercial Waste Storage Bins were being stored on a section of the public car park with no fencing to keep the bins from overflowing and looking unsightly. A new purpose built commercial bin storage area was constructed on two parts of the Glebe Car Park, so that Businesses in the area can now store their bins on the condition that they have no other location on their own premises to store the bins. This Storage area also assist businesses comply with the County of Kerry Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste Bye-Laws 2019. An additional Storage area has also been built on a unused portion of the Fairhill Car Park. In 2024, Irish Businesses Against Litter (IBAL) survey placed Killarney with a ranking of 4th out of 40 towns and cities.

Grants/Funding:

Urban Regeneration Development Fund & Active Travel.

- **Killarney Public Realm Project**

Atkins consulting engineers have been appointed to prepare Public Realm plans for Killarney Town Centre. Plans are being developed on a phased basis and it is anticipated these will be completed in 2025.

- **Aras Phadraig Site**

Reddy Architecture and Urbanism have been appointed to develop a theatre, public plaza, underground car park and a serviced site for a Primary Care Centre on the Aras Phádraig site. The council proceeded to the planning process in 2024 and is expected to be completed in early 2025.

- **Killarney THRIVE**

Killarney MD was successful in securing funding through the Southern Regional Assembly THRIVE funding scheme for the development of a Town Centre First Heritage Revival Plan for Killarney town. This project has seen the appointment of project delivery team which have begun the public consultation process, which will continue into Q2 2025.

Towns and villages

Rathmore

Civil works to facilitate the undergrounding of ESB overhead networks for Section 3 of the Rathmore Village under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme for 2020 is complete. Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the ESB Works are underway.

Community Recognition Fund

A number of community and voluntary groups in Killarney Municipal District submitted detailed plans and proposals for the fund Window2 & Window3 in 2024. The diversity and breadth of projects received points to a vibrant and committed community groups sphere in Killarney MD. It is anticipated the allocation of funding will be announced by the Department in 2025.

Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund 2024

The Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund was announced in 2024. The scheme is designed to support larger sports facility projects, where these projects are focused on a primary objective - to increase active participation in sport. Projects can be large scale venues/stadia where the focus is more related to social participation and high performance sport. Killarney MD projects were very successful in the 2024 scheme, securing €7.750 million in funding across 3 projects - Derreen Sports Centre, Fitzgeralds Stadium and Killarney Rugby Club.

Active Travel Measure Allocations

The following projects were progressed in 2024 following allocations under the Active Travel programme:

- **Killarney Town – Interconnected Network of Cycleways, Rock Road** -Works Completed
- **Killarney Town – Interconnected Network of Cycleways, Deer Park Road/Gael Scoil Junction** -Detailed Design to be finalised with NTA.
- **Killarney Town – Interconnected Network of Cycleways, Gael Scoil Road/Chestnut Drive** -. Detailed Design to be finalised with NTA.
- **Rock Road (Lower) – Improvement and widening of Pedestrian Facilities at Rock Road** - Works Completed
- **Flesk Walkway & Cycleway** - Works Completed
- **Upper Lewis Road, Killarney** - Detailed design to be finalised.
- **Ballydribbeen Link, Killarney** - Part 8 Drawings to be finalised.
- **SRTS (R2) Fossa National School** - Contract awarded with TII N72 Safety Scheme
- **Killarney LTP** - Aecom Consultant Engineers have been appointed by Kerry County Council to develop the Killarney Local Transport Plan. Briefing on the Local transport Plan held on the 11th of November 2024
- **New Road** Consultant appointed to develop this scheme

Community Support Fund

Funding of €73,400 was allocated to 32 groups in the Killarney MD through the 2024 CSF scheme. An additional €1,600 was allocated to countywide projects, bringing the total allocation in Killarney MD CSF 2024 to €75,000.

The fund in 2024 targeted funding under four main categories of support:

- Connected, Inclusive & Resilient Communities
- Community Tidy Town Initiatives, Amenity Projects & Environmentally Sustainable Projects
- Community Based Tourism, Festivals & Events
- Connected, Inclusive & Resilient Communities Countywide

Community Enhancement Programme

Killarney Municipal District oversaw the allocation of over €21,726.53 of funding supporting 19 community groups in the Municipal District. This funding looked to deliver capital and equipment focused projects across the MD, projects from mobility restricted friendly pathways to projectors and laptops all of which enhanced the level and quality of voluntary grass roots community service delivery for all. Provision was also made for funding ringfenced for Women's Groups in the county as part of the 2024 scheme.

Community & Environment:

Tidy Towns

The Tidy Towns efforts across the MD, supported by Killarney MD and Kerry County Council, continued in 2024. Assistance was provided through available funding streams and supports. Killarney town again maintained the highest of standards, retaining the Gold Medal standard in the National Tidy Towns Competition for 2024. The town also increased its points scoring by 9 pts to 384, just 2 points behind the overall winners Ballincollig, Co. Cork. The significant efforts by volunteers across the MD is testament the commitment by so many to their local communities for the benefit of all.

Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Report

In the Irish Businesses Against Litter Survey 2 2024, Killarney was placed fourth out of 40 towns/cities surveyed across Ireland. The town was deemed ‘Cleaner than European Norms’ in the 2024 final report issued recently. This is an improvement of 10 places since the report in January of 2023, and 24 places on the January 2022 report. It is an outstanding achievement and testament to the hard work and dedication of outdoor staff, the Killarney Looking Good committee and volunteers, the Coffee Cups project participants and residents in the town.

Killarney Coffee Cup Project

In July 2023 Killarney became the first town in Ireland to be single use coffee cup free. Then Ministers for State for Public Procurement, eGovernment and Circular Economy and Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage met with participants of the Killarney Coffee Cup Project and stakeholders. Still going strong in 2024 the project currently has over 50 participating businesses, all of which centre on sustainability and the protection of our natural environment. The project sits within the Killarney Looking Good has been extremely well received both locally and internationally and has brought immense positivity to Killarney, receiving a number of awards bodies including the recent LAMA Award for Best Environmental Project.

Festivals/Events

Building on the resurgence of activity following the Covid19 Pandemic 2024 saw the continued return and growth of Killarney’s many festivals. In 2024 we saw changes to the route plans for many events, with a focus on events moving their ‘core’ elements to the public realm in the town centre. While this has increased demands on infrastructure and supports, it has also allowed for a greater level of participation and inclusiveness to these events. Events in 2024 which included:

- St. Patrick’s Day Festival – now a 3 day event which has been enormously successful
- Good Friday Run – returning after a number of years
- Wander Wild Festival
- Killarney International Rally of the Lakes
- Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle
- Kerry Ladies Football Team Homecoming
- Christmas in Killarney
- Killarney Historic Stages Rally
- Quest Adventure race

In 2024 we also saw the introduction of a number of new events and pilot projects, the Killarney Christmas Markets and Global Economic Summit – a new marquee event attracting global industry decision makers to Killarney.

Anam Centre

2024 was a very good year for the Various Arts, Cultural and Heritage in Killarney, particularly in the ANAM centre. There was a significant increase in room usage and booking supporting a wide range of community groups, cultural and heritage groups, with an over 100% increase in bookings. Groups such as filmmaker courses, Torc Dancers, Kerry Stars, Wander Wild Festival, Killarney Triathlon Club, The future of the Ukrainian Nation in Ireland, Killarney Looking Good, KASI Ukrainian Citizens Information Meeting, Killarney Cardiac Response, Cruinniú na nÓg, Kerry Business Women's Network, The Story Sanctuary, Dechas Drama Group, Ben Ryan, Killarney Looking Good Volunteers meetings. Dignitaries to the MD were also received at the Anam Centre where they enjoyed performance of traditional music and heritage.

Street Performers Bye-laws 2023

The Killarney Town Street Performance Bye-Laws came into effect in 2023, and saw the KM offices issue 16 such licences in 2023 and 18 in 2024. Over the course of the summer of 2023 the MD office received 15 complaints from businesses and members of the public, a significant reduction on previous years, all of which were followed up. The number of complaints received in 2024 was 2. The administration in support of the new Street Performers Bye Laws has seen a smooth and timely issuance of licences, for which the MD administrative staff are to be commended, while enforcement of the Street Performers Bye Laws has been proactive and effective. Broadly speaking there has been a good level of compliance and co-operation with this new system of street performance and busking administration.

Placemaking & Connected Communities:

Culture Night

Culture Night 2024 was a real treat for Killarney town, which saw two street spectacular events hosted on the public realm, and a film offering in the Anam centre. The Killorglin District Pipe Band entertained street revellers with traditional pipe band favourites and even threw in a few contemporary songs to get the large crowds feet tapping.

Aistear Pheig Mhór – an amazing street performance piece based on the legacy of Peig Sayers created by Julí ní Mhaoileoin and Sinead Kavanagh featured puppets, lanterns, glowing fish and seagulls, live music and street scape projections all accompanying a 12ft tall street puppet of Peig herself moving through the town. Outrageous fun for all ages!

The Kerry International Film Festival also screened a series of short films made by Kerry secondary school students for the "The Rubbish Film Festival", which encourages creativity and environmental awareness. The screening was followed by an art workshop where young people learned how to make their own mini "Zines" from recycled materials.

Street Art @ Chaple Lane

A vibrant street art mural was delivered on Barrys Lane in Killarney harking back to the mystical heritage of Lough Lein and the O'Donoghue Chieftain. The work also referenced the aquatic life in the lake in a colourful celebration of local natural flora and fauna.

Utility Box Street Art Project

The Killarney Utility Box Street Art Project got going in 2024 with the painting of prominent street utility boxes. Kerry artist James Hayes brought his creative flair to a traffic signal cabinet on East Avenue/Kenmare Place, bringing a much-welcomed softening of the streetscape in the area. It is anticipated that 2025 will see further works being carried out across the town as the project advances.

Town Twinning

The Killarney Town Twinning Association in conjunction with the MD elected members and the MDO continued to maintain strong links with all our twinned towns and sister cities in 2024. During the year meetings with individuals from Concord and Springfield were hosted during visits to Killarney & Ireland. As part of the 2025 St Patricks Day celebrations Mayor of Casperia Marco Couso, accompanied by his wife and son, and Deputy Mayor; Roberta Genari along with a number of their twinning association members and including over twenty Majorettes participated in the parade. Also in attendance was Mayor Julie Dunlop of Kendal, UK and her husband Jim, and former Mayor Josef Miehling of Pleinfeld, Germany accompanied by his wife Erika and over their members of their twinning association and the Hummell Group. In April a group of 13 students and 2 teachers arrived in Killarney as part of the Erasmus Programme that KTTA are involved in with our partners in Pleinfeld, Germany and were welcomed to the town.

Stakeholder Engagement

Killarney Municipal District liaises on an ongoing basis with stakeholder representative bodies across the MD including the Killarney Access Group, Killarney Chamber of Tourism and Commerce, Killarney Retail Association, Tidy Towns groups from towns and villages in the MD. Also, representative bodies from sectors such as Jarvey operators, Taxi operators, Bus tourism operators, environmentalist groups, residency associations. Throughout 2025 the MD will continue to build on these relationships and look to strengthen and widen the range of engagement with MD stakeholders.

LISTOWEL MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Cathaoirleach 2024-2025
Cathaoirleach 2023-2024
Listowel Municipal District Manager
Municipal District Engineer
Municipal District Officer

Cllr Jimmy Moloney
Cllr. Aoife Thornton
Mr. John Kennelly
Mr. Declan O'Mahony
Ms. Patricia Greaney

10 Listowel Municipal District Meetings took place in 2024 – 5 Ordinary Meetings and 5 Special Meetings.

There are 6 elected members in the Listowel Municipal District, prior to the Local Elections in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Tom Barry, (Sinn Féin), Cllr. Robert Beasley, (Sinn Féin), Cllr. Michael Foley, (Fine Gael), Cllr. Mike Kennelly, (Fine Gael), Cllr. Jimmy Moloney, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Aoife Thornton, (Fine Gael)

Following the Local Elections held in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Tom Barry (Sinn Féin), Cllr. Michael Foley (Fine Gael), Cllr. Mike Kennelly (Fine Gael) Cllr. Jimmy Moloney (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Liam Nolan (Independent), Cllr. Michael Leane, (Fianna Fáil)

Recreation Infrastructure

Beale Beach

Enhancement works to Beale Beach were completed in 2024. The scenic Beal Strand is a popular walking amenity with over 5 km of uninterrupted sandy beaches connecting Hannon's Strand to Littor Strand. The works involved underpinning and strengthening the path substructure, removing existing damaged areas, and replacing with new reinforced concrete and a handrail. The project was funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development's 2022 CLÁR Programme and Kerry County Council.



Shannon Way Walking Route

The Shannon Way is a 35km linear walking trail overlooking the beautiful Shannon Estuary. It links the coastal resort of Ballybunion to the ferry port town of Tarbert via the historic Ballylongford village. Significant works took place to maintain and upgrade sections of the trail in 2024 to improve the user experience for visitors and local communities. This project was funded by the Department of Rural & Community's 2022 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and Kerry County Council.





Public Convenience upgrades at Ballyheigue Beach

Refurbishment of the public conveniences' facility in Ballyheigue was completed in 2024. The facility serves the popular Blue Flag beach which attracts large numbers of visitors. It also provides an essential amenity to users of the North Kerry Way, the Eurovelo cycle route as well as the local community. This initiative was funded by the Department of Rural and Community's Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) and Kerry County Council.

Kingdom of Kerry Greenways Trailhead Facility

Plans progressed to develop a new trailhead facility at the Listowel trailhead for users of the Kingdom of Kerry Greenways in 2024. It will include toilets, lighting, and landscaping. The building is currently under construction and is expected to open later this year. This project is funded by the Department of Rural & Community's 2022 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and Kerry County Council.

Green Flag Award

Childer's Park and Woodland in Listowel retained its international Green Flag status, to be one of 120 public green spaces nationally to be awarded this accolade. This is an international accreditation and a benchmark standard for green spaces and parks that are managed in environmentally sustainable ways.

Tidy Towns

Listowel Tidy Towns gained its 16th Gold Medal and improved by eleven marks over last year's 2023 results. This continued success reflects the hard work and commitment of the Listowel Tidy Towns group in maintaining the town's beauty year after year. Other towns and villages were also successful in achieving silver and bronze medals in the county.

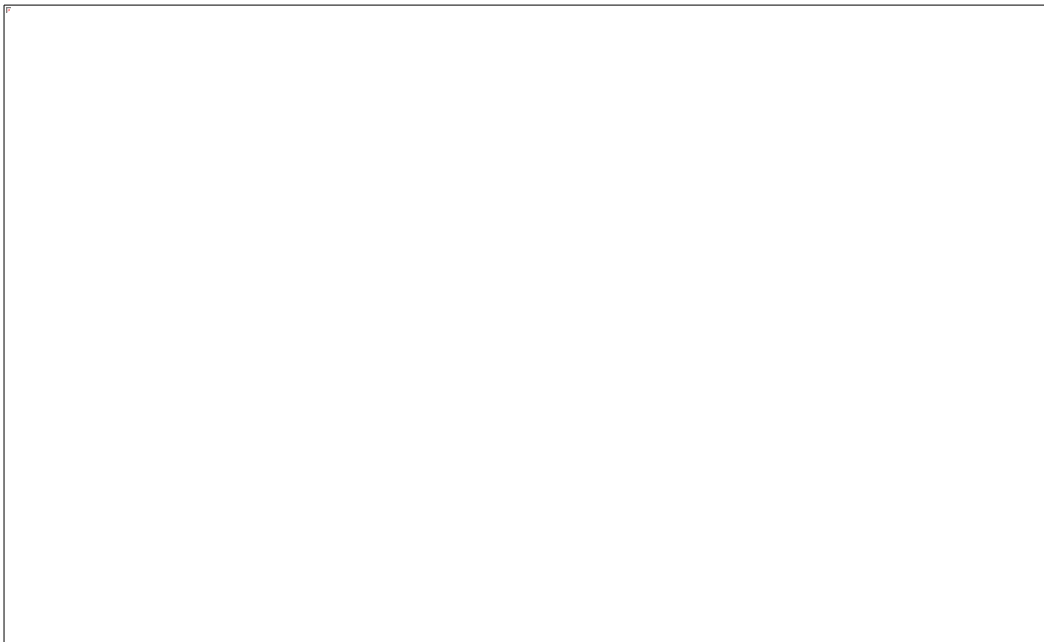
Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)

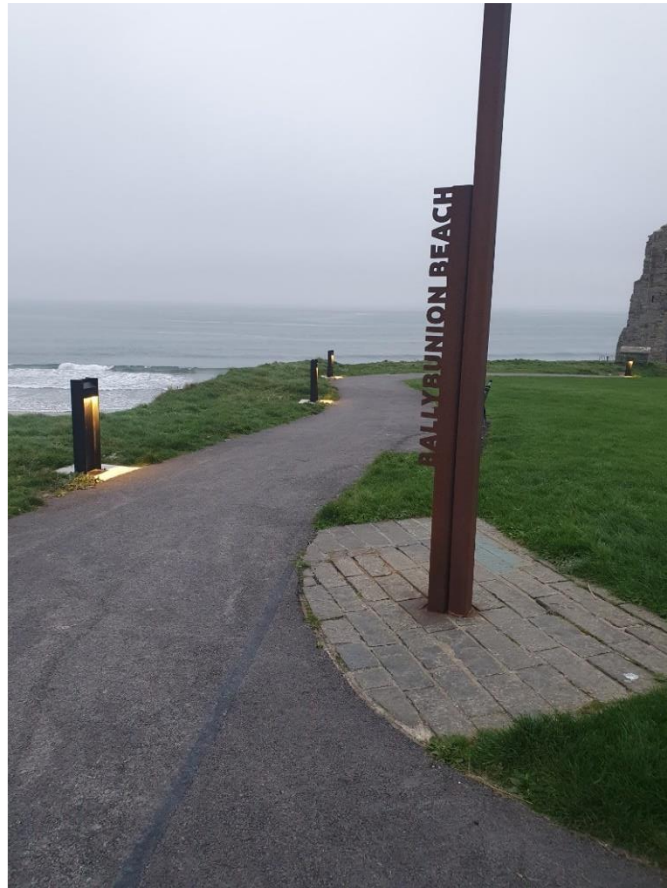
Following the successful 2021 RRDF Application for Listowel ‘Where Stories Begin’, consultants were appointed to develop the project in 2024. The initiative includes several interventions to regenerate the town’s core including the renewal of Listowel town square and development of an activity hub at the former Neo Data site on Bridge Road. Public consultation on the project will take place in 2025. The funding awarded will bring projects through the development stage and to the point where they are ready to seek funding to commence physical works.

Community Recognition Fund

The Community Recognition Fund supports the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution of Kerry communities in hosting new arrivals in the county in response to the Ukraine crisis. Three community and voluntary groups in Listowel Municipal District benefited from the 2024 Window 2 Allocations including Ballybunion Community Centre (€100,000), Ballybunion Sea & Cliff Rescue (€56,7169) and Listowel Tidy Towns (€50,848). The Department of Rural and Community Development first introduced the fund in 2023.

The upgrade of the Ballybunion Castlegreen area was completed in 2024 through 2023 Phase 1 Community Recognition Funding of €78,230.





Town & Village Renewal Fund

Funding was secured to progress a Town Centre First Health Check for Ballybunion. Town Centre Health Checks provide a baseline, to help monitor and drive the development of town centres going forward. This initiative is being funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Town Centre First Policy.

Outdoor Recreation & Infrastructure Scheme

Funding was awarded for three projects under the Department of Rural and Community's Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) in 2024. An allocation of €198,00 was approved for the provision of recreational support facilities at three Blue Flag Beaches including Ballyheigue. Under Measure One an allocation of €30,000 was announced for the maintenance and repair works at Ballybunion South Blue Flag Beach.

A 2023 ORIS approved Project Development Measure to design an accessible pedestrian route from beach level to the promenade and the proposed Shared Facility Centre for Water Based Sports Activities at North Beach was progressed in 2024. Funding for the water sports facility was previously approved under the Fáilte Ireland Platforms for Growth programme for the design and construction of the centre.

CLÁR Programme

Four projects were successful in securing over €162,425 in funding under the CLÁR Programme in 2024. These included:

- Lixnaw Development Association funding of €20,451 to refurbish an existing community playground.
- Ballyheigue GAA funding of €50,000 to develop a community walkway with lighting.
- Moyvane Development Association funding of €41,974 for Moyvane Community Walkway Extension, Solar Lighting for the Kiln Walk and Sports Hall Floor Protection.
- St. Senan's GAA funding of €50,000 to improving access, functionality, safety, and the environment for people of all ages and abilities at the grounds.

Local Enhancement Programme

The 2024 Department of Rural and Community Development's Local Enhancement Fund provided support to community groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas with their non-pay running and operating costs. Groups were also able to use the funding to conduct necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities and to purchase equipment. In total, 38 community activities were approved to the value of €39,370 Listowel Municipal District.

Community Support Fund

During 2024, the Kerry County Council funded Community Support Fund assisted numerous community groups and projects across Listowel Municipal District. In total 52 community activities (51 Listowel MD projects + 1 Countywide project) were approved to the value of €38,000.

Festival & Participative Events 2024

The Festival & Participative Event Fund supported by Fáilte Ireland to support festivals and participative events in Kerry provided support to eight groups in the Listowel Municipal District in 2024 totalling €14,892.

Other Community Support

Additional support was awarded under a once off allocation to support Christmas lights in towns and villages across the Municipal District including in Listowel, Ballylongford, Ballybunion and Barraduff. Tidy Towns Groups also received support both under grant schemes and from the Listowel Area Office of Kerry County Council.

TRALEE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Cathaoirleach 2024 -2025
Cathaoirleach 2023-2024
Municipal District Manager
Municipal District Engineer
Municipal District Officer

Cllr Mikey Sheehy
Cllr Terry O'Brien
Niamh O'Sullivan
Brian Hickey
Eamon Cunningham

During 2024 a total of 12 meetings of the Municipal District Meetings were held. There were six Ordinary Meetings and six Special Meetings of the Municipal District.

There are 7 elected members in the Tralee Municipal District, prior to the Local Elections in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris (Sinn Féin), Cllr. Sam Locke, (Non-Party), Cllr. Terry O'Brien, (Labour), Cllr. Mikey Sheehy, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Cathal Foley (Sinn Féin), Cllr. Johnnie Wall, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Jim Finucane, (Fine Gael)

Following the Local Elections held in June 2024, the elected members were:

Cllr. Deirdre Ferris (Sinn Féin), Cllr. Sam Locke, (Non-Party), Cllr. Terry O'Brien, (Labour), Cllr. Mikey Sheehy, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Paul Daly, (Sinn Féin), Cllr. Anne O'Sullivan, (Fianna Fáil), Cllr. Angie Baily, (Fine Gael)

Craft Shop at Blennerville Windmill

Works commenced in late 2024 on the repurposing of the disused craft workshops into a Community Bakery, Baking School & café and works will be completed in mid-2025.

Tralee Bay Wetlands Eco and Activity Park

Tralee Bay Wetlands Ecology Park & Activity Centre were once again leaders in Native Habitat management and continued to develop more native habitats in the park throughout 2024. The Park has again been recognised nationally by An Taisce by retaining their Green Flag and the All-Ireland Pollinator Award for 2024.

Tralee Bay Wetlands' continuous development on educational projects with communities and local agencies and education centres is continuously growing and collaborations during 2024 include working with MTU Tralee on National Science week and delivering courses on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

The National Biodiversity Centre were delighted to see Tralee Bay Wetlands host the first Kerry specific Wild Bee Festival at the Wetlands in 2024 and it is hoped that this will become an annual event.

During 2024 there was further Development of the Choil Beag & the Ponds for Life projects, these were two great initiatives for County Kerry in showcasing best practice in developing and managing these two habitats and fu

Park users / visitors increased in 2024 to 338,883 and Tralee Bay Wetlands continues to provide a wonderful amenity and education space for the County and beyond.

TOURISM AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Tidy Towns

The Tidy Towns competition commenced in 1958 and has since become Ireland's best-known sustainable and environmental initiative. The competition is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and each year attracts more than 900 communities who compete for a cash award and the title of Ireland's Tidiest Town. Tralee secured its twelfth consecutive gold medal, up seventeen points on the 2023 total. Tralee placed 2nd in the Large Urban Centre category.

Collaborative work by Tralee Tidy towns, Tralee Chamber and Kerry County Council won the Chambers Ireland sustainability and biodiversity award 2024. Tralee Tidy towns also won a Gold Kerry Community award.

Irish Business Against Litter report (IBAL)

Although Tralee's public spaces scored well there are some privately owned areas of the town that need further engagement to raise the overall score for Tralee in the Irish Business Against Litter table resulting in a 28th place finish out of 40 towns.

Féile Thrá Lí 2024

2024 saw the second year of the Féile Thrá Lí festival which ran in conjunction with the Rose of Tralee International Festival, in August. This free, 5-day event concentrated on street entertainment, local music, parades, wellness & fun and Féile Thrá Lí 2024 was universally praised as a huge success and the town of Tralee.

Féile na mBláth 2024

Féile na mBláth at the Park Festival was held in late-June and ran from Friday the 28th through to Sunday 30th of June in the Tralee Town Park and was a huge success for the town and a great showcase for the hugely impressive amenity, that is the Town Park. All events were free and supported by Kerry County Council and Tralee MD.

The festival saw three themed days with flower shows, literature, art, music and free workshops for all. Festival goers were encouraged to re-cycling & reuse and to Cycle to the park where possible to promote the "Green Theme" of the festival.

The centrepiece of Féile na mBláth was the Tralee Flower & Garden Club Competitions. There was traditional Food and Craft Stalls as well as Art in the Park, Tralee Community Garden workshops, free entry to Kerry County Museum with Medieval Reenactors.

Tralee Food Festival

The Tralee Food Festival took place on 17th and 19th of May 2024, the festival celebrated the very best of local food and drink. This 3-day festival brought together a great mix of vendors and educational food workshops, the Tralee Food Festival is a great event for food lovers of all ages and very well received in the Town each year.

Although the Tralee Food Festival celebrates all that is good about food in Kerry, it also provides a great family focused event in the town over the weekend and provides a boost to the hospitality and food tourism sector in Kerry.

St Patricks Day

The 2024 Tralee's St. Patrick's Day parade was a hugely successful event and a day to celebrate our Irish heritage and culture. St Brendan's Basketball club were this year's Grand Marshal, and they brought a great sense of fun to the parade.

This year's parade was presented by the magnificent and assorted communities who make up our town and the superb attendance by all sports clubs, societies, groups and businesses added to the great sense of pageantry in the town for our National Day of Celebration. This year's theme was "A World of Colour" and brought vibrancy and fun to the streets of Tralee. This year's event was run in conjunction with Tralee Chamber Alliance.

Christmas in Tralee

Kerry County Council was delighted to support the Christmas festivities in Tralee along with Tralee Chamber Alliance. The town lights were fantastic and a sight to behold and the excellent programme of events had something for everyone including a spectacular turning on the light's ceremony, New Year's eve fireworks display, Christmas concert at the Island of Geese, live musical performances, Santa parades and festive markets, all of which were family-oriented and welcomed visitors and residents into the town to celebrate the festive season.

Tralee Town Park

Tralee Town Park was awarded a Green flag, for the 5th time on 8th November 2024 by An Taisce. This is an international award and a benchmark standard for green spaces and parks that are managed in Environmentally and Sustainable ways. All sites implement a management framework, and then undergo an annual inspection conducted by qualified judges. Tralee Municipal District acknowledges and recognises the hard work that staff and volunteers in the Community Garden and Garden of the Senses do in ensuring the Town Park is available and accessible to all members of the public.

Approved funding for various projects in the Tralee Municipal District 2024

| Grant Scheme | Project Description | Grant |
|--|--|-------------|
| Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme | Extension of Ballyseedy Wood Amenity Trail & Replacement of fencing along River Lee Walk | €230,000 |
| Local Enhancement Programme | 17 Community Activities | €23,166.77 |
| Community Support Fund | 26 Community Group projects | €58,360 |
| Festival & Participative Events | 6 Festivals supported | €13,247 |
| CLÁR | Enhancement of road access to Banna Strand & Enhancement of Derrymore beach carpark | €99,500 |
| Total Grant | | €424,273.77 |

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The Ballyseedy Amenity Trail project, which created a 5 km loop walk on both banks of the River Lee and will link Ballyseedy Wood with the new parkland development at Ballygarry Estate was opened by Minister of State, Norma Foley in August 2024.

Community Support Fund

During 2024, the Community Support Fund supported numerous community groups and projects across the Tralee Municipal District. In addition, the retention of part of the fund assists in leveraging funding from other sources and to co-fund projects with other funding streams.

DIRECTORATE REPORTS

Housing

Human Resources

Roads, Transportation, Smart Travel and Public Realm

Economic & Community Development

Community Integration and Water Services

Planning Environment and Emergency Management

Corporate Services

Finance

**DIRECTORATE OF
HOUSING**

A/Director of Services: JOHN KENNELLY

HOUSING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

HOUSING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

The objective of the Housing Department is to maximise provision of suitable accommodation for those who are unable to provide their own, utilising the various social housing options, and to manage and maintain the Council's housing stock and facilitate the development of sustainable communities.

2024 saw a continued high demand for services and increased delivery activity in the area of Housing and Social Support.

Housing Stock

At the end of 2024, the Council had a rented housing stock of 4,526 units as detailed in the table below. A total of 5,121 housing maintenance requests were received in 2024, 97% of these requests were closed by year end. The breakdown of requests received across the Municipal Districts is as follows:

| Municipal District | % of Overall Housing Stock | % of Housing Maintenance Requests Received |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Castleisland/Corca Dhuibhne | 15% | 11% |
| Kenmare | 15% | 13% |
| Killarney | 12% | 12% |
| Listowel | 23% | 17% |
| Tralee | 35% | 47% |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>100%</i> | <i>100%</i> |

Progress on Housing Capital Programme 2024

Kerry County Council Housing Capital Unit completed three schemes during 2024.

Housing Capital Unit (Direct Build) - Completed Developments 2024

Ten new build social houses were completed through direct build at:

- 9 new homes at Marian Place, Ballyheigue
- 1 single rural dwelling at Lyreacrompane

Housing Capital Unit (Direct Build) – Scheme commenced or under construction in 2024

| Scheme | Status | No of homes |
|---|--------------------|-------------|
| Garryruth Road, Tralee, Co. Kerry | Under construction | 19 |
| Matt Talbot Rd, Tralee | Under construction | 27 |
| Ballybeg, Dingle, Co. Kerry | Under construction | 34 |
| Áras na Cluana (Locke's Shop). Mitchel's Rd, Tralee | Under construction | 8 |
| Clogharesta Apartments, Hawley Park, Tralee | Under construction | 16 |
| Lohercannon Phase 2, Tralee, Co. Kerry | To commence 2025 | 89 |
| Single Family dwellings, Abbeydorney | To commence 2025 | 2 |
| Single rural dwellings | To commence 2025 | 2 |

Land Acquisition for Future Social Housing Developments

There is continual activity in terms of identifying suitable lands for purchase for social housing across the county. Any site identified is fully appraised as part of the assessment process. Subject to it being found satisfactory negotiations are then entered into in terms of possible purchase. Conveyancing was ongoing with regard to a number of sites for social housing purposes during 2024.

Approved Housing Bodies

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) delivered 82 social housing units in 2024 and 26 AHBs were actively delivering or managing homes around the county with a strong AHB delivery pipeline for 2025 – 2027.

Housing Acquisitions

Kerry County Council, under the Government's Acquisition Programme, purchased 12 properties under Tenant in Situ during 2024 and acquired 1 property under the special priority category of specific housing for persons with a disability.

Turnkeys

In 2024, 1 home was delivered through the turnkey scheme.

Approved schemes are currently under construction in Sneem, Milltown, Ballyheigue and Ballybunnion with delivery expected to be in 2025 and 2026.

A call for Expressions of Interest was advertised during the year and submissions were invited for consideration. These were assessed in 2024 and have been evaluated. Subject to second stage assessment (Capital Appraisal) and Departmental approval a number of these will progress during 2025.

Part V Delivery

In 2024, nine units were completed as per Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended in Dingle, Killarney, Gneeveguilla and Cahirciveen.

Voids Programme

In 2024, works were carried out on 138 vacant properties which were returned to productive use to meet the needs of qualified housing applicants. This represents a significant increase on the previous year's number of Voids completed and has contributed to aiding the completion of the backlog voids.

Of the 138 Voids Properties, 82 of these received part Department funding with the remaining 56 being fully funded by Kerry County Council.

Planned Maintenance & Stock Condition Surveys

Planned maintenance works were carried out to 99 properties in 2024 with 61 of these receiving Department funding. A total number of 93 stock condition surveys were undertaken and funding was received for 43 number of these.

EERP

In 2021, the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH) launched the *Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme* designed around the Programme for Government (PfG) commitment that calls for the 'retrofit' of 500,000 homes to a B2/Cost Optimal Equivalent (BER) standard by 2030, of which, approximately 36,500 homes are expected to be local authority owned homes. This revision requires local authorities to move to a 'deeper retrofit' programme. The programme provides for a significant upscaling in the level of energy works and focuses on ensuring that the fabric of the home is upgraded, and an energy efficient heating system is provided. Kerry County Council are obliged under this government 10-year program to begin upgrading their Social Houses to be more energy efficient.

35 number properties had EERP works completed and claimed in 2024

Housing Applications

The total number of households subject to a fully completed assessment for the purposes of determining their qualification for social housing support in 2024, was 2,678. The net need, reported as part of the Summary of Social Housing Assessment (SSHA) 2024, was 2,333.

Kerry County Council received 786 new social housing applications in 2024. This is a decrease of approximately 10.5% on the number of applications in 2023 (878 in 2023).

Choice Based Letting (CBL)

Choice Based Letting (CBL) is the method of letting used by the Council which has been put in place for all qualified applicants on the Council's social housing list, in line with Kerry County Council's current Social Housing Allocation Scheme, adopted by the Council. This method of letting has been in place since November 2023.

All our general housing allocations are processed through CBL, although applicants may be considered for housing outside of the CBL process if they are in a Disability Category, Traveller specific accommodation or in an Emergency and Homeless category.

As of 31st December 2024, 286 properties (mixture of KCC & AHB stock) had been advertised for bidding on the CBL system.

User engagement continued to grow throughout 2024, and Council staff continued to work with the service provider, with a view to improving the efficiency of the service and also improving reporting capability.

Housing Tenancies

In 2024, 268 Tenancies commenced in Kerry County Council. 202 of these were in Kerry County Council owned stock, 16 in Short Term Leased properties, 11 in Long Term Leased properties, 33 in RAS Properties and 6 Repair and Lease Properties.

Housing Grants

Kerry County Council continued to operate three housing grants schemes for private houses. The schemes are the

- Mobility Aids Grants
- Housing Aid for Older People
- Housing Adaptation for People with a Disability

The purpose of the schemes is to help people to remain living in their own homes and greatly enhance the living conditions of eligible elderly and disabled household members in our community. The grants also help increase the standards of household accommodation throughout the county. Up to the end of November 2024, these grants were 80% funded by the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government and the balance from the Council's own resources. Following a review of the Grants by the Department, the funding (provided by the Department) has been increased to 85% for applications approved from 1st December 2024 onwards.

Kerry County Council paid 644 grants in excess of €3.2m in 2024. 80% of the expenditure on these grants is funded by the DHLGH. The following is a breakdown across the schemes.

| | | | |
|--|-----|---|------------|
| Mobility Aid Grants | 174 | - | €860,824 |
| Housing Aid for Older People | 300 | - | €1,149,908 |
| Housing Adaptation Grants (Disability) | 170 | - | €1,256,073 |

Adaptation Works to Council Houses

In 2024, Kerry County Council received Grant funding of €763,608 from the DHLGH (90% of €848,453) to carry out adaptation works to its housing stock.

This grant funded works on 4 extensions and carried out minor adaptation works, such as bathroom adaptations, stair lifts and ramps to a further 74 Kerry County Council properties.

In total Kerry County Council exceeded the allocation and drew down funding of €905,846, which together with own funding resulted in expenditure of €1,006,495 on extensions and adaptations.

Housing Loans

At 31st December 2024, Kerry County Council had 210 active housing loan accounts. A collection rate of 96% was achieved in 2024 with closing arrears of €50,137.

Kerry County Council received 26 applications in 2024 for the Local Authority Home Loan. 8 loans were approved in 2024 with a total value of €975,600. 8 loans under the Local Authority Home Loan were drawn down in 2024, totalling €964,800.

Housing Rents

Kerry County Council had 4,499 active tenancies at 31st December 2024. A collection rate of 92% was achieved in 2024.

Tenant Purchase Scheme

221 sales have been completed by Kerry County Council since the initiation of the scheme to year end 2024, 41 of which were completed during 2024. 151 applications were at various stages of the tenant purchase process at the end of 2024.

Tenants make an application to the Local Authority who will determine eligibility under the scheme.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

The RAS Scheme continued to operate very successfully in 2024, despite several Landlords deciding to leave the scheme and the challenges posed by the reduction in the availability of suitable properties in some towns and villages.

Kerry County Council signed 71 New RAS Contracts during 2024, including 45 AHB/RAS contracts.

As of 31st December 2024, 728 people were benefitting from RAS Supports throughout the County of Kerry, including 194 Approved Housing Body tenants.

As part of the renewed focus on RAS (as directed by the Department), throughout 2024 Council staff engaged with Landlords and Agents to promote awareness of the scheme.

Leasing/Availability Agreements

Leasing continued to represent an important element of supply of social housing supports. As it is the Council's objective to maximise the delivery of social housing using all the resources available, this scheme continued to be operated and promoted by Kerry County Council in 2024. Council staff engaged with local estate agents and property owners to promote this option throughout 2024, resulting in a positive outcome.

Kerry County Council and the Approved Housing Bodies secured a total of 32 New Leases during 2024.

National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

Kerry County Council's Housing & Disability Steering Group met on a quarterly basis throughout 2024. The purpose of this group is to facilitate integrated and timely responses to the housing needs of people with physical, intellectual, mental health and sensory disabilities by the various statutory and voluntary organisations working with the disability sector in Kerry. The work of the Housing & Disability Steering Group is supported by the Housing Agency.

The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People has been developed for the period 2022-2027. The National Implementation Plan for the Strategy was launched in June 2023 and Kerry County Council's Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability has been reviewed in line with the actions outlined in the Implementation Plan.

Traveller Accommodation 2019 - 2024

Kerry County Council, pursuant to Section 8 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1988, adopted the Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2019-2024 in September 2019. This Programme sets out accommodation targets to be achieved over the period 01/07/2019 - 30/06/2024:

| TAP (5 YR PROG) 01/07/2019- 30/06/2024 | TOTAL |
|--|--|
| FILLING HALTING SITE VACANCIES 15 | FILLING HALTING SITE VACANCIES 19 |
| PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION WITH SOCIAL SUPPORT (HAP) 95 | PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION WITH SOCIAL SUPPORT (HAP) 37 |
| LEASED ACCOMMODATION 15 | LEASED ACCOMMODATION 5 |
| LA & AHB ALLOCATIONS 35 | LA & AHB ALLOCATIONS 102 |
| TOTAL 160 | TOTAL 163 |

The 5-year target as set out under TAP 2019-2024 was 160 units. Kerry County Council achieved a figure of 163 units which represents 102% of the target

Traveller Accommodation 2025 - 2029

Kerry County Council, pursuant to Section 8 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1988, adopted the Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2025-2029 on 13th December 2024. This Programme sets out accommodation targets to be achieved over the period 01/01/2025 – 31/12/2029

| Accommodation | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | Total |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Filling Halting Site vacancies | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 20 |
| Private rented accommodation with Social Supports | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 85 |
| Leased Accommodation | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 16 |
| Direct Local Authority and Voluntary Housing Provision | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 50 |
| Housing First | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| <i>Total Accommodation</i> | <i>35</i> | <i>35</i> | <i>35</i> | <i>35</i> | <i>36</i> | <i>176</i> |

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)

The LTACC met on 4 occasions during 2024 while officials of the Housing Social Support team continued to meet with members of the Kerry Travellers Health & Community Development Project (KTHCDP) throughout 2024 to address any concerns that the Traveller community might have had during this period.

Homeless Services

The provision of Homeless Services continues to be extremely difficult and challenging. There has been significant activity in this area over the last number of years. The problems are complex, and not all are related to accommodation only. Many of the cases involve other underlying causes or related considerations and require a holistic and cross service approach involving other agencies to try and address the issues.

To meet this challenge, the Council continued to advance a number of its strategic priorities for the homeless services this year including:

- The awarding of a contract to Novas Initiatives for the provision of two Tenancy Sustainment Officers in 2024 to work with clients who have recently exited homelessness and to sustain the tenancies that they are in

- In conjunction with our partners in the Southwest Region, HSE and Focus/Simon, the Council is committed to the extension of the Housing First Programme to Kerry and, as of the 31st of December 2024, have successfully tenanted 22 properties under this programme.
- The establishment of a dedicated point of contact within the service to deal with all presentations arising from a notice to terminate being served. The dedicated point of contact will engage with clients at the earliest possible opportunity and advise them accordingly in order to prevent a homeless situation arising. This is identified as a homeless prevention measure and a total of 45 households were assisted by this means to the following:

| Placement | Number |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| LA Social Tenancies/Tenant in Situ | 20 |
| AHB | 3 |
| HAP | 13 |
| RAS | 8 |
| Private Rented | 1 |

The continuation of the Ukrainian crisis along with the additional accommodation demands of refugee/ displacement programmes and the direct impact on the Kerry property markets given the scale of the numbers of persons currently accommodated through these Government Programmes in Kerry has placed great pressure on the Homeless Services ability to meet the needs of its clients. Despite these difficulties, however, Kerry County Council was successful in continuing to stabilize the number of persons accommodated in emergency homeless accommodation.

No of Placements

There was a total of 132 placements during 2024 consisting of 17 families & 115 singles

The number of clients moved from emergency accommodation to tenancies in 2024 was 23 and this figure is comprised of:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| LA Properties including Leasing | 9 properties | 14 Adults |
| AHB | 10 properties | 12 Adults |
| HAP & RAS | 3 properties | 4 adults |
| Private Rented | 1 property | 1 adult |

Additionally, there were 39 exits from emergency accommodation for the following reasons:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Staying with family or friends | 10 |
| Departure to medical facility (hospital) | 13 |
| Departure to medical facility (residential treatment) | 6 |
| Departure to correctional facility | 7 |
| Other (relocation to another country/did not return to service) | 3 |
| TOTAL | 39 |

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

HAP continued to be popular with social housing applicants throughout 2024, even though a decline in the number of applications received was noted. As of 31st December 2024, there were 1,551 active HAP Tenancies in Kerry. There were 246 new HAP tenancies in Kerry in 2024. The scheme means that local authorities can continue to provide housing assistance for households which qualify for social housing support, including many long-term Rent Supplement recipients.

The HAP online portal, developed by the HAP Shared Services Centre for people who are eligible for Social Housing, and who wish to apply for HAP came into operation in early 2024. Kerry County Council launched the online application process for HAP on 1st March 2024, which has been made available for new applicants or existing tenants who are moving to a new HAP property. Engagement levels continued to be monitored throughout 2024, and Council staff promoted the use of the online application process continuously.

Private Rented Standards

Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland is the Government's housing plan to 2030 and sets a target for the inspection of private rental accommodation for compliance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 as 25% of all tenancies to be inspected annually. Kerry County Council has established a Housing Inspections Unit dedicated to undertaking private rental inspections to enforce the requirements of the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. Working in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Rental Tenancies Board (RTB), targets are established each year for the respective Local Authority. When achieved, it will ensure that every private rental property is inspected at least once every four years.

The 2024 target for tenancies to be inspected was set at 1,737.

The target is in respect of the number of tenancies / dwellings inspected and re-inspections do not count towards the target, unless the initial inspections were in the previous calendar year. The total number of inspections carried out in 2024 was 1,172.

Vacant Homes Office

In 2022 Kerry County Council established a Vacant Homes Office (VHO), following Circular 04/2022 Vacant Homes Officers.

The VHO is tasked with tackling the vacancy rate of properties across the County.

The office includes a full-time Vacant Homes Officer with supporting resources. The Office collects and collates vacancy data, manages and implements the schemes available to re-activate vacant and derelict properties and is responsible for promotion and awareness of the various schemes. The Derelict Sites Register and associated levies are incorporated into the Vacant Homes Office.

The VHO manages the following schemes:

- Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, Croí Cónaithe;
- Ready to Build Scheme – Serviced Sites, Croí Cónaithe;
- Repair & Lease Scheme;
- Buy & Renew Scheme;

The VHO is also responsible for the collection, monitoring and assessing vacancy data locally, with the aim to use that data to engage with owners and promote schemes to encourage activation of properties. The VHO provides an advisory role internally and externally to interested parties on vacant properties.

In 2024, the following were the main active areas in the VHO.

Vacant Homes Survey

The Vacant Homes Survey was rolled out in March 2023 and completed at the end of January 2024. The objective of the data collection survey was to identify vacant dwellings in settlements (towns, villages, cities) with a 1km buffer. The use of the survey is to target or activate properties identified as vacant.

At the end of the survey, 3,077 properties in total were surveyed across the County. Of those surveyed, 55% were vacant, 40% occupied, 4.5% holiday / second home, 0.5% other (demolished/unknown).

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, Croí Cónaithe (Towns) fund, was launched in July 2022. The grant provides support to assist in the refurbishment of vacant properties. The grant was extended in November 2022 to include eligible vacant properties in all areas, including cities, towns, villages and rural parts of the country. In May 2023 the grant was further expanded to provide for applications for a property as a principal private residence and or a property made available for rent, subject to a tenancy registered with the Residential Tenancy Board (RTB). A maximum of two grants are available per applicant, with only one grant available for a rental property. Properties for inclusion must be built up to and including 2007, proof is required. And the grant amounts increased from €30,000 to €50,000 for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant and from €50,000 to €70,000 for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant with the derelict property top-up grant, subject to a structural report. In July 2023, the scheme allowed for an additional 20% for properties on qualifying islands. However, Kerry has no qualifying islands under the scheme.

At the end of December 2024, the following is the data on the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant:

- 572 total number of applications received
- 278 applications approved
- 51 applications refused (rural location, not vacant, new build, other)
- 39 applications incomplete (insufficient information provided)
- 13 applications withdrawn
- 97 applications closed (no further information provided)
- 92 applications are active at further information / processing stage
- 2 pending initial review

43 grant applications were drawn down with payment completed by the end of 2024, equating to approximately €2.33m in funding having been paid out.

The DHLGH launched a Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan (LAPR) in July 2024. This LAPR is a new type of loan for the purchase and renovation of non-habitable homes. And so, these properties are eligible for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. The property is required to be habitable on completion of the works and the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant payment is put towards the loan.

Towards the end of 2024, a presentation was provided to the Killarney, Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne and Kenmare Municipal Districts at each of their respective Council Meetings. The presentation provided an update on the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant for the County and for each of the areas, including the number of paid grant applications and the projections for the year ahead. The presentation also allowed for facilitating any queries or questions from members and the provision of answers to the queries raised in relation to the scheme.

Repair and Lease

The Repair and Leasing Scheme (RLS) provides funding to develop vacant properties and bring them up to the Minimum Standards for Rental Accommodation. The properties are leased to the Local Authority, therefore there must be a social housing need in the area. The funding is up to €80,000 per unit. A % of the market rent for a similar property in the area is negotiated between the property owner and the local authority and the return of the funds are deducted from the rent over the term of the lease. The lease term can be between 5 to 25 years. To avail of the scheme, properties must be vacant for 12 months or more. The owner of the property must undertake the repairs. The Vacant Homes Office work closely with the Leasing Office with regard to the social housing need, the leasing agreements and in agreeing the % market rent and the term of the lease.

On the 26th January 2024, the DHLGH set a target of 6 units for delivery in 2024.

The Repair and Lease Scheme, as per Circular 14/2017, was expanded in on the 17th June 2022, this allows for the expansion of scheme to include for vacant commercial properties. As per Circular 37/2023, 22nd September 2023, the pilot expansion was further extended to allow applications to the end of June 2024.

At the end of 2024, Kerry County Council have 3 active applications under RLS.

The target of 6 units in 2024 was met with the delivery of 6 units in Rathmore in February 2024, Q1 2024.

Derelict Sites

The function of the Derelict Sites Office is to identify properties countywide which may be classified as Derelict under the Derelict Sites Act 1990.

An Authorised Officer inspects such properties and makes the necessary enquiries to ascertain the owner/occupier of said properties. The Derelict Sites Office will then engage with the owner/occupier in an attempt to rectify the dereliction issues with the site. The level of this engagement varies on a case-by-case basis.

If engagement is unsuccessful, and the issues are not addressed on site, the Authorised Officer then initiates the process of entering the site on the Derelict Site Register, as set out in the Derelict Sites Act.

In accordance with the Derelict Site Act 1990 (as amended), Kerry County Council maintains a Derelict Site Register on which it enters the particulars of any land which in the opinion of Kerry County Council is a derelict site.

There were 64 sites on the Kerry County Council Derelict Sites Register on 01/01/2024.

A comprehensive review of these 64 sites was undertaken in 2024.

29 sites were re-entered on the Derelict Site Register following this review and a further three sites have been served with Statutory Notices of intention to enter them on to the Derelict Site Register.

In addition, 10 new sites were entered on the Derelict Site Register in 2024.

As at 31/12/2024 there were 39 sites on the Kerry County Council Derelict Site Register.

Once a property has been entered on the Derelict Site Register, Derelict Site Levies fall due for all properties on the 1st of January of a given year. Levies are calculated at 7% of the Market Value, with interest of 1.25% becoming payable where an amount is due and unpaid for a period beginning 2 months after the date the levy is demanded.

Engagement by the Derelict Sites Officer is an important element in the activation of Derelict Sites around the county.

CPO Activation Programme

The Department launched the CPO Activation Programme in April 2023 to provide a planned, systemic and proactive approach to bringing vacant and derelict properties into productive use.

The main steps of the Programme include:

1. identification of vacant and derelict properties,
2. identification of property owners,

3. engagement with owners including communication regarding the various schemes and measures in place to support bringing the property back into use, and
4. where owners of vacant and derelict properties cannot be identified or where they are unwilling to engage, use of available legislative powers to compulsory purchase or acquire such properties using either the Housing Act, 1966 or the Derelict Sites Act, 1990

Work is ongoing in this area with dedicated resources assigned within the Housing Dept. On 31/12/2024 there were 126 open files at various steps of the Programme.

It is envisaged that this will be a rolling programme with properties moving through the steps on a continual basis.

Where engagement with the owner results in the property being brought back into use, then the property exits the Programme, and the outcome is recorded.

Where owners of vacant and derelict properties cannot be identified, or where they are unwilling to engage, Kerry County Council may use the available legislative powers to compulsory purchase or acquire such properties using either the Housing Act, 1966 or the Derelict Sites Act, 1990.

In 2024 6 no. sites were identified to progress to Compulsory Acquisition under Section 14 of the Derelict Sites Act, 1990.

Public Notice of the Intention to CPA the 6 sites were published in newspaper, site notices and issued to the owner/occupier 27/11/2024.

**DIRECTORATE OF
HUMAN RESOURCES**

Director of Services: MARTIN O'DONOGHUE

HUMAN RESOURCES

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Department provides a range of services across the organisation in the areas of recruitment, career and personal development of staff, employee and IR engagement, as well as the day-to-day operations of Human Resources within the Council. The Department continued to provide supports to management and staff to allow the delivery of an extensive range of local authority services and functions during 2024.

The various business teams within the Human Resources Department manage Recruitment and Selection, Industrial Relations, Staff Welfare, Equality and Diversity, Child Protection, Workplace Partnership, Personnel Management, Training and Development, & Superannuation.

The Human Resources Department continued to work with management across the organisation to deliver on their resourcing requirements in the context of operational and service delivery plans. The Human Resource Department was very active in the recruitment of employees across all outdoor, professional/technical & administrative grades in 2024. In total, 274 employee appointments were made during the year, and 66 recruitment and selection processes were conducted throughout the year which involved the processing of 1,394 candidate applications.

Throughout 2024, the Training & Development Unit continued to provide a wide range of training programmes to enable staff and management to carry out their duties in a safe & effective manner. Various other courses and training interventions were provided to ensure our employees have the required level of skills, competencies, experience and qualifications required for their roles. Training in areas of Financial Management & I.T skills along with Cyber Security and Climate Action continued to be prioritised areas for staff Training in 2024. Within the delivery of statutory & mandatory Health & Safety training there was particular focus on Serious Incident Training and Major Emergency Management. Also, a number of employees attained qualifications under our Educational Assistance Scheme in 2024.

Our very active Workplace Partnership Committee continued to meet monthly throughout 2024. These meetings continue to give employee representatives, involved in direct service delivery, opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue with senior management and also provide an ongoing forum for consultation and information sharing.

There continues to be regular consultation with the various trade unions who represent employees across all administrative, professional, technical & outdoor levels. There was also regular engagement with the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) which represents the local authority sector on the more significant IR related issues.

The HR Department also continued to facilitate the various options which exist for Water Services employees in accordance with the Water Services Framework agreement in the context of the transition of the Water Services function to Uisce Éireann.

With over 1,500 staff, the Council employees come for a wide range of backgrounds with diverse skill sets, qualifications and experience.

| No. of People Employed as at 31st December 2024 | |
|---|-------|
| Category | Total |
| Managerial/Administrative | 559 |
| Professional/Technical | 259 |
| Outdoor/Operational | 717 |
| | 1,535 |

| Gender Breakdown | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|-------|-------|
| Category | Female | Male | Total |
| Managerial/Administrative | 406 | 153 | 559 |
| Outdoor/Operational | 56 | 661 | 717 |
| Professional/Technical | 46 | 213 | 259 |
| | 508 | 1,027 | 1,535 |

**DIRECTORATE OF
ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION**

Director of Services: FRANK HARTNETT

TRANSPORT NETWORK OPERATIONS

NATIONAL ROADS OFFICE AND GREENWAYS

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVE TRAVEL

The Directorate is primarily responsible for the delivery of roads and transportation services, including Active Travel, supporting local communities and the management of major capital infrastructure to support economic development.

The Directorate has 4 core business units; each managed by a Senior Engineer: -

- ***Transport Networks Unit*** – improvement and maintenance of our road assets (4,932km), public lighting; provision and implementation of response to severe weather events; enforcement and issuing of licences and permits; maintenance of towns, public amenities and public conveniences. It also has responsibility for the Machinery Complex, which supports the delivery of our road programmes, and the Road Design Office (Tralee), which is involved in the design and implementation of capital road schemes on the non-national road network in Kerry.
- ***National Roads Office & Greenways Unit*** - operates under a Service Level Agreement with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), it is primarily responsible for the design and implementation of major capital road schemes on the national road network, both in Kerry and nationally. Since 2021 it has taken on responsibility for the delivery of the major Greenway projects, including the South Kerry Greenway, the Fenit-Tralee-Listowel-Limerick Greenway and the development of future strategic greenways in the county.
- ***Capital Development Unit North*** - design and development of strategic sites throughout the north and east of the county, as well as public realm and building projects under Urban and Rural Regeneration programmes and the Smarter Travel “Active Towns Initiative.
- ***Capital Development Unit South*** - design and development of strategic sites throughout the south and west of the county, as well as public realm and building projects under Urban and Rural Regeneration programmes, and the Smarter Travel “Active Towns Initiative”.

ROADS, TRANSPORT AND SAFETY

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 and the National Investment Framework for Transport Infrastructure (NIFTI), 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 publication of the Government’s 2024 Climate Action Plan further highlights the challenges for the development of new major road infrastructure.

These policy documents will be reflected in the funding for roads going forward. They also detail considerable investment that will be identified for Active Travel with prioritisation then focussed on Public Transport and then Private Transport. The impact of these policies and strategies may influence the level of future grant funding.

In addition to maintaining the regional and local road network in good repair, Government priority in the revised NDP, is to carry out targeted improvements to sections of the network.

- The first category of targeted works are safety/minor works projects which are designed to address sections of road with poor safety characteristics and poor safety records, and minor projects where the appraisal demonstrates a significant benefit in areas such as

support for the local economy, improved accessibility (including areas remote from the major national road network), protection of lifeline routes, and traffic management.

- The second category are strategic projects which would have a significant and quantifiable economic impact, particularly as regards employment and on industry, tourism, agriculture, rural development, and urban regeneration, including the Tralee Northern Relief Road.

The investment is delivered through a series of targeted Department of Transport funded programmes to local authorities which include:

- Restoration Maintenance (resealing).
- Restoration Improvement (strengthening).
- Discretionary (repairs & routine maintenance).
- Drainage works.
- Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience Works.
- Safety related works

ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The substantive element of the directorate's work programme was the improvement and maintenance of national, regional, local, and urban roads. Kerry County Council depends on national government for the greater part of its funding to carry out improvements to the road network.

In 2024, the grant allocation from the Department for the non-national roads was €31.545m, an increase of €0.5m on the previous year. The allocation included €857,000 for drainage works, which was targeted for works on the local secondary and tertiary road network, €811,000 for Climate Change Adaptation Works to address the impact of climate change on the road network (including repairs to damaged roads due to severe weather events). €643,050 was allocated under the Community Involvement Scheme, which allowed for the improvement of 8 local roads. The Department of Rural and Community Development also provided a grant allocation of €1,545,758 for Local Improvement Schemes in Kerry in 2024 which allowed 29 schemes to be completed from the priority list.

Kerry County Council secured funding under the Specific Improvement Grant scheme, which allowed for the progression of Phase 2 of the Clash to Ballymullen Relief Road, and advance improvements on the Tralee-Fenit route; Tralee Northern Relief Road and progress the planning design of the Killarney Inner Relief Road.

The N69 Listowel Bypass was completed and officially opened to the public in June 2024 by An Taoiseach Simon Harris in August 2024.

The N69 greatly improves movement across the region and diverting 7,000 vehicles per day away from Listowel town centre. In addition, the compulsory acquisition of lands associated with the Killarney Inner Link Road was authorised in June 2024, this impacts positively on a number of pipeline projects for Killarney and the county and a game changer for local economic development and for investment infrastructure.

Kerry County Council continued to progress the roll out of the NTA funded Active Travel programme and the capital programme which funded projects under the URDF and RRDF.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2024

NATIONAL ROADS

- **N69 Listowel By-Pass** -This 6km scheme was completed in June 2024 and has relieved traffic congestion in the town centre.
- **N22 Farranfore to Killarney Project** - Additional Transport alternatives assessments were undertaken, and the Preferred Transport Solution was identified and was presented to the general public at a public event in November. The Public Consultation period ended in December and allowed members of the public to provide feedback on the Preferred Transport Solution.
- **N86 Camp - Daingean Ui Chúis Road** -Land acquisition continued along this section with over 95% fully acquired.
- **N86 Ballynasare Lower to Ballinclare and Doonore North to Ballygarret Road Project (5.5km)** – Tender documents for the second Contract (N86 Ballynasare Lower to Ballinclare and Doonore North to Ballygarret), which is 5.5km in length, were finalised and ready for publication.
- **N70 Sneem to Blackwater Bridge (Ankail to Doon) Road Project.** -Land acquisition advanced and was approximately 70% complete at the end of 2024.
- **N70 Waterville to Ballybrack-** The Statutory Consent application documents were finalised and TII approval sought to publish the application to ABP.
- **N70 Creamery Cross** - Site Investigations and environmental surveys were undertaken. The detailed design of the emerging preferred route was progressed, in advance of the planning process.
- **N72 Gap Cross to Golden Nugget-** The Contract was awarded in Q4 for this Safety/Active Travel scheme which is now under construction.
- **N72 between Killorglin and the RDI Hub at Anglont** - investigative works and design advanced with statutory consent application documentation prepared. An information day was held in December 2024.
- **Pavement Improvement Works** - works were carried out at N71 Kenmare to Bonane-Phase 1 and N71 Muckcross to Torc.
- Tenders were invited for a Pavement Contract between Creamery Cross and Kinneigh (Phase 2).
- **Rehabilitation Works** - works were completed in March 2024 at N70 Gleensk adjacent to the Viaduct. The intervention works involved the construction of a 41m Contiguous Pile Embedded Wall.

- **Bridge Works-** N70 Laune Bridge Rehabilitation works were completed in October 2024 which included scour protection, grouting all piers and abutments, concrete repair and repointing. A new lighting system will be installed by early March 2025.
- **Tralee Northern Relief Road** – An Advance Works Service Diversions Contract was completed in 2024. Tenders were invited for the construction of Section A main alignment including a 1km offline section with a roundabout at Listellick. The Contract was awarded in early 2025 and the works are underway. A Consultant was appointed in 2024 to advance the Planning and Design of Section B from Listellick to Bracker O Regan Road.
- **Killarney Strategic Link Road-** The Preliminary Business Case was prepared and submitted to the Dept. of Transport for approval in Q4 2024.

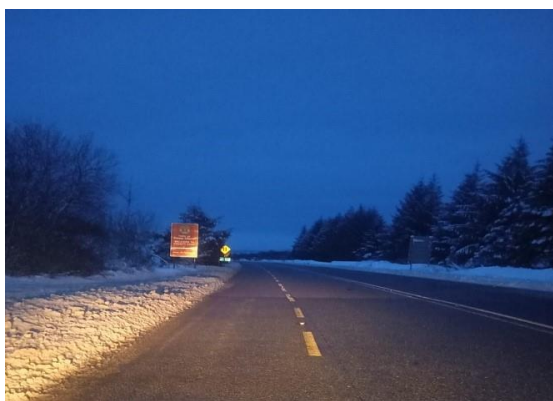
GREENWAYS

- The National Development Plan 2021 – 2030 commits to increase resources for the delivery of greenways and Transport Infrastructure Ireland has been assigned as the Approving Authority for the implementation of the Greenway Programme.
- **Tralee to Listowel Greenway.** - The Second Public Consultation for the Project was undertaken in September 2024. The information gathered from this consultation will be used to identify the preferred route in Q2 2025.
- **South Kerry Greenway-** The Land Acquisition advanced throughout the scheme. Construction works continued the first phase between Glenbeigh and Mountain Stage and works commenced on the second phase of this project between Kells PO and Kells Station with good progress being made on the ground.
A trial gabion section was completed as the Tender Documents were prepared for the Main Contract. Several Advance Contracts including, Topo Surveying, Fencing, Site clearance and Ecological surveys were undertaken along the scheme.
Public Consultation on Route Corridors for the section from Renard to Cloghanelinaghan. East of Caherciveen took place in October 2024.
- **Cockleshell Road to Spa/ Quiet Road-** The Part 8 process was completed for the L2004 Quiet Road which will link the Spa to the Tralee to Fenit Greenway. Works are underway to complete this important new link in the Greenway Network. Land Acquisition is ongoing for the Cockleshell to Spa Greenway.
- **Sweepers-** Two electric sweepers were procured and delivered and will make the maintenance of the existing greenways more efficient and environmentally friendly.

NON-NATIONAL ROADS

- **Restoration Improvement** – 112km of the regional and local roads were treated with for surface restoration and road reconstruction under this programme in 2024 and an overall expenditure of €15.61m.

- **Restoration Maintenance & Supplementary Restoration Maintenance Programmes** – 140km of the regional and local roads were surface dressed under these programmes at an expenditure of €3.6m.
- **Community Involvement Schemes** – The funding allocation of €643,050 allowed for the improvement of 8 projects across the county under this scheme.
- **Local Improvement Schemes** – A overall funding allocation in 2024 of €1.545m allowed for the improvement of 29 projects and a total length of 19.4km under this programme.
- **Bridge Rehabilitation** – works were progressed on 13 bridges throughout the county and an increase in expenditure of €0.38m.
- **Safety Improvement Programme** – works were progressed on 10 schemes throughout the county, including the upgrade of the Ardcost Junction, Portmagee on the R565, the installation of a pedestrian crossing on Tailors Row L5014-1 in Castlegregory Village and Footpath connectivity on the L3097 Whitebridge Killarney.
- **Climate Adaptation and Resilience Works Programme** - works were completed on 23 projects under this programme, with a funding allocation of €810,800. These works included repairs to damaged roads as a result of severe weather events.
- **Drainage Programme** – works were carried out on 315km of the road network
- **Former National Roads** – the funding allocation of €600,000 was invested in the pavement inlay of Main Street, Castleisland from the junctions with the L-2040 (Killarney Road) to the junction of the L-2041-4 (Limerick Road Junction) - formerly the N21.
- **Specific Improvement Grants** – works progressed as follows:
 - Enabling works commenced on Clash to Ballymullen P2
 - Construction works progressed on the Tralee to Fenit realignment P3
 - Construction works were completed on Finnegans Cross junction improvement project
- **Weather events** - the Roads & Transportation team responded to and supported communities during 33 Met Eireann weather alerts, including wind, rainfall, thunderstorms, snow/ice, low temperatures, fog and high temperatures throughout 2024.



- **Killarney Inner Link Road** - on November 6th, 2024, Kerry County Council were advised by An Bord Pleanála of the positive decision on the Compulsory Purchase Order Oral hearing held in June 2024, authorizing compulsory acquisition of lands associated with the Killarney Inner Link Road, this impacts positively on several pipeline projects for Killarney and the county and a game changer for local economic development and for investment infrastructure.
- **Winter Maintenance** - the Kerry County Council Winter Maintenance Plan was activated on 36 occasions during 2024.
- **Fleet** - The Council invested c. €1.4m in our Machinery Yard with a new suite of surface dressing plant including an ACMAR Bitumen Sprayer, Pneumatic Tyred Roller and Self-Propelled Chip Spreader, to assist with the delivery of the increased work programme and two new electric sweepers for Greenway maintenance.



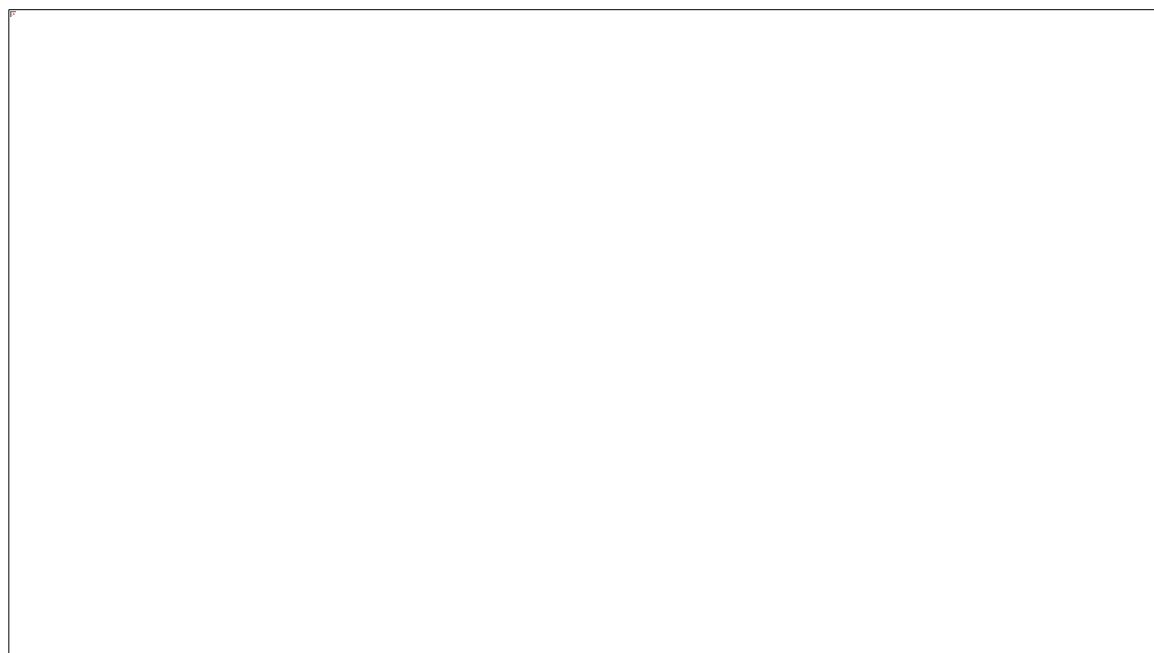
- **Road Openings** - more than 980 road opening licences were issued throughout the county facilitated by both clerical and technical teams and enabling works by NBI, Uisce Éireann, ESB, Eirgrid and others.
- **Road Closures** - 69 Road Closures were processed throughout the county facilitating

festivals, events in communities throughout the county and the delivery critical infrastructure works.

- **Permits** - over 120 abnormal load permits were issued throughout the county on selected routes for various applicants, requiring significant technical review and analysis.

ROAD SAFETY / ENFORCEMENT / COMPLIANCE/ CAR PARKING

- Death and serious injuries on our roads are a major concern Nationally and in Kerry, to address this Kerry County Council's appointed a dedicated Road Safety Officer in July 2024, fulfilling Kerry County Councils commitment under Action 1 of the "Road Safety Action Plan for Kerry 2024". The Road Safety Officers priority is to promote, implement and monitor the Council's 'Road Safety Action Plan' and the Government's 'Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030' locally, and to develop a plan of events, initiatives and campaigns around those actions.
- Kerry County Council's Road Safety Officer launched a number of initiatives and campaigns to raise road safety awareness since joining Kerry County Council including:
 - Road safety conference to secondary students
 - Older driver's road safety conference
 - AXA road safety roadshow targeting second level students
 - Driving in severe weather conditions
 - School crossing review
 - Walking bus scheme



- Enforcement Officers investigated complaints in relation to overloaded vehicles, road openings, road damage, overgrown hedges, signage, casual trading, beach byelaws, etc. resulting in 841 enforcement notices issued through the county.

- 13,761 parking fines issued by traffic wardens enforcing laws relating to illegal parking and the stopping of vehicles on public roads across the county.
- 29 S.254 street furniture licences were issued facilitating the outdoor dining in towns and villages across the county.
- Over 900 road making material tests were carried out on roadworks schemes to ensure compliance with material specifications.
- Over 1,170 safety inspections were carried out on road work schemes, as well as inspections carried out in the areas of housing, water services and contractors.
- Over 905 roads and services queries were processed.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

- Local Transport Plans for Tralee and Killarney have advances and will proceed to public consultation in 2025.
- 600m of paths in Tralee Town Park were upgraded in December. The works continued the upgrades carried out previously in the town park and substantially complete the main strategic links. These facilities link the Presentation Secondary School, the CBS Secondary School to existing and proposed active travel links, existing carparks and public transport links within the Town. The works were funded by the National Transport Authority
- Local Transport Plans for Tralee and Killarney – these plans were substantially completed in 2024 and set out a strategic plan for active travel in both Towns. These transport plans will form Part of the Town Settlement plans which will be progressed in 2025.
- The Safe Routes to School scheme for the Mercy Secondary School, Mounthawk was progressed to the Statutory Consultation phase.
- The Bracker O’ Regan Road traffic Calming scheme design was advanced during the year to allow the statutory public consultation process commence in 2025.

ROCK ROAD ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECT

The Rock Road scheme is part of the Department of Transport ‘Pathfinder’ programme and is one of several Active Travel projects in the Killarney MD which obtained planning in 2021.

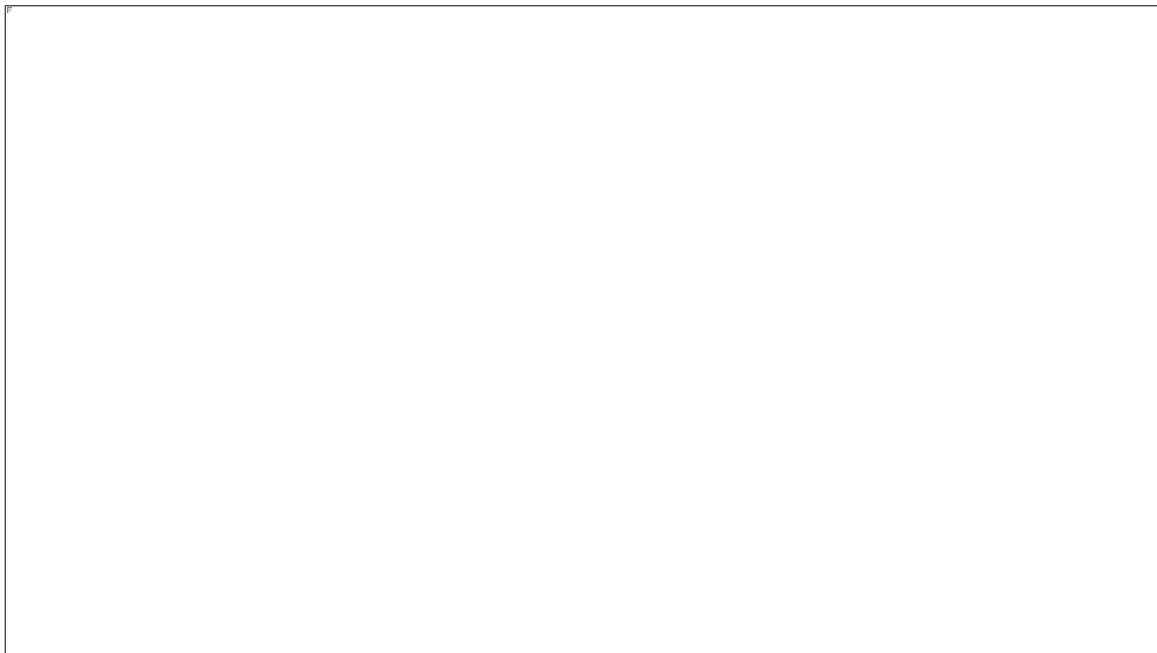
The Rock Road Active Travel project was delivered in 2024, funded through the NTA Active Travel allocations. The works were completed in August 2024 and consisted of the following:

- Footpath improvements along Rock Road.
- The construction of fully segregated cycle lanes along Rock Road in accordance with the NTA Cycle Design Manual standards.
- Improvements in the public lighting along Rock Road.

- Improved pedestrian crossings along Rock Road including the construction of raised zebra crossings.
- Improved pedestrian crossing facilities at existing junctions with Rock Road and junction tightening in accordance with best practice guidance.
- Drainage and all associated construction works.

The Flesk Cycleway, Killarney linking the Muckcross road to Ross Road was also completed in 2024

Photographs from the Rock Road scheme is included below.



CAPITAL PROJECTS

South Kerry

- **Killarney – Áras Phádraig** – Part 8 planning approval was published in November 2024 for a New theatre with community space, Primary Care Centre and a public plaza.
- **Killarney Public Realm** – Part 8 planning approval was published in October 2024 for Public realm works at Kenmare place to Main Street 2024.



- Proposals for the other town centre consultant have advanced and will proceed to planning approval stage in 2025
- **Caherciveen - Daniel O'Connell Quarter** - RRDF category 1 funding of €6.4m was approval by the Department of Rural & community Development in 2024 for Caherciveen for the upgrade and extension to the Carnegie building and for the boardwalk along the Fertha river at Quay Street
- **Caherciveen Public Realm** - Part 8 planning achieved for improvements to the public realm at Fair Green and at the waterfront.
- **Killorglin - Killorglin Courthouse** - RRDF category 1 funding of €840,000 was approval by the Department of Rural & community Development in 2024 for upgrade work to the former Killorglin Courthouse
- **Killorglin Public Realm** - Desing for public realm works have advanced and will proceed to planning approval stage in 2025

CAPITAL PROJECTS

North Kerry

- **Tralee - Destination Town Signage** - Contract completed to install wayfinding signage in Tralee, upgrades to the entrances to the Town Park also formed part of these works.
- **Tralee URDF** - Phase 3 which includes urban realm upgrades for New Road, Island of Geese and Rock Street was advertised for tender in November.
- **Blennerville Bakery School** - Works to provide a Bakery School at Blennerville were advertised in November

- **Tralee – Boxing Club, Boherbee** – Site enabling works were completed at the site to allow construction to commence in 2025.
- **Listowel – new Trailhead facilities at Childers Park** – the design for this facility was completed and the project was advertised for tender with a construction start date of January 2025.
- **Listowel RRDF** – Consultants were appointed to design concepts and plans to upgrade public realm at the Square and William Street. Consultants were also appointed to prepare an Activity Hub Master Plan for the Neo-data site, the old handball alley and the Town Council depot. Proposals for the Seanchaí Centre are also being developed.
- **Beach facilities – for Ballybunion, Fenit and Maharabeg** – Designs of a state-of-the-art toilet and changing facilities for 3 of our Blue Flag beaches in the county were progressed during the year. The Construction contract for the Fenit Facility was advertised for Tender in November.

PIERS AND HARBOURS / COASTAL PROTECTION / EROSION

- Operation and maintenance of 59 piers and slipways located throughout the county.

PUBLIC AMENITIES

- €2.1m expended on maintaining open spaces / playgrounds and beaches, which supports the tourism offering of the county
- €2.4m expended on street cleaning, to enhance the public realm in our towns and villages and supporting economic vibrancy
- Maintenance of 36 public conveniences throughout the county including upgrade work to a number of facilities throughout the County further to grant and own resource funding.

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE:

During the year the Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) considered reports on the following:

- Function and Role of Directorate
- Role and Responsibilities of the SPC
- Review Draft Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029 high-level Framework and Draft Implementation Plan 2024-2025
- Strategic issues to be considered by the SPC
- Climate Action Plan Implementation
- Update on Speed Limit Review Rural Local Road Network

**DIRECTORATE OF
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**

Director of Services: NIAMH O’SULLIVAN

COMMUNITY, ARTS AND CULTURE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

TOURISM

LIBRARY SERVICES

COMMUNITY, ARTS & CULTURE

The role of the Community Department has developed significantly and comprises of many functions which require significant interagency collaboration and engagement with internal sections within Kerry County Council.

The principal functions administered through the Community Department are summarised as follows:

- Co-ordinating the work of the Kerry Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and overseeing and monitoring the community elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)
- Co-ordinating and overseeing the LEADER Programme and the Kerry LCDC led LAG and administration of the animation element of the LEADER programme
- Co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2024-2028 (SICAP)
- Co-ordinating National grant scheme programmes and leveraging state grants to support local community initiatives.
- Administration and Management of the Councils Community Support Fund
- Co-ordinating the implementation of the Age Friendly Strategy for the County
- Supporting and Implementing the Healthy Ireland Initiative at a local level
- Co-ordinating the work programme of the Kerry Public Participation Network
- Administering the following community support initiatives:
 - Kerry Community Awards
 - Pride of Place
 - Comhairle na nÓg.

The Municipal District Officers for the Kenmare, Castleisland/Corca Dhuibhne districts are provided from the staffing resources of the Community Department

KERRY LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC) & LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP)

The Kerry LCDC has 19 members representative of public and private interests including business, local development, education, enterprise, agriculture, voluntary and local authority members. During 2024, the LCDC convened 8 meetings.

The LCDC is charged with responsibility for the implementation of the community elements of the LECP and with the co-ordination of local and community development activity in the County. The LCDC is also the contracting authority for the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) where €2.89 million was invested in social inclusion projects throughout the County in 2024.

The total numbers of New Arrivals being hosted in Co. Kerry is 10,587, comprising 9,639 Ukrainians and 948 International Protection Applicants. Additional SICAP funding of €942,747 was provided to NEWKD, SKDP and IRD Duhallow to help with these supports.

The Kerry LCDC is the Local Action Group (LAG) and is the main approval body for the LEADER programme. Investment in Kerry from 2014 to 2024 under LEADER programme, Transitional LEADER, EURI and exchequer funding amounted to €16,543,319.28 million. A new LEADER 2023-2027 programme commenced in May 2024 with an overall budget of €8.2 million with Expression of Interest for projects sought during the year. The first projects under the new LEADER programme were approved at the December LAG meeting.

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN 2024-2029 (LECP)

The LECP Advisory Group, the Kerry Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Kerry Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Community Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) along with Kerry County Council have undertaken a process to prepare a Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the period 2024-2029.

The Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029 is a strategic policy document that will further the societal and economic development of the County over the next six years. The plan aims to promote and support the economic and community development of County Kerry for the period 2024-2029 and is aligned with the ambition and objectives established in the Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.

Extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement undertaken by Kerry County Council throughout the process demonstrated its commitment to a broad, diverse, and accessible range of county-wide consultation. The various forms of public participation ensured a diverse range of stakeholders contributed to the development of the LECP.

One of the key features of the LECP will see the delivery of three 2-year implementation plans for the period 2024-2029. The Implementation Plan details specific actions to assist in achieving the High-Level Goals agreed for the period. The Plan is a multi-agency plan and includes actions contributed by a wide range of service providers.

The Draft Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029 will go before Full Council in Q1 2025 for review and adoption. Following which a submission will be sent to the Minister for Rural and Community Development, and the policy document will be published by Kerry County Council.

ADMINISTRATION OF LEADER IN 2024

Decisions on LEADER funding are made at a local level by the Local Action Group through the framework of a Local Development Strategy (LDS). The Kerry LCDC led Local Action Group (LAG) is made up of 20 people representative of the local community and the local public and private sectors.

One of the biggest achievements to date for the LCDC in Kerry has been enhanced strategic planning, the targeting and coordination of resources which has resulted in the LCDC as the Local Action Group being recognised nationally as the leader in the delivery of the RDP

LEADER Programme. This success is attributed to the collaborative work and commitment of the LAG and the commitment demonstrated by the Implementing Partners. A total of 7 LAG meetings were held during 2024. The new LEADER 2023-2027 programme with a budget of €8.2 million commenced in May 2024. Expressions of Interest for LEADER funded projects were sought during the year with the first projects under the new LEADER programme approved at the December LAG meeting.

LEADER has enabled all stakeholders on the LCDC to invest strategically in priorities identified in Kerry's Local Development Strategy and the Local Economic and Community Plan (2016-2022). There is a high level of community vibrancy across Kerry because of LEADER. It has proven to be very effective at promoting active community engagement and volunteerism in Kerry. LEADER has supported a range of projects including the enhancement of community amenities and infrastructure, development of new playgrounds, support to microenterprises and environmental initiatives including community-based projects that aim to raise awareness and promote best practice regarding sustainability and biodiversity.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROGRAMME (2024-2028)

SICAP is a Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme. The Programme is co-funded by the Irish Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Union through the [European Social Fund Plus](#) under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training (EIST) Programme 2021- 2027. It aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

The Local Development Committees (LDCs) in Kerry are the Programme Implementers (PIs) who manage the programme at the local level and the LCDC is the key decision maker in terms of annual planning, monitoring and oversight. The PIs are required to submit a SICAP annual plan each year setting out their proposed plans for the coming year. The annual planning process provides an important opportunity to link the SICAP actions with the social inclusion priorities of the Local Economic and Community plan (LECP).

There are 12 pre-defined target groups that can be supported under the Programme: People living in disadvantaged communities, People impacted by educational disadvantage, People living in jobless households or households where the primary income source is low-paid and/or precarious, People who are long-term unemployed, People with a criminal history, Refugees, International Protection Applicants, Disabled People/People with Disabilities, Heads of One-parent Families, Travellers, Roma and Island residents.

To support the integration of New Arrivals, an additional budget was allocated to the SICAP programme in Kerry in 2024 to support the successful integration of the new communities into the county. These supports include social outings for families and summer camps for children, English language classes, access to employment courses, wellbeing supports, homework supports for children, humanitarian aid etc.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

In 2024, the three local development companies, as the Programme Implementers, had another very busy and productive year in the delivery of SICAP in Kerry. The PIs work with target groups and service providers using a community development approach to improve people's lives.

The table inserted hereunder gives the actual statistics relating to individuals and communities who have benefited from the Programme in 2024 and also gives the budget parameters within which the Programme was delivered.

SUMMARY OF SICAP WORK PROGRAMME 2024:

| Lot Name & Budget | Individuals Interventions KPI 2* | Community interventions KPI 1* |
|--|---|---|
| NEWKD Annual Budget: €1,666,886 Total administration Costs: €413,731 (25%) Total Action Costs: € 1,230,699 | 784 (Across 11 Thematic areas) | 73 (Across 6 thematic areas) |
| SKDP Annual Budget: €1,134,281 Total Administration Costs: €227,571 (20%) Total Action Costs: €879,785 | 689 (Across 10 thematic areas) | 51 (Across 7 thematic areas) |
| IRD Annual Budget: €91,748 Total Administration Costs: €20,487 (22%) Total Action costs: €71,261 | 61 (Across 7 thematic areas) | 10 (Across 4 thematic areas) |

KPI 1: Key Performance Indicator 1; KPI 2: Key Performance Indicator 2

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL GRANT INITIATIVES

The Community Department is responsible for co-ordinating funding applications under certain Government Grant Schemes such as Town and Village Renewal, ORIS, CLÁR, Community Enhancement Programme etc. to maximise funding opportunities and leverage state grants to support local community initiatives which have high impact at a local level.

It is important to note that the local contribution to the various programmes has been secured in many instances through the annual strategic element portion of the Community Support Fund. A 'Senior Grants Management Team', facilitated by the Community Department has been established to ensure good financial governance of funds administered through National grant schemes. In 2024, a total of €3,996,660 has been secured in Kerry through National Grant Schemes, that are managed through the Community Department in Kerry County Council. A summary of which is outlined below.

CLÁR

CLÁR provides funding for small scale capital projects in rural areas that have experienced significant levels of depopulation. In 2024 fifteen projects were awarded funding totaling €651,422 under Measure 1 (Developing Community Facilities and Amenities).

Measure 1 Projects (€651,422)

| | |
|---|----------|
| Staigue Fort, Castlecove | € 50,000 |
| Lixnaw Development Association | € 20,451 |
| Listry GAA Grounds | € 44,809 |
| Brosna Community Development Association | € 50,000 |
| CLG Lios Póil | € 49,511 |
| Ballyheigue GAA | € 50,000 |
| Tulloha NS | € 50,000 |
| Milltown GAA | € 50,000 |
| Sneem Development Co Op Ltd (Community Building) | € 42,640 |
| Moyvane Development Association | € 41,974 |
| Castlemaine Playground Committee in conjunction with St. Josephs NS | € 50,000 |
| Laune Rangers GAA & LGFA | € 34,537 |
| St. Senans GAA | € 50,000 |
| Castlegregory Celtic FC | € 49,500 |
| Headford Ambush Interpretative Development | € 18,000 |

Town Centre First Suite of Supports

In 2024, the Town Centre First Suite of Supports, replaced supports previously available for the development of Town Centre First plans, town health-checks and the Project Development Measure (PDM) through the Town & Village Renewal Scheme. The scheme was tailored to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland through a renewed focus on town centre economic and social recovery and regeneration.

In 2024 a total of 6 projects were awarded funding totaling €159,950 under Measures 1 - Town Team Support Fund, Measure 2 - Town Centre First Plan and Measure 3 - Project Development Measure of the Town Centre First Suite of Supports.

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|
| Dingle | €10,000 | Measure 1 |
| Ballybunion | €10,000 | Measure 1 |
| Castleisland | €10,000 | Measure 1 |
| Kenmare | €30,000 | Measure 2 |
| Milltown | €49,950 | Measure 3 |
| Valentia Island | €50,000 | Measure 3 |

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

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

The announcement of ORIS 2023 funding under Measure 1 was announced in April, 2024 and Measures 2 and 3 were announced in June, 2024.

In 2024 a total of 9 projects were awarded funding totaling €1,192,840 under Measures 1, 2 and 3 of ORIS 2023

| | | |
|--|----------|-----------|
| Marketing the Kingdom of Kerry Greenways | €29,700 | Measure 1 |
| Trail Improvements at Reenagross Woodland Park, Kenmare | €30,000 | Measure 1 |
| Ballybunion – Beach Access (South Beach) | €30,000 | Measure 1 |
| Glanageenty Forest Recreation Park – Traffic Congestion Relief for the Access Road | €30,000 | Measure 1 |
| River Lee Walkway/Cycleway, Tralee | €30,000 | Measure 1 |
| Ballyseedy Wood Amenity Trail | €200,000 | Measure 2 |
| Recreational Enhancement at three Blue Flag Beaches - Ballyheigue, Banna & Rossbeigh | €198,000 | Measure 2 |
| Jarvey Lane Repair & Upgrade Project | €200,000 | Measure 2 |
| Milltown - Kilderry Looped Amenity Walk | €445,140 | Measure 3 |

Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund

The Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin T.D., and the Minister of State for Sport, Physical Education and the Gaeltacht, Thomas Byrne T.D., announced the second round of funding allocations under the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF). This follows the first LSSIF round of allocations announced in January 2020. The total amount of grants awarded is €173 million, benefiting 35 individual projects. Three Kerry sports projects will benefit from the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF), with Fitzgerald Stadium to receive €6 million, The Derreen Community Complex in Killarney €1 million and Killarney Rugby Club €750,000 under the fund.

LOCAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME 2024

The Local Enhancement Programme 2024 provided capital support to community groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas. The capital funding for the Local Enhancement Programme and the Ring-Fenced Fund for Women's Groups under the Programme assisted groups in carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to facilities, energy efficiency type projects, purchase of equipment etc. 153 groups in the County were awarded funding in 2024 totalling €173,948.45

Community Support Fund (CSF)

Kerry County Council appreciates the valuable contribution that communities make to the overall well-being of the county and its citizens. In recognition of this, the CSF has been developed to provide flexible financial support to community groups and local organisations.

The fund is facilitated through the Local Property Tax, through the decision of the Elected Council.

The fund, which in 2024, was in its tenth year, has supported over 2,713 projects since 2015. As occurred in previous years, a portion of the Community Support Fund 2024 was retained to leverage funding from other funding streams to target strategic projects in the five municipal districts and to co-fund projects which are in receipt of grants from other sources.

Other Community Grants

During 2024 several other funding opportunities were availed of including:

1. **LGBTI Dormant account grant to Listowel Family Resource Centre** for the development, implementation and evaluation of **LGBTI+ Employer Inclusion Workshops** in the county. Funding of €11,000 was provided.
2. **Africa Day: Department of Finance** Funding of €7,500 was provided to support Africa day event co-ordinated by **Tralee International Resource Centre** in May 2024.
3. **DHLGH (Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage) - Once Off Christmas Support Allocation** of €50,000 which supported 19 projects in the County.

Arts Service | Creative Ireland Kerry Office

Policy development:

Kerry County Council launched its *Kerry Arts Development Strategy 2024-2034* in November 2024. It is available to download from the Publications section of the website: arts.kerrycoco.ie and hard copies are available from the Arts Office, and all libraries countywide. In summary:

The vision of the new Arts Strategy is to support a sustainable arts sector that contributes to the social, cultural, and economic development of Kerry, and ensures that people have access to a rich and rewarding range of high-quality artistic and cultural experiences.

Kerry County Council's Arts Service works to support and to develop the arts sector; artists, arts festivals and events, arts venues, organisations, and those that provide opportunities for communities and visitors to engage with the arts, enabling vibrant arts activity throughout the county.

(1) Funding 2024:

The Arts Office awarded €35,000 in arts grants countywide under the **Arts Act 2003**, this Act provides for;

- (1) Stimulating public interest in the arts
- (2) Promoting knowledge and appreciation of the arts
- (3) Improving standards in the arts

In 2024, twenty-seven **Arts Act Grants** were awarded to arts festivals, arts events, and arts projects. A further €26,200 was awarded via **Individual Artist Bursaries**, to artists based in, and

from Kerry, to develop their work practice. **Artist in Schools** bursaries were awarded to four schools.

Contributions funding of €166,000 was awarded between eight arts venues and internationally acclaimed arts festivals across the county, under **Contributions to Voluntary Organisations** to support artistic programme and development, to encourage engagement with target audiences and to promote platforms for arts practitioners. In 2024 supported organisations were; Síamsa Tíre, St. John's Theatre and Arts Centre, Kerry Writer's Museum, Cill Rialaig, Tech Amergin, Carnegie Arts Centre, Listowel Writers Week and the Kerry International Film Festival.

(2) The Arts Office work programme

Across all MDs, included the following initiatives led by the Arts Office and co-funded by the Arts Council:

- **Writer in Residence Programme:** Emer Fallon
- **Dancer in Residence Programme:** Catherine Young
- **Visual Artist in residence Programme:** Lisa Fingleton

The above Artist in Residency Programme engaged with over 1,300 people, which included members of the public, fellow artists, primary school, secondary school & further education students, community groups & day-care centres.

- **Culture Night 2024:** delivered a total Programme of 61 events on 20th September with 6,372 attendees. These were in-person events, with an increase of more than 500 attendees from 2023 figures. Over 30 projects were awarded from funding from KCC Arts Office.
- **Visual Artist Mentoring:** to help artists live and make work in Kerry. We partnered with *Visual Artists Ireland* on an Artist Curatorial Support Programme for artists. This comprised of three individual online clinics for 15 Kerry artists.
- **The Cill Rialaig Residency Award:** following an open call, two artists from Kerry were each awarded a two-week residency in their own individual cottage studio at Cill Rialaig Artist Retreat.
- **Festival Support:** Arts Festivals Mentoring- Following a call out to arts festivals, Dr. David Teevan provided Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Festival mentoring to Féile Na Bealtaine, K-FEST and Chamber Music on Valentia. David helped the festivals to create or update their EDI Policies and brainstorm inclusive events for their festivals this year.
- **Short Film Bursary:** Supported Filmmaking in the County - Short Film Bursary; 14 Submissions received; €10,000 Awarded to David Prendiville of Next Sunday Productions for *Sweet Delusion*. The Office has dealt with over 30 film queries from incoming production companies since March.
- **EDI Artist Bursary:** St. John's Theatre Practitioner in Residence Richard Walsh assisted New York-based LGBTQIA+ choreographer & performer Gillian Walsh to facilitate workshops targeted at the young LGBTQIA+ community in Listowel. The project engaged with the wider youth theatre & dance community in Listowel.

- **POP** - Kerry Arts Office partnered with Roscommon, Cork City, Laois, and Tipperary Arts Offices to create a policy for Public Outdoor Performances (POP) following funding from the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration Scheme. We worked in partnership with the National Resource Organisations ISACS, Poetry Ireland, Music Network and Theatre Forum. It was supported by Promenade, who help artists and communities to create new arts experiences in Ireland's public places spaces. The initiative is funded by the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration Scheme with additional local authority support. **Illuminate: Empowering Youth through Art**, Kerry event for the POP event series, took place at Island of Geese Tralee on Saturday March 2nd 2024, and was facilitated by Kerry County Council's Arts Office and local partners Munster Technological University and Music Generation Kerry. 11 artists participated on the day in a 2 information stands, 4 workshops and 5 performances including a stage reading by Listowel Youth Theatre.
- **Percent for Art Scheme** – Commissioning process took place in 2024. Elizabeth O' Kane was selected to create a figurative sculpture to commemorate the Women of Kerry during the Revolutionary Period.

(3) Partnership Development

- **Kerry Local Creative Youth Partnership (LCYP)** focus on Youth Theatre – partnership with Kerry County Council and Kerry Education & Training Board's LCYP, provided continued support to Shout Out Youth Theatre in Listowel, SKY Youth Theatre in Cahersiveen, and Dingle Youth Theatre with a total of 108 young people taking part.
- **Music Generation Kerry**, Kerry ETB is the lead Partner, Kerry County Council is a strong support partner (€37k annual contribution). This programme (which must evidence local partners and funding) levers €200k into Kerry each year to support music education and increase access to those who do not have access to music education. The programme covers musical instruments/ instrumental tuition, singing/ vocal tuition, and composition. Over 2,800 young people took part in instrumental, music technology & vocal classes through their schools, after-school, online, & midterm and summer masterclasses and camps, versus 2,500 last year. Supported by the County Library service, and the Arts Office, Music Generation Kerry has an Instrument Lending Scheme with over 400 instruments available for low-cost rental, from Tralee Library. Donations of unwanted instruments in good condition are always welcome.
- The **Sliabh Luachra Music Trail** is a partnership project with Cork County Council and Limerick County & City Council, which is supported by the Arts Council's *Invitation to Collaboration Scheme*. There was a public meeting between the partners & the stakeholders in January 2024. Following this, , World Fiddle Day, Con Curtin Music Festival, Handed Down Concert & Lecture Series, and the Patrick O' Keeffe Traditional Music Festival all received funding to directly support Sliabh Luachra musicians to perform at their events. Our intercounty partnership, between Cork, Kerry, and Limerick Councils, has appointed Aidan Connolly as Musician in Residence in November 2024 to 2025.

- The Arts Office undertook part of the work of **Screen Kerry** responding to incoming location queries, with information and support from across Kerry County Council services.
- **Creative Places Uíbh Ráthaigh** – this partnership with Comhchoiste Gaeltachta Uíbh Ráthaigh, Ealaíon na Gaeltachta, South Kerry Development Partnership and Éigse na Brídeoige has secured Arts Council’s Creative Places funding for a three year period - awarded €325,000 over the three years The aim of the project is to work with local artists, community groups and community development agencies, to construct a co-ordinated arts infrastructure, which will engage inclusive and diverse creative approaches within the multilingual context of Uíbh Ráthach, while supporting, honouring and celebrating the area’s Gaeltacht status and heritage.
- **ANAM Summer Arts Programme** – Arts Team working with Killarney MD and Corporate Services delivered 45 Events across all artforms and for all ages took place in June, July, and August. This included music, creative writing, painting, wet felting, puppet making and filmmaking workshops, as well as performances by Grace Foley, Dóchas Drama Group, Killarney School of Music, and Killarney Comhaltas.

(4) Arts Service communications:

1. Updating of the Arts Database is ongoing.
2. Social Media – Facebook (3,979 followers), Twitter/ X (4,211 followers) & Instagram (1,950 followers) @KerryCoArts – sharing arts opportunities & events.
3. Our fortnightly e-newsletter of local, national & international arts opportunities & events in Kerry currently has 1,058 Subscribers – you can subscribe to the newsletter on our website arts.kerrycoco.ie or by emailing the Arts Office on arts@kerrycoco.ie
4. The Arts Website arts.kerrycoco.ie is a one-stop shop for the arts in Kerry, with information on Artist Residencies, Funding, Publications, Festivals, the Sliabh Luachra Music Partnership, Youth Arts, Public & Visual Arts, Film, Creative Ireland, Cruinniú na nÓg and Culture Night. There is also a page of External Links to both local and national arts organisations across all artforms which may be helpful to those looking to engage and to artists.
5. Creative Kingdom, monthly Radio Kerry slot, second Saturday of every month, 10.30 a.m. as part of the Saturday Supplement with Joe McGill, Arts Officer, & guests.

Creative Ireland Kerry operates from the Arts Office – the work programme is supported and overseen by the Arts Officer | Creative Ireland Coordinator, and delivered by the Creative Communities Engagement Officer, with support across the Arts Team. Kerry County Council was initially allocated €211,419. Additional funding was secured, giving a total allocation to Creative Ireland Kerry of **€287,250**. in 2024.

Creative Ireland Kerry delivery 2024: 56 Creative Ireland projects delivered through

- (1) our Culture & Creativity Team,
- (2) Creative Community Grants,
- (3) Annualised and
- (4) Additional Funding

All of which engaged with over 190,000 people.

Cruinniú na nÓg (€34,131 budget)– 67 Events took place on 15th June which were attended by 1,304 children & young people.

Creative Ireland Kerry Strategy 2023-2027 is available from the Arts Office, Libraries and on our website arts.kerrycoco.ie

- 1) **Administration, Documentation, Advertising, Promotion, Management & Marketing:**
- 2) **Culture & Creativity Team (€40,686 countywide)**
 - **Environment: Rubbish Film Festival** - was a digital arts education initiative which encouraged creativity and environmental awareness among students in five secondary schools across Kerry. The students also received additional training and support in key Next Generation Skills, to create short films that highlighted the global issue of waste, pollution and climate change and their impact on the planet.
 - **Library: Summer Stars Reading Challenge**- Summer Stars is an annual reading challenge. Its main aim is to promote reading during the Summer for all children. Kerry Library invites children to participate in the reading challenge and to experience the fun and pleasure of reading and writing over the summer months alongside a programme of story times, workshops and interactive sessions that celebrate reading and writing. Summer Stars is non-competitive, and every child who reads even one book/e-book is regarded as having completed the programme. **Library: Children's Book Festival programme**- For the month of October Kerry Library invites authors, storytellers, illustrators, and musicians to Libraries across the county. Some of this year's highlights included Creating Writing Workshops Mad4Tales and Story Gate with each event free of charge with children invited to attend events both in their local library and online.
 - **The Bat Project - *Engaging Art to Save a Species!* Ireland's lesser Horseshoe Bat -**

The Bat Project is a joint initiative with Kerry County Council and Kerry Biosphere. The Bat Project's aim is to raise awareness regarding Ireland's native bats, in particular the Lesser Horseshoe Bat. Bat surveys were carried out along with a schools and community education & awareness programme, that encourages a wider understanding of Ireland's nine bat species, and the conservation actions required to protect these species. This included bat walks, bat box building workshops, schools' workshops, and the delivery of a calendar competition to primary schools in Kerry, (Supported through the Local biodiversity Action Fund) and concluded with an interactive exhibit which was displayed in libraires.

Architecture Kerry Project One: Reimagining Killarney - Architecture Kerry in partnership with Kerry Childcare Youth Partnership engaged with children in Killarney Direct Provision ranging in age from 3 to 15 to reimagine the built environment in Killarney town in arts-based creative projects to celebrate the built environment of their locality. The project was children led and had their say on the final format and delivery for their work. The children showcased and exhibited their artwork in Killarney town using a building's façade as a medium to highlight their work and raise awareness. By using a building façade as part of the children's artwork they were given the opportunity to deliver and communicate their creativity to a wide public audience.

Architecture Kerry Project Two: Traditional skills and practice at Muckross Traditional Farms

Architecture Kerry reinforced the importance of preserving traditional skills while also demonstrating their relevance in contemporary sustainability and design practices. While successfully delivering key elements such as demonstrating that traditional skills and crafts are not only a form of creativity but that they are a vital part of Kerry's tangible and intangible cultural heritage but also contribute significantly to the local cultural economy. These skills play a crucial role in the sustainable reuse of traditional materials and structures, thereby aiding in the fight against climate change. The two-day event showcased Kerry's vernacular traditional skills to highlight and promote the traditional skills and craftsmanship practiced in Kerry, offering the public an opportunity to engage with artisans and learn about their techniques. Various heritage crafts and skills were showcased, including:

- Stone masonry techniques
- Stained glass conservation
- Furniture making and restoration
- Súgán chair making
- Thatching
- Window conservation work

Architecture Kerry Project Three: Art in Architecture - A Modern Interpretation of the Georgian Drawing Room

A modern interpretation of The Georgian Drawing Room as part of Architecture Kerry who co-ordinated, managed and delivered this architectural project. Architecture Kerry's third project was an artistic and modern interpretation of the 18th century Neoclassical or Georgian drawing room at Colaiste Íde, Dingle. Artlab worked with students to explore the Georgian interior architecture through media using paper and plaster in a Sculptural Installation. Their works were exhibited, and students showcased a new and exciting interpretation of their historic built environment with their work going as far as being displayed for the Irish Georgian Society Event; Picturesque Designed Landscapes of Kerry: Where Art Embraces Nature at Colaiste Íde.

- **Killarney MD: New Street Project on Chapel Lane, Killarney**

Killarney MD delivered a large street art mural which referenced the mythical heritage of Killarney and the National Park. This mural built on Creative Ireland supported street art projects in the nearby laneways network of Killarney town to date. The project saw students from nearby school students, residents, and businesses coming together to select the successful design from a local artist who worked in tandem with St. Bridget's Secondary School to design a mural for Chapel Lane Killarney which was once the ecclesiastical centre of Killarney prior to the construction of the cathedral.

- **Museum - Dig Tralee** is a community archaeology project where volunteers work alongside professional archaeologists on a hillfort site on the outskirts of Tralee. Creative Ireland has funded the making of a short film documenting the participants' journey through the dig, tracing their hopes and expectations, what they learned and what surprised them. This is the second year of a project that will run over the next three to five summers.
- **Library - Children's Book Festival** During October, Kerry Library welcomed authors, storytellers, illustrators, and musicians into libraries across the county. Inviting the public to attend free events both in library branches and online to discover new wild and wonderful words!
- **Family Time at your Library** - Welcoming families to their local libraries to engage family members of all ages in the enjoyment of reading, sharing stories and creating together. The events support a family-focused approach to reading with children as part of the national Right to Read programme.
- **Film maker in Residence Programme 2024** This residency was programmed to meet demand from the youth sector. Film and digital creativity is consistently an ask from youth consultation for Creative Ireland Kerry. Jesse Gilbert worked as Film maker in Residence, with 30 schools expressing interest, and 300+ students engaged.

4) Annualised Projects

Fighting Words, managed by Kerry Writer's Museum, Fighting Words is a free creative writing programme founded by Roddy Doyle in 2009. Fighting Words Kerry targets primarily schools across the county.

Culture Night 2024 - Creative Ireland Kerry funded 5 projects as part of Culture Night Kerry 2024 with a strong community element and creative engagement:

- **Aistear Pheig Mhór** - a multidisciplinary street spectacle performance bringing the 10ft puppet of Peig Sayers, together with lanterns, waves, projections, and musicians to Killarney.
- **Echoes of the Home Shore** - a multifaceted celebration of the rich cultural heritage of the Castlegregory hinterlands. Including a visual art exhibition alongside music and storytelling to showcase the unique voices, environments and artistic traditions of our place. Artists from across multiple disciplines were invited to perform traditional and personal works reflecting on what it means to live, create and hold on to / care for traditions and environments in a rapidly changing world.

- **Trá Rí Ra** - an interactive series of events including percussion performance and workshops and group drumming - dance with a DJ and star gazing with an astronomy guide
- **'Last Post'** - a staged reading of a site-specific play by Paul Murphy at Ballymac Post Office
- **Skills for Life ft. Vocaleze Choir** - a live performance by the Vocaleze Choir as part of a special music video project created by the Skills for Life group from Munster Technological University (MTU).

Creative Kingdom – Radio Kerry Creative Kingdom is a dedicated arts and culture radio programme in Kerry, developed by Kerry County Council in association with Radio Kerry. Part funded by Creative Ireland Kerry, it is broadcast on the second Saturday of every month as part of the Saturday Supplement programme, the intention is to create a wider understanding about the projects, initiatives and opportunities within the Arts Office and Creative Ireland Kerry, with cultural conversations for communities in Kerry.

Residential Care Home Concerts bring music to the elderly living in residential care settings, with multiple creatives involved in the events. 20 Concerts took place in care centres, nursing homes, and community hospitals. The feedback received from residents and staff alike, through feedback forms was unanimously positive.

- **Supporting Creatives** – Partnered with **Kerry Local Enterprise Office** to offer 18 creative practitioners one-to-one online mentoring sessions with Méabh Ring.

5) Creative Communities Public call out for community & creative practitioner led projects: (€56,425 awarded countywide)

Pagan Rave - A diverse group of 30 to 50 artists from Kerry and beyond collaborated by strengthening and reviving Ireland's ancient customs, folklore, heritage, and rich cultural legacy. The workshops became a vibrant space for shared learning, where participants of all ages connected through the art of mask-making, weaving stories of the past into each handcrafted piece. The celebration culminated in a high-energy pagan rave where Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh entertained the crowds, embracing both ancestral traditions and contemporary expression in a powerful display of unity and creativity.

Let the Light in, Inspire, Create, Show. Celebrating Harry Clarke's centenary in Dingle

International artist Ben Dearnley led this community project through workshops with local schools which also coincided with Cruinniú na nÓg where children and participants worked collaboratively to create contemporary stained glass-like panels that went on display in the Díseart in Dingle. The exhibit also encouraged visitors and locals alike to explore both this new artwork along with Harry Clarke's historic stained-glass windows, which reflects Ireland's Celtic revival and artistic heritage.

The Musical Variety Show- The Musical Variety Show by Inspired is a community project that supports the employment, education, and personal development of adults with intellectual disabilities. Since its launch in September 2023, the show has grown into a major event, culminating in a spectacular performance at the Dúchas Centre in Kerry Sports Academy.

Originally planned as a small production, high demand led to the addition of two extra matinee shows. The performance featured a unique take on *Cinderella*, followed by a mix of song, music, and dance. Participants played a hands-on role in all aspects of production, from set design to costumes, making it an immersive experience for both performers and audiences.

Scéalta sa Chlapsholas - Scéalta sa Chlapsholas offered a unique opportunity to celebrate the local storytelling, culture, and history under the stars through a series of open-air night time film and TV screenings which was held in the Díseart gardens on the Dingle Peninsula, which showcased the works by local filmmakers and highlighted both the historical and contemporary stories of Dingle and the Dingle Peninsula along with rare home videos from the 1940s and 1950s, which were sourced with the help of the Dingle Classic Film Society. Screenings were free to the public, with filmmakers introducing their work and engaging in discussions afterward.

Kerry Youth Theatre - Youth Theatre group is a community-driven initiative which fosters inclusivity through theatre by providing young adults of mixed abilities with a creative space to explore theatre arts. By celebrating diversity and challenging stereotypes, the initiative promotes awareness and inspires positive social change within the community. Through theatre, participants are empowered to share their stories, embrace their creativity, and take centre stage. The workshops, rehearsals and performances give participants the opportunity to work collaboratively to develop their acting skills through storytelling & stagecraft while building confidence and friendships. Led by experienced facilitators, the program creates a supportive environment where young people can express themselves freely and connect with their peers.

Inch Talks Trash - Taking place over three days on Inch Strand local children learned about the area's biodiversity and environmental challenges. Alongside artist Hannah Sayers, they took part in *Inch Talks Trash* in which they collected beach waste and transformed it into art during a workshop at the community centre. Their work was showcased in a final exhibition that celebrated their creativity and environmental awareness and captured the community's engagement and effort. In addition to this an evening event for local adults featured a Dingle-based designer where circular fashion was discussed which led to a workshop in which they created t-shirts from recycled materials.

Puffins on Parade (POP)! - Puffins on Parade (POP) was a community-focused youth engagement project as part of the National Circus Festival of Ireland. Young participants created large puffin puppets and showcased them in the festival's finale parade which brought the streets of Tralee to life. The initiative provided an inclusive space for young people to explore their creativity while being mentored by professional artists. Through hands-on collaboration, they developed performance and artistic skills which contributed to the vibrant community spectacle. This project not only empowers the youth but also fosters a sense of community pride and engagement through a shared celebration of creativity and street arts.

Wise Wool Project - The Wise Wool Project's aim is to raise awareness about the wool waste in Ireland and to promote more sustainable practices. Through countywide workshops in schools, community centres and festivals the project educated the public on the value of wool as a reusable resource. Led by Kerry Walker and Lisa Sandow, the initiative fostered

community engagement by encouraging eco-friendly and circular economy solutions to wool waste. The highlight of the project was the *Woolly Celebration Day* at Kate Kearney's Cottage which featured workshops, discussions, storytelling, and music. The event was to bring people together to celebrate wool's potential, inspiring local communities to rethink waste and sustainability.

Sensory Room at KFest - The sensory room is for children, particularly those with additional needs in which a calm space is offered amid the festival's busy atmosphere. This initiative demonstrates the festival's commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that all children can fully participate and feel at ease in a welcoming environment. The sensory room catered to children up to 18 years old, providing opportunities to create art through painting with artist Rochelle Lucey, play music, and explore their senses for inspiration. This initiative aimed to have a lasting impact, particularly on children with additional needs, by encouraging them to embrace their creativity and recognize their artistic potential. It further reinforces the message that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can be an artist and use creative expression as a source of empowerment.

Biddy's Day - The annual Biddy's Day Festival in Killorglin is a vibrant celebration that brings the community together, highlighting Irish folklore, traditional craft-making, and the Biddy groups' customs. These groups, with their straw hats and Brídeóg dolls, visit homes to offer blessings for prosperity and protection. Held during the February Bank Holiday weekend, the festival fosters community engagement by reigniting interest in this important cultural tradition and creating a space for shared celebration.

Paint and Peace Project - The Paint and Peace Project was a 4-week initiative led by artist Tricia O'Connor which focused on engaging children with additional needs and their support workers in Co. Kerry. The project's objective was to foster creativity, strengthen community bonds, and connect participants with their natural landscape through art. By creating "Paint + Peace Activity Cards," the project offers lasting benefits for group work, staff training and family to access art and well-being strategies which in turn impacts the community long-term.

Guthanna Idir an Dá linn - The *Exhibition* shone a light on the experiences of the palliatively ill, a group often overlooked in society. The title reflects their shared sense of being in limbo—neither fully living nor fully dying—and their desire to be heard and seen. This powerful installation was driven by the stories of seven individuals, each sharing their lived experience, wisdom, and passion to give a voice to others in similar situations. The exhibition fostered community engagement by inviting visitors to reflect on mortality and the importance of creating meaning during life's final stages. Curated by Tricia Healy the exhibition offered a platform for these voices to educate and challenge perceptions about illness and dying. With the support of the community, this ground-breaking and urgent exhibition main aim was to leave a legacy for both the voiceless and the living.

Ballybunion Arts Festival - The Ballybunion Arts Festival is an annual event that engages the community and visitors through a diverse range of arts activities. The festival focused this year on celebrating Ballybunion's natural environment and cultural heritage, while also supporting regional regeneration and local economic growth. The festival's program is designed to engage

with various community groups, with events aimed at making the festival more accessible, especially for locals facing financial barriers or feeling excluded. A key aspect of the festival is its' promotion of the Irish language, with events such as 'Use Your Cúpla Focail' and a 'Pop-up Gaeltacht' which encourages people to engage with Irish through music, conversation, and phrases displayed at local venues. By offering a large portion of the festival's events for free while enhancing community connections and participation.

Envisioning Elegance: Spectacle and Promenade Workshops- Community groups and parade organizers were invited to join parade designer Eddie McGuinness for a series of free workshops focused on adding spectacle and energy to parade presentations. These three immersive, hands-on workshops taught participants the art of creating visually captivating spectacles and promenades, with a focus on choreography, costume design, and event planning. The workshops combined theoretical discussions with practical exercises to help attendees enhance their creativity and skills in organizing grand events. Their showcase event and a culmination of the workshops was a final presentation at the 2024 Féile Thrá Lí 'Parade of Light' and 'Parade of Colour' in August. Professional event management company Shannon Star Entertainment LTD assisted in organizing and implementing the event.

The Mantle: A Community Arts Project: Rossbeigh - The Mantle was a community arts project at Rossbeigh that explored the ecologies and mythologies of the strand and surrounding coastline through various storytelling practices. From the 10th August - 7th September the public event took place by the beach every Saturday and guided by a different mode of storytelling. From informal gatherings to biodiversity walks, performances & art making workshops, this programme invited members of the local community and all those with enduring or newformed connections to Rossbeigh to come together and pick up the storytelling mantle.

Project Paint + Make - Me and the Moon launched a unique initiative that brought process-led art activities to 14 primary schools across Kerry. The Paint + Make Project introduced primary school children and their teachers to the concept of process painting, which emphasizes the journey of creation rather than a finished product. Through these workshops, the children were given the opportunity to express themselves creatively, while teachers were provided with the tools and methods to guide their students through a rich, hands-on artistic experience. The culmination of this creative journey was an exhibition showcasing the children's vibrant artworks, which opened at the Kerry County Museum on February 1st.

Additional Funding 2024 €62,000

Creative Health & Well-being on a Shared Island:

In addition to annual core funding, the CIK Office was allocated the below:

1) Weaving Worlds Together- commenced Q1 2025

Age Friendly Kerry

Age Friendly Ireland is a shared service function of local government, hosted by Meath County Council. It operates through a national network of 31 Age Friendly Programmes across all local authority areas. Age Friendly Ireland co-ordinates, supports and provides technical guidance to

the 31 local authorities led, multiagency Age Friendly City and County Programmes. In Kerry, a strategic approach has always been taken to developing Kerry as an Age Friendly County in line with the Kerry Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). As a result, the age friendly programme is aligned with a wide range of actions and commitments within the LECP, and these are being delivered as part of individual work programmes.

Older Peoples Council

The Kerry Older Peoples Council Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday the 26th June in the Rose Hotel Tralee. A new executive was voted in at the AGM, with representation from all 5 Municipal Districts in Kerry.

This was the first AGM following the joint work programme with Kerry Public Participation Network where registered groups representing older people have become part of the PPN structure as an Over 55s Linkage Group.

In addition to the AGM, Age Friendly Kerry held a consultation with those present to identify the key challenges for over 55's in Co Kerry.

Creative Cahersiveen Project

Following a well-attended meeting regarding arts engagement led by the HSE Arts and Health in Cahersiveen opportunities were sought to develop creative projects locally. Funding was secured for a project from Healthy Kerry through the Age Friendly initiatives fund. The aim of Creative Cahersiveen was to give adults the opportunity to get involved in various art taster sessions to encourage people to explore their creative side and improve wellbeing! It is known that quality of life can be enhanced by taking part in cultural and creative activities locally. Workshops were held Cahersiveen Library during May and June. These included Printmaking with Darragh Kinch and Wool Felt making with Fiona Ladden.

In addition to the workshops being held in the library, taster sessions were also ran with groups including Cahersiveen Men's Shed, Glencar Community Social Group, Cahersiveen Active Retired and Cahersiveen Social Services. These workshops include Pottery, Drama, Felting/Textiles and Writing/Reminiscence.

ACORN Tablets

July 22nd 2024 saw the launch of a new Acorn tablet lending service from Kerry Library. The tablets aim to help bridge the digital divide by providing age-friendly, easy-to-use technology. This service is being provided under the Kerry County Council Age Friendly Programme. Acorn is an age friendly smart tablet that has been designed with and tested by older adults. The Acorn design principles are based around easy navigation and accessibility. Optimum screen size, colour-coding, uncluttered screens, a consistent navigation system, larger fonts and zoom function help build fast familiarity to create a tablet that can be used by any level of experience. Acorn tablets are now available for lending from all libraries in Kerry and the service is available free of charge to registered library members. A tablet can be borrowed for a two-month loan period and each tablet comes with a set-up guide. On return, each tablet will be wiped clean of all personal data and prepared for lending again.

Older Drivers' Road Safety Conference

Kerry County Council, Age Friendly Kerry and the Older People's Council Kerry, in association with An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority hosted the 'Older Drivers' Road Safety Conference in the Rose Hotel, Tralee on Tuesday, 8th October 2024. The free event was well attended by older people from all parts of Kerry. Driving a vehicle represents freedom and independence and helps older people to feel more confident and in control of their lives. It gives independence and allows key social interactions within their community. The purpose of the conference was to provide older drivers with an insight into continuing to drive and staying safe on the road.

Active Ageing Festival Event

Active Ageing Festival Event took place on Friday 15th March at the Kerry Sports Academy Tralee. Kerry Recreation and Sports Partnership work together with MTU Health and Leisure Department. staff and students to coordinate and deliver this popular event. This was the third year running this event and each year it has been fully booked with older adult participants (150). The event aims to get people active, showcase some of the activities available for older adults to take part in locally, introduce new sports or activities, information stands and has a strong social element to it.

National Age Friendly Awards.

Kerry secured one of 30 Finalist places out of over 176 entries. The title of the project was: Halloween Safety Door Hanger Initiative An Garda Síochána - Tralee Community Policing Unit. The project involved the distribution of door hangers throughout Tralee to indicate whether or not they want trick-treaters to call to their homes. Red doorhangers hanging outside indicated that the house does not want trick-treaters to call to their homes while a green doorhanger indicated they are welcome. The project was the overall winner in the category Age Friendly Safety & Security Award.

National Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme

The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme is a support service designed to enable older people continue living in their homes and to avoid the early or premature admission into long term residential care. The programme comes from an agreement between Department of Health, Department of Housing and Age Friendly Ireland. The Staff and administration are funded by Slainte Care and it is a free service for over 65s.

Older Peoples Council.

The Older Peoples Council met 5 times during 2024

Kerry Age Friendly Steering Group Meeting

The Steering Group met once in 2024. In addition, Age Friendly was represented at a number of local events throughout Co Kerry during 2024.

The Kerry Public Participation Network (PPN)

Kerry Public Participation Network (Kerry PPN) is an independent umbrella network of community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups active within the county.) Established under the Local Government (Reform) Act 2014, Public Participation Networks (PPNs) are the main link through which the Local Authority connects with these groups. Kerry PPN give members a greater say in local government decisions which affect their own

communities – through the five Strategic Policy Committees, Local Community Development Committee and the soon to be formed Local Community Safety Partnerships.

Kerry PPN is governed by the Secretariat, a voluntary board elected from the Kerry PPN membership whose responsibility is to oversee the development of the network and ensure that the objectives of the network are carried out. The Secretariat are supported by one full time Development Officer and a Support Worker who manage the day-to-day running of the PPN.

Funding for Kerry PPN is provided by both the Department of Rural and Community Development and by Kerry County Council through an annual allocation. The PPN in Kerry is hosted by Kerry County Council.

The focus of Kerry PPN's work in 2024 was on:

- Developing the newly formed Disability Linkage Group, with the aim to empower member groups to advocate for positive change and create a brighter future for those with disabilities in our community.
- Continuing the work of the Environmental Linkage group to input into Kerry County Council policy regarding Tree & Hedgerows, Pesticide, Herbicide and Fungicide use and the provision of allotments and community gardens.
- The provision of capacity building training for member groups. Free training was provided to community groups in the areas of project planning and the managing and maintaining of community documents for governance and funding.
- Facilitating member groups to input into various public consultations held by Kerry County Council in 2024.
- Electing representatives to the 5 newly formed Strategic Policy Groups (SPCs) and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) following the local elections in June 2024.
- Promoting the work of the PPN and the benefits of membership to community groups by hosting information roadshows in each municipal district.
- Supporting information sharing for member groups through the creation of the weekly community newsletter and sharing it to an audience of 2,000+ contacts.
- The Kerry Community Awards (KCA) 2024, with Kerry PPN providing the administration, organisation and event planning for the awards ceremony and supporting the KCA selection committee.

Healthy Ireland

Healthy Kerry is a project of the LCDC, supported by the Community, Arts and Culture unit and is funded by the Healthy Ireland Fund (HIF). The funding secured through the HIF is being used to fund the Health and Wellbeing Officer/Healthy Kerry Co-Ordinator position in Kerry County Council.

It is a key objective in the LECP to ‘develop healthy towns and communities.’ Healthy Kerry provides a platform for cross-sectoral interagency work and seeks to tackle health inequalities, which has resulted in the development of Kerry’s first ‘Healthy Kerry Framework’.

Healthy Kerry Framework

The Healthy Kerry Framework (2021-2027) was developed in 2021 to support the implementation of the national Healthy Ireland Framework and campaigns in response to the needs of the local community over the next few years. Echoing the national Framework, the vision of the Healthy Kerry Framework is that everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential in a county where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society.

A working group of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), called the Healthy Kerry committee, prepared this inaugural framework to guide the delivery of health and wellbeing projects and actions over the life of the plan. Three aspects were agreed to be prioritised for a Healthy Kerry. These include building healthy communities, promoting wellbeing in the workplace (including remote working) and supporting the implementation of national and local policies and plans in Kerry.

Initiatives identified under this plan will ensure the promotion of wellbeing initiatives which will result in developing healthy towns and communities across the county. Funding will be leveraged under the Healthy Ireland programme to deliver the actions agreed in the Healthy Kerry Framework which are consistent with actions in the LECP. Through the Healthy Ireland Fund, Kerry LCDC has successfully implemented a number of collaborative local programmes and projects to support the national Healthy Ireland Framework and campaigns. A number of these projects are detailed below.

The Rural Men’s Outreach Project was piloted initially in South Kerry by SKDP. Through collaboration with NEWKD in 2024, this project is now offered countywide. The Rural Men’s Outreach Project provides outreach support to rural men who are feeling isolated, lonely and at the risk of or experiencing mental health issues. The role of the Rural Men’s Outreach Officers is to contact men living in rural parts of Kerry to discuss with them the best way forward to address their mental health issues and to tackle the isolation and social exclusion they experience.

With support from the Healthy Ireland Fund, the Kerry Mental Health and Wellbeing Fest is held every year to highlight World Mental Health Day on 10th October. The organising committee is a collaboration between the HSE Mental Health Services, Connecting for Life Kerry, Healthy Kerry, Kerry County Council, NEWKD, SKDP, Kerry Mental Health Association, Jigsaw Kerry, Munster Technological University (MTU), MTU Students’ Union, Kerry Library, National Learning Network, Kerry Volunteer Centre, HSE Health Promotion and Improvement, Maine Valley Family Resource Centre, Kerry Community Youth Service and the Kerry Recreation and Sports Partnership.

In line with the ethos of the Healthy Kerry Framework, Healthy Kerry, Kerry Library and Kerry Recreation and Sports Partnership put together an exciting suite of free play events for children throughout the county to celebrate National Play Day. With funding secured from the

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, a series of free events were held at Kerry Library from Saturday, 13th July to Saturday, 20th July 2024. In total, 13 events were held across all 6 Kerry County libraries - situated in Caherciveen, Killarney, Listowel, Killorglin, Tralee, and Castleisland. Across the week, a total of 355 children attended these events. Keeping with the National Play Day theme of 'Time to Play!', children were invited to engage in free play events and workshops including LEGO, sensory construction playtime, STEM Toys playtime and Irish myths and legends themed arts and crafts. To further develop the concept of 'Time to Play!', Kerry Library will utilise and safeguard the play equipment purchased to host regular playtime events throughout the year.

Playground Passport

The playground passport a convenient, pocket-sized guide to all the playgrounds in Kerry was developed in 2024 with funding from Healthy Ireland. The passport includes activities and games for children to play while they explore the playgrounds across the county. The passport will be distributed through the primary school network in Spring 2025 and is available in English, Irish and Ukrainian.

Local Community Safety Partnerships

The new Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 provides for the establishment of Local Community Safety Partnerships. A whole of government approach aims to bring together the relevant social services providers and the Gardaí to work together with the community and local business leaders in Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs) so that they can focus on the matters of concern identified by the local community which they are operating in.

Kerry Community Awards

The objective of the Kerry Community Awards is to recognise work of the community and voluntary sector that has already been undertaken and/or continues to be undertaken to seek to improve the Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental quality of life in our local communities, both urban and rural.

The Kerry Community Awards recognises good practice models of community projects already implemented. The Annual Kerry Community Awards Ceremony took place in September 2024. Cúnamh Iveragh CLG were the overall winners at the event. Based in Cahersiveen, the group supports children and young adults with intellectual disabilities, as well as their families, providing care in a comfortable setting.

2024 National Pride of Place Awards

2024 was the All-island Pride of Place Awards Competition 22nd year. The focus of Pride of Place is on people coming together to change and improve daily lives in their communities. Local authorities across the 32 counties are invited to nominate entries on an annual basis. Kerry County Council's entries to Pride of Place for 2024 were as follows:

- Coiste Forbartha na Sceilge
- Dingle Hub
- Knocknagoshel Community Centre

Coiste Forbartha na Sceilge were runners up in the “Populations of 300 - 1000” category for their dedication to enhance the quality of life for locals and visitors alike to ensure Ballinskelligs continues to flourish as a vibrant, caring and inclusive community.

Kerry Comhairle na nÓg – Youth Council

Comhairle na nÓg child and youth councils operate in each of the 31 Local Authority areas across Ireland. Funded and managed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the councils enable young people aged 12-17 to exercise their right in influencing decision-makers on the topics most important to them. The Comhairle na nÓg Steering Group in Co. Kerry is managed by the Community Department. Strengthening the links with schools at county level is one of the key areas that the Comhairle in Kerry wishes to develop further.

2024 has been a productive and impactful year for Kerry Comhairle na nÓg, with members actively engaging in initiatives at both local and national levels. Their dedication to the year’s theme, School and Exam Stress, and other projects has been outstanding.

National Consultations

During 2024 Comhairle members took part in a number of national consultations, with one member selected to represent Kerry on the National Youth Assembly of Ireland.

Members also represented their peers at Dáil na nÓg, the Child Poverty and Well-being Programme Office Youth Advisory Group and the National Stakeholder Forum on Education for Sustainable Development to name a few.

Kerry Comhairle na nÓg Strategy 2024

Kerry Comhairle na nÓg prepared a Strategy for 2024 setting out the Vision, mission and objectives of the Comhairle for 2024. The mission of Comhairle is to get the youth voice heard and involved in decisions that impact on their lives and futures. Through proactive engagement they plan to enact positive change.

Comhairle Na nÓg Conference

The Annual Comhairle na nÓg Conference took place in the Rose Hotel, Tralee on the 22nd October 2024. More than 140 young people gathered for the event which was opened by the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Breandán McGearailt. Following round table discussion of various topics, the topic of Mental Health was chosen by the students as the principal topic for consideration by Comhairle in 2025.

Launch of Comhairle na nÓg website

The Department of Children, Equality, disability, Integration and Youth (DECDIY) launched the Rebrand of Comhairle na nÓg on Tuesday the 10th of September. The Comhairle na nÓg brand has been redesigned from the ground up, with new exciting and elegant branding, accompanied by an inviting website. The new website has been designed with three main users in mind.

- Comhairle na nÓg members,
- Young people interested in joining Comhairle

- Policy makers who are keen to include children and young people in the decision making process.

Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership (KRSP)

The Kerry Recreation and Sports Partnership is a sub-committee of the LCDC in Kerry and is a key lead in the delivery of a number of actions in the LECP, in particular those that aim to increase participation levels in sport and physical activity in the county.

The Local Sports Partnership works with relevant partner organisations and NGB's to coordinate sport programmes, events and initiatives to increase participation levels in sport and physical activities across the five municipal districts of Kerry. It supports clubs and communities to target increased participation, in conjunction with key partners, with an emphasis on low participation groups. KRSP also coordinates the involvement of schools to take part in programmes and events that strengthen school-club links and provide school children with opportunities to access and enjoy new sports.

In 2024, Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership received various funding opportunities from Sport Ireland and other agencies they collaborate with amounting to €243,052.50.

| Funding Stream | Funding Details | Total allocation |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Sport Ireland - Dormant Account Fund 2024 | Tralee Community Sports Hub (Phase 5) | €20,000.00 |
| | Equality, Diversity & Inclusion | €30,000.00 |
| | HER Moves | €6,000.00 |
| Sport Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport, Media, and Gaeltacht (DTACSMG), | Participation Nation Funding Scheme | €123,750.00 |
| | Amuigh Faoin Speir Funding Scheme (Biodiversity) | €41,250.00 |
| Age & Opportunity | Active National Grant Scheme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People | €500.00 |
| HSE | HSE Funding 2024 | €21,552.50 |
| TOTAL | | €243,052.50 |

Sports Club Grants 2024

Kerry sports clubs were invited to apply for grants of up to €5,000 per club under a new funding scheme by Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership. The aims of the Partnership included increasing participation in sport and physical activity, improving the quality of coaching and training and supporting volunteers in sport. Through funding from Sport Ireland, the Sports Club Grant 2024 aimed to assist new and existing clubs to create structures which achieve long-term development and offer benefits to the club. A total allocation of €207,565 was made under this fund with 135 clubs receiving funding.

Economic Development and Tourism Unit

The Economic Development and Tourism Unit (ED&TU) plays a pivotal role in positioning County Kerry as a destination for both economic growth and tourism. Our mission is to foster a dynamic and supportive environment that drives job creation, supports sustainable economic

development, and promotes a diversified tourism industry. The Unit serves as a key liaison between local businesses and business support agencies, driving impactful partnerships and collaborations across sectors.

Throughout 2024, the Kerry County Council's ED&TU maintained strong relationships with state agencies, including IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, and Údarás na Gaeltachta, as well as the education sector, to effectively coordinate the county's economic development and tourism promotion. The Council continued to initiate and cultivate projects and partnerships within local communities to enhance the quality of life in towns and villages across the county, making them more attractive for visitors, residents, businesses, and investors alike. The Unit's work also focused on supporting new tourism initiatives, expanding both new and existing tourism infrastructure, and collaborating with local communities and the tourism sector to elevate the Kerry visitor experience.

The work programme for 2024 included the following:

Kerry Local Economic and Community Plan

The Economic Development and Tourism Unit continued to implement the current LECP 2016-2022, which is reflected programme of activity for 2024. In parallel, significant progress was made in the development of the next iteration of the LECP 2024-2029.

The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant Local Authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

Significant consultation of the draft LECP took place throughout 2024, involving engagement with communities, businesses, Government Departments and Agencies as well as Elected Members and the Southern Regional Assembly. It is expected that this 6-year strategic plan for Kerry will be adopted in H1 2025.

Marketing and Promotion of Kerry as a place to work, live, study and visit.

A priority for the Economic Development and Tourism Unit remains to work collaboratively to market and promote the county as a place to work, live, invest and visit. The official launch of the new Kerry Brand and Discover Kerry website/platform took place in January 2024 and was accompanied by an integrated, multi-channel marketing campaign. The goal of the new Discover Kerry brand is to position the county as a vibrant, innovative, and attractive place to live, work, and visit. By broadening the county's narrative and showcasing its diverse economic strengths, the initiative seeks to transform perceptions of Kerry—not only as a holiday destination but as a place with abundant opportunities, a high quality of life, and a connected, supportive community.

The Discover Kerry campaign has fostered a renewed sense of community pride and collective identity. By involving a broad range of stakeholders—from small business owners to educational institutions, local government, and tourism bodies—the project has created a platform for collaboration. I

It is a location to showcase the range of enterprise and entrepreneurship in the county, with regular content developed to tell business success stories, highlight funding opportunities and events, with links to company pages on the website. There is a steady growth in national and international followers and engagement through platforms such as LinkedIn.

The Live pillar of the platform focuses on the lifestyle benefits that come with living in Kerry—its stunning natural beauty, vibrant local communities, and relaxed pace of life.

Opportunities for investment

In 2024, the Economic Development and Tourism Unit continued to work with stakeholders such as IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, the Tech Industry Alliance, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs and Munster Technological University to promote Kerry as a place to work, live, visit and to facilitate opportunities for investment and to position Kerry as a location for business, including “second sites”.

Kerry County Council actively engaged with the international diaspora during 2024 to raise the profile of Kerry, to foster relationships and to promote Kerry as a place to invest and do business and share knowledge.

Western Mass & Dingle Peninsula Economic Development & Tourism Development - May 2024

An economic development and tourism event took place in the Blasket Centre on Friday, 3rd of May. This was an important event exploring opportunities for cooperation between Kerry and Western Massachusetts, USA, and for furthering the strong linkages that exist with the Dingle Peninsula.

The visiting delegation included Will Reichelt, Mayor of West Springfield City, Rick Sullivan President & CEO Economic Development Council of Western MA, as well as representatives from the tourism bodies and chambers of commerce.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Springfield Museum and the Office of Public Works (Ionad an Bhlascaoid - The Blasket Centre) in Dingle to showcase artifacts that represent the historic connection between Western Massachusetts and County Kerry.

The Big E - Springfield, USA - September 2024

A delegation from Kerry County Council attended the Eastern States Exhibition (‘Big E’ Fair) in Springfield Massachusetts in September, along with representatives from Údarás na Gaeltachta and members of the Irish Consulate in Boston.

Businesses in Kerry, particularly those in West Kerry have been regular attendees at the The Big E Exposition, in Springfield, USA the largest state fair event on the East Coast of the US, and the 7th largest Fair in the US, displaying their products and promoting Kerry as a destination to visit.

Kerry County Council hosted a networking breakfast briefing which was attended by over 70 businesses and Chamber representatives from the Massachusetts area including member companies from the Western Mass Economic Development Council in sectors such as food, manufacturing, aerospace and tourism.

The event provided an opportunity to deepen existing partnerships and to form new links between Kerry, West Springfield and the State of Massachusetts and to promote Kerry as a destination for investment, business and tourism.

The delegation also attended an official reception with Congressman Richard Neal to discuss further linkages and opportunities between Kerry and Springfield.

Joining the Dots - Aberdeen

‘Joining the Dots’ is a programme that promotes economic development in UK and Irish regions through the sharing of best practices by local policy experts. The aim being to identify common challenges, and then explore solutions and opportunities for growth. Beginning in 2018 the event has been hosted in over 10 different locations throughout the UK and Ireland. In 2024, 20 local authorities from Ireland and the UK gathered in Aberdeen to discuss the important topic of ‘The Future of City Centres’ and how relevant strategies can be applied to enhance the economic, and cultural development of cities and regions. Kerry County Council presented in the session on Participative and Integrated Urban Regeneration – Showcasing the regeneration of Tralee as an example of good practice.

US State Legislators

Kerry County Council were delighted to host a visit from the US National Council of State Legislators in Killarney House on in September 2024.

The NCSL are the parent body of US State Legislators and Legislative Staff, numbering some of the most influential decision makers in State Assemblies across America. Organised in 1975, the membership consists of state legislators and legislative staff in America’s states, commonwealths and territories.

Over the past number of years, the NCSL have visited Ireland but 2024 was the first time that the group, numbering 25, visited Kerry.

As part of the visit, the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Breandán MacGearailt, elected members and staff of Kerry County Council met with the group in Killarney House and made a number of presentations to them in relation to economic development and the tourism in Kerry. Representatives from the MTU and Kerry Group also attended and gave presentations on their specialist fields.

Global Economic Summit 2024

The inaugural Global Economic Summit was held at the Europe Hotel, Killarney from May 20th to 22nd 2024. The conference saw 400 daily delegates, engaging with pressing issues from climate to technology. By bringing together the strategic agenda, visionary attendees, Kerry's unparalleled setting, and genuine engagement opportunities, the Global Economic Summit in Kerry was more than just a meeting of minds. In May 2024, Kerry became the heart of global economic discourse.

International Delegations / Business & Tourism Promotion Events: The conference featured a host of high-profile keynote speakers both international and domestic including H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco; Yulia Tymoshenko, Former Prime Minister, Ukraine; Tedros Adhanom

Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organisation; Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York.

Great Lighthouses of Ireland Partners Gathering and Networking Event Valentia Island, Co Kerry.

In October, the Great Lighthouses of Ireland (GLI) convened their annual three-day networking event on Valentia Island. Established in 2015, the Great Lighthouses of Ireland initiative aim was to celebrate Irish Maritime Heritage and while promoting sustainable tourism and community development across the country. This is a collaborate effort involving public, private and community stakeholders all committed to developing and delivering high exceptional visitor experience. Over the last few years this initiative has evolved into a significant contributor to tourism, heritage and cultural appreciation.

Kerry County Council supported the event, which was officially opened by chairperson, Bobby Kerr. Key speakers included Irish Lights CEO, Yvonne Shields, Tourism Ireland Content & Brand Manager, Jenny Jensma and Dublin Port Heritage Director, Lar Joye.

Kerry Ambassador Programme

The Kerry Ambassador Programme was created for community and industry leaders who are interested in supporting the county by influencing and attracting business events and investment opportunities to Kerry. The programme was launched in October 2022 with an invited group of highly regarded individuals who are leaders in their field being formally inducted as founding Kerry Ambassadors.

The initiative provides a platform for Kerry Ambassadors and programme partners to work together in pursuit of a common goal – to advocate for Kerry and to contribute to Kerry’s ongoing economic growth and recovery, by placing Kerry on the national and international stage as a premier business events destination AND a place to do business.

Since its launch in October 2022, the programme has generated/supported 13 confirmed business event opportunities for the county worth an estimated €2.9m to the economy. These include the Global Economic Summit that took place in Killarney in May 2024, the Ce4RT Regenerative Tourism Conference that took place in Dingle in November 2024 and International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity (ISAPA) taking place in Tralee in June 2025.

With a range of other event opportunities in the pipeline, the Kerry Convention Bureau is working closely with Kerry County Council to develop and progress the programme.

Southwest Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

Throughout 2024, the Council has provided strategic input to the current Regional Enterprise Plan and ensured actions are aligned with the LECP deliverables. A Regional Enterprise Steering Group oversees the implementation of the Plan. There are 7 Working Groups supporting the 6 Strategic Objectives. Kerry County Council is represented in all 6 working groups and chairs two of the groups in Clustering and Food Production and Agri-Tech. An example of some of the high-level achievements include:

- A Clusters Managers Forum has been set up and all Clusters in the Southwest Region are engaged and driving forward with collaborations on projects into 2025.
- Cork and Kerry Hubs Networks have been successfully established and are working collaboratively on events and projects into 2024 and 2025.
- The Space Industry Cluster feasibility study has been completed and the REISS supported Re-Create Shandon Hub feasibility report has also been completed with governance in place.
- Munster Animation Forum has completed a feasibility study mapping a path for progress towards a Munster Animation Cluster with a shared strategy and vision for the sector.
- The iEd Hub is a new HCI funded collaborative initiative involving UCC, MTU and industry stakeholders providing training for unmet industry needs through a range of new post graduate courses.

Following a decision by the Minister in April 2024, implementation of the Southwest Regional Enterprise Plan will now extend into late 2025 and the regional Steering Committee will oversee the final stages of implementation of the Strategic Objectives of the Plan as well as developing a new Regional Enterprise Plan for the region, including new objectives and actions to be launched in Q1 2026.

Kerry Month of Enterprise

Kerry County Council supported the Kerry Month of Enterprise during the month of March 2024. The series of events held over the month gives established businesses and budding entrepreneurs an opportunity to network and discover the assistance available to them in growing and sustaining a business in Kerry. The Kerry Month of Enterprise is a collaborative initiative between Munster Technological University, Kerry County Council, Kerry Local Enterprise Office, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Udarás na Gaeltachta, Kerry Innovation Centre, North, East & West Kerry Development (NEWKD), South Kerry Partnership Development (SKDP), and IRD Duhallow.

Cantillon Conference 2024

The Cantillon Conference, which is organised by Munster Technological University and supported by Kerry County Council, took place on the 7th of March 2024. In a rapidly changing global landscape, Cantillon 2024 highlighted the importance of the need for transformation across sectors from technology and energy to healthcare and manufacturing. The conference serves as a nexus for industry leaders, policymakers, scholars, and innovators to collectively address challenges and strategically plan for a sustainable future.

Tech Industry Alliance

Kerry County Council is supportive of the development of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) sector in Kerry and works in partnership with Tech Industry Alliance (formerly Kerry SciTech). Tech Industry Alliance (TIA) is a merger of KerrySciTech with the Cork based cluster it@Cork to become a technology cluster of over 250 companies serving the Southwest of Ireland.

The Tech Industry Alliance Leaders' Awards took place on the 29th November at the Great Southern Hotel, Killarney. This is the first time the event has taken place in Kerry. For 17 years the awards have celebrated the success of the South West's thriving tech sector. Leaders Awards recognise the innovative use of technology in various organisations and businesses throughout the Southwest region of Ireland. There were a number of successful Kerry-based companies on the night including Stingray Labs / Beam, Aspen Grove Solutions, Enercon and BioAtlantis. In addition, Coláiste Gleann Lú, Tralee was crowned winner of the Excellence in Education Award.

Enterprise and Innovation Hubs

The success of remote working, combined with high-speed internet access, has significantly contributed to the return of many individuals to Ireland, as well as the decision by new workers to make Kerry their home. Enterprise and Innovation Hubs are at the heart of entrepreneurship, offering a wide range of programs and supports to foster the growth of start-up and scale-up businesses. Kerry is uniquely positioned to capitalise on these hubs, unlocking the full potential of individuals eager to live and work in the county. The strong presence of STEM and digital sectors, alongside the growing remote working community through the Connected Kerry Hub Network, creates a powerful synergy. Coupled with Kerry's attractive lifestyle and lower cost of living, it forms an exceptional environment for talent to thrive.

In this context, the Council remains committed to supporting several Enterprise and Innovation Hubs throughout the county, including the RDI Hub, Dingle Hub, Sneem Digital Hub, Kerry Food Hub, Listowel Food Hub, and the Castleisland Carnegie Co-working Space. These hubs play a crucial role in driving innovation, supporting local businesses, and positioning Kerry as a prime destination for entrepreneurs and remote workers.

Under the Town & Village grant funding programme supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development, a marketing campaign focussed on the benefits and advantages to remote working in Kerry was launched in collaboration with Discover Kerry in 2024. It included the development of marketing material including professional video and photography content. The promotion of these hubs and the role they play in providing high quality enterprise space will be key to the marketing campaign and the videos were used as part of a print and digital asset marketing campaign across local airports and independent.ie.

[Insert image of billboard in Cork]

Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation (Skellig CRI)

The Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation (Skellig CRI) is a key partner in Uíbh Ráthaigh Taskforce. The Centre is based locally in Cahersiveen Library and facilitates the delivery of higher education programmes, research, and practice locally in the Skellig Coast region. Research support and resources are established within the Centre and harnessed in conjunction with the local community. Skellig CRI offers a range of part-time adult education programmes.

Film and Festival Development

Film and festival development are an integral part of the Council's economic, and tourism offering and afford an opportunity for local people to promote their areas and attract increased

visitors and revenue into their community. Community Groups, Chambers and Tourism Alliances around the county make a great contribution to Kerry tourism by organising festivals and events that showcase culture, people, and places. In 2024, the ED&TU unit continued to support the county's wide range of festivals and events with mentoring and workshops for festival providers and marketing and promotion supports (e.g. events calendar and social media). Upwards of 35 Festivals and events were supported throughout the County.

Kerry County Council also assisted in the development of off-peak festivals to extend the tourism season and encourage visitor growth throughout the year.

Global Irish Festivals Series Scheme 2023/2024

In 2023, Kerry County Council secured funding from Fáilte Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs, as part of the Global Irish Festival Series 2023 -2024 to deliver a diaspora focused festival in October 2024.

Kerry County Council established a steering group which included representatives of the Irish Hotels Federation, Kerry Convention Bureau, Kerry Tourism Industry Federation, Fáilte Ireland along with other key KCC staff to oversee the festival delivery. The Kerry Homecoming Festival, which aimed to encourage Kerry's diaspora to return home at Halloween, took place from 18th October to 1st November 2024.

The diverse festival programme featured close to fifty free events, blending Samhain traditions customs with modern day events. The fabled Cailleach featured as the centrepiece of the Samhain street spectacles held in Listowel, Tralee, Dingle and Kenmare. The broad range of activities held during the festival included storytelling events, Jack-o-Lantern carving workshops, stargazing, genealogy workshops, heritage talks as well as an American Wake which was held at Kerry Writers Museum and the Global Gaelic Games Social Festival held in Fitzgerald stadium. The programme also included established local seasonal events such as the Patrick O'Keeffe Music Festival, Kerry International Film Festival, Oireachtas na Samhna, Tralee's National Circus Festival, and the Tralee Half Marathon. More than 36,000 people attended Kerry Homecoming Festival events across the county, including 5,000 overseas visitors who came to Kerry to join in the celebrations.

Féile Thrá Lí

Kerry County Council presented and hosted Féile Thrá Lí from the 16th of August to the 21st of August. Over the past two years, Kerry County Council has developed a new street and family festival to cater for all tastes and to complement the core activities which form part of the Rose of Tralee International Festival. The Council has invested significantly in a varied and engaging programme and has worked with the Féile Thrá Lí Committee, Tralee Vintners, Tralee Chamber Alliance, local businesses, the gardai and other partners to ensure the festival was a great success.

The Rose of Tralee Festival remains the centrepiece of the Kerry summer and remains a key driver of the tourist industry here and in the greater southwest region. The event attracts visitors from across the globe.

This year Kerry welcomed the Rose Tour, the tour showcased key county highlights including the Kerry Cliffs in Portmagee, Molls Gap in Killarney, The Blasket Centre & Sleah Head on the Dingle Peninsula and the Kingdom of Kerry Greenways.

Kingdom of Kerry Greenways

The Kingdom of Kerry Greenways continue to be a key asset for both the community and tourism, with strong marketing efforts in 2024 aimed at raising awareness and attracting visitors to these scenic routes. The Tralee-Fenit and Listowel to Limerick Greenways, which opened in October 2022, are central to promoting North Kerry to both domestic and international tourists.

With support from a professional marketing agency, Kerry County Council continued its promotional efforts in 2024, focusing on the creation of digital assets, media trips, key press releases, and targeted campaigns to enhance visibility. These activities included collaborating with influencers, and leveraging media opportunities to reach both domestic and international audiences. These efforts have been supported by funding under the Outdoor Recreation & Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), similar to the funding received in 2022/23, enabling continued promotion and enhancement of the Greenways.

As part of this ongoing initiative, Kerry County Council invested in new infrastructure to improve the user experience on the Greenways, including the installation of additional seating, bike parking, and repair facilities.

The Kingdom of Kerry Greenways continue to offer a unique opportunity to explore and enjoy the stunning landscapes of Kerry, while also contributing to the local community and economy.

Kerry Dark Sky Reserve

The Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve is only one of three Gold Tier Dark Sky Reserves on Earth such is the pristine quality of its night skies. The reserve extends to over 700 sq km in the Skellig/ West Iveragh region on the Wild Atlantic Way and there are plans to extend it further. Astro-tourism is a growing niche market within international tourism with an increasing number of tourists interested in experiencing nature-rich destinations that experience less light pollution allowing them to appreciate the night sky. Kerry County Council, manage the data associated with the live sky quality meters

The following events were supported in 2024 via Kerry County Councils Community Support Fund and Fáilte Ireland's Festivals and Events Funding:

- The Skellig Coast Dark Sky Festival which blends the arts and culture with dark skies
- The 'Bop ar an Trá' which blends the use of the Irish language with dancing and star gazing.

Four Edges of Ireland Project

Kerry County Council is working on a collaborative initiative with partner Councils: Cork County, Donegal and Ards North Down Borough Council. This included a feasibility study assessing the potential of the "Four Edges" as a new tourism initiative.

The project aims to enhance and cross promote the island's four extreme geographic points to create joined-up sustainable tourism experiences to attract additional visitor footfall, stays and spend. The points are:

- Banba's Crown, Malin Head, Co. Donegal (north)
- Brow Head, Co. Cork (south)
- Burr Point, Ards Peninsula, County Down (east)
- An Dún Mór/Dunmore Head, County Kerry (west)

The project will be progressed in 2025 across all partners.

Destination Town Tralee

Kerry County Council, in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, has installed new bespoke bilingual wayfinding signage at thirty-five locations around Tralee town park and town centre. This project is part of the Destination Town Programme and aims to enhance the visitor experience by providing directional, informational, and interpretive signage to make Tralee more accessible for visitors.

The signs refer to Tralee's historical, natural, and cultural sites and include QR codes for digital trails and audio guides, as well as NaviLens codes for visually impaired visitors. The project also involved enhancement to key pedestrian entrances and linkages in Tralee Town Park and will involve installation of public lighting on the Neill Armstrong Way.

Adventure Activity Tourism

The Adventure Activity tourism sector has huge potential countywide in Kerry with numerous opportunities for hiking, walking, biking kayaking, surfing, and other outdoor water-based activities. The significant increase in year-round outdoor activities is expected to grow year on year.

Kerry County Council is liaising with Fáilte Ireland in relation to the Platforms for Growth on developing shared beach facilities for water sport activities at Fenit, Ballybunion and Maharabeg to enhance the visitor experience. They will include all weather changing rooms, hot showers, secure storage, equipment cleaning and toilet facilities and will be fully accessible.

Adventure Tourism Conference 2024

Ireland's Association for Adventure Tourism (IAAT) held its Annual Conference in Kerry for the first time in November, with the support of Kerry County Council. IAAT is the independent representative association for the adventure tourism sector on the island of Ireland. This sector is one of the fastest growing and most exciting within Irish tourism and the IAAT aims to work with adventure tourism operators to develop the sector in a sustainable and responsible manner. IAAT is partnered with the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC), the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance (NITA), Fáilte Ireland, FareHarbor, Tourism Northern Ireland, the Sustainable Tourism Network, the European Confederation of Outdoor Employers (EC-OE) and the European Platform for Sport Innovation (EPSI).

(Photo link in comment)

Bray Head Discovery Point, Valentia Island

Plans are progressing with Fáilte Ireland to improve the visitor facilities at the Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Point at Bray Head, Valentia Island. In 2023 Fáilte Ireland approved indicative capital funding of €1.9 million for the upgrade of Bray Head Tower and Viewing Point on Valentia Island, which will include the stabilisation and conservation of the existing Signal Tower which dates from 1803 and enhanced visitor experiences at Bray Head. The works to stabilise and conserve the existing Signal Tower building will result in the provision of a new roof top viewing platform which will afford stunning views of the Skellig Islands and surrounding landscape. Bray Head is the closest land point to Skellig Michael and has dramatic sea views. It is one of 188 current Discovery Points along the Wild Atlantic Way.

Valentia Transatlantic Cable Ensemble

A delegation from Newfoundland, Canada visited Valentia Island in June, led by Mr. Steve Crocker, the Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture. Representatives from the Municipalities of Newfoundland and Labrador were also part of the delegation. Officials from Kerry County Council, the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage representatives from Valentia Island Development Company and the Transatlantic Cable Foundation joined the delegation. The main purpose of their visit was to discuss the UNESCO World Heritage application for the Transatlantic Cable Project. The Department has appointed a World Heritage expert to assist in guiding the Transatlantic Cable Ensemble towards UNESCO World Heritage nomination.

Destination Experience Development Plans/ Visitor Experience Development Plans

All 5 areas on the Kerry section of the Wild Atlantic Way touring route now have the Visitor/Destination Experience Development Plans either completed or underway. These are five-year sustainable tourism development plans for a region and are prepared collaboratively by Fáilte Ireland in conjunction with Kerry County Council, other agencies and with the local tourism trade and communities. The key aims of the DEDP/VEDPs are to grow the visitor economy to create sustainable, high-quality jobs in the sector, that will support and strengthen local communities year-round, while protecting the natural environment.

The Skellig Coast VEDP was the national pilot project and the first to be completed. The Dingle Peninsula/ Corca Dhuibhne, Killarney and West Cork/Kenmare plans are underway. The Cliff Coast DEDP (CCDEDP) was launched in February 2025.

The DEDP/VEDPs also inform the Kerry County Council's Tourism Strategy, Local Area Plans, the Local Economic and Community Plan, the County Development Plan and inform funding applications.

Kerry Library: 2024 review

Kerry County Council operates 9 full time branch libraries - at Ballybunion, Caherciveen, Castleisland, Dingle/Daingean Uí Chúis, Kenmare, Killorglin, Killarney, Listowel and Tralee; a two vehicle Mobile Library service and a local history and archives facility that operates from Library Headquarters at Tralee. The adult and children's book lending service is supplemented with a wide range of online resources.

Library provision is underpinned by The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration 2023-2027, the five-year libraries national strategy designed to develop and

strengthen the public library network. Together with the Kerry Library Development Plan 2024 – 2028 it supports ongoing government and local authority investment in library infrastructure, programmes, technology and services.

Book lending continues to be the core element of the library service with children's books and general adult fiction titles most in demand. The range of additional services provided includes free internet and WiFi, facilitation of book clubs, book loans and classroom novels to schools, children's reading & storytime, language learning and conversation sessions, sensory materials, adult literacy support, local history, online and hardcopy newspapers and magazines, exhibitions and music instrument lending. The growth of book clubs has been significant. Kerry Library holds a Book Club Collection comprising of over 70 titles and Book clubs avail of this service countywide - eBook or audiobook options are also available.

Kerry libraries support communities countywide and provide a public meeting place for people from all generations, demographic groups and backgrounds. This demand for meeting, study and social spaces is reflected in the 8% increase in the number of individual visits to the Kerry branch and mobile libraries during 2024 – 428,343 individual visits were recorded.

Library members from outside the county also avail of Kerry library services; book lending is available to library members who are not Kerry residents; a range of family history and genealogy sources are provided and libraries provide local and practical information on the many and varied enquiries that they get from visitors to the county.

Digital systems

Libraries enable the provision of up-to-date technology to support the availability of information at each of the nine libraries. During 2024 DoEHLG funding facilitated the installation of new computers for public usage. A new self-service printing, photocopying and scanning system is now provided, representing a significant enhancement of services to the public.

Online services now constitute a mainstream part of the library offering. The library website www.kerrylibrary.ie facilitates free member access to e-books, e-audio books, e-newspapers, e-language courses, e-magazines and e-training. All libraries provide free internet and WiFi while Kerry library has a very active social media presence. Online demonstrations of resources available for primary school teachers took place during the year. A partnership between Kerry ETB and Kerry Library enabled Digital Skills Supports Hubs at Killarney and Killorglin Libraries over a 13-week term from September to December, where one on one assistance supported members of the public to develop their digital literacy skills.

Mobile Library service

The Mobile Library service continues to play an important part in the provision of a library facility to rural and some urban communities. The two-vehicle service – one covering North & West Kerry and the other South & East Kerry, stops at 83 locations countywide. This is a very valued service for those who use it. 39,964 books were borrowed from the Mobile libraries during 2024.

The Department of Rural and Community Development has approved funding to Kerry County Council of €225,000 to support the provision of a 'Next Generation' Mobile Library vehicle under the current Libraries Capital Programme. This vehicle will replace one of the current vehicles which is 25 years in service. Work is ongoing preparing the vehicle specification and tender documentation.

Events programme

The library service supports annual national culture events including Cruinniú na nÓg, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Heritage Week, Culture Night and the Bealtaine Festival for older people.

A Libraries National Open Day took place on Saturday, 28 September. This is one of the actions in the libraries national strategy and it is expected that this promotion will grow over the coming years.

Libraries provide a range of activities in association with Architecture Kerry, Listowel Writers Week, Science Week, the Festival of Kerry [the Rose of Tralee Historical Exhibition] Library Ireland Week, the Kerry Homecoming Festival, Vision Ireland, Space Week and Poetry Ireland.

There is ongoing liaison with local organisations including the Kerry Regional Adult Literacy Coalition, Kerry Education & Training Board, the Kerry Public Participation Network, Kerry Local Sports Partnership, the HSE (Health Promotion Unit), Kerry Archaeological & Historical Society, Age and Opportunity Ireland and the National Learning Network.

The Healthy Ireland at your Library initiative enables the provision of nationally funded recommended health related books as well as hosting a series of free events during Kerry Mental Health Week. The Healthy Kerry programme provided funding for a range of activities in libraries during National Playday Week in July.

Libraries promoted Ireland Reads Day on 28 February - an initiative of the Government of Ireland to celebrate reading, funded by Healthy Ireland and supported by public libraries and organisations that promote literacy and the arts. The website www.irelandreads.ie offers book recommendations.

All Kerry libraries have now been chartered and recognised as Age Friendly libraries under the Libraries national Age Friendly programme. Some additional accessible equipment was provided following receipt of Dormant Accounts Funding, including keyboards, track balls, magnifiers and height adjustable desks.

An Acorn tablet lending service was put in place during the year with the aim of helping to bridge the digital divide by providing easy-to-use technology. Acorn is an age friendly smart tablet that has been designed with and tested by older adults. This service is being provided under the Kerry County Council Age Friendly Programme. 45 tablets are available for lending across the nine libraries.

Some individual events held in libraries during 2024 included:

- Unveiling of a plaque in memory of local community activist Eamon Langford [Caherciveen library - June]
- Comic Book Workshops for teenagers [in association with Cruinniú na nÓg - Killarney library - June]
- Activator Pole walking sessions [in association with the Kerry Local Sports Partnership - Tralee library - July]
- Film Making Clinic for teenagers [Tralee library - July]
- The ‘Whole Wild World bus tour!’ with authors and illustrators Ashwin Chacko, Muireann Ní Chíobháin, Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick, Leona Forde, Olivia Hope and Eve McDonnell [Killorglin and Kenmare libraries - September]
- Astronomy Workshops [Killarney library - Space week events - November]

Children’s services

Kerry libraries continue to deliver the Right to Read programme to support and promote reading and literacy skills development throughout the authority. This programme has four pillars – Spring into Storytime [April], Summer Stars Children’s Reading [June to August], Children’s Book Festival [October] and Family Time at your Library [November/December].

52 Storytime and craft sessions were provided during Spring into Storytime including a visit from the national Laureate na nÓg Patricia Forde, to Kenmare and Killorglin libraries.

70 events were programmed for the 2024 Children’s Book Festival [CBF] supported by funding from Creative Kerry. Funding was sourced to provide transport to a library event for pupils in a school in each of the Municipal Districts who would not normally visit a library in person.

There is ongoing engagement with primary schools to encourage usage of the available services. These include library induction tours, age appropriate storytime sessions, Classroom Novel sets and block loan collections for teachers and provision of the online literacy support resource LOTÉ (a database of digital picture books in over 50 world languages, with English translations)

In line with the national First Five ‘Little Library Bag’ initiative, a free library book pack was made available to all 4/5-year-olds starting school in September 2024. Children and their parents/guardians were invited to collect these bags in person at their local library, thus introducing them to the library service for the first time.

Kerry libraries also participated in the national Little Library at Bedtime initiative. Aimed at 0 - 4 year olds, it offered a free bedtime book, a library card wallet and tips for parents when doing bedtime stories with their children. This was jointly funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Sustainability

Kerry Library actively explores sustainable alternatives and options when developing services and resources and is a conduit for trusted information to communities.

Kerry Library partnered with the Heritage Council to provide ESKER [Environmental Science Kits for Ecological Recording] boxes on loan to schools and community groups to support education about biodiversity. The boxes contain a range of equipment from insect collection nets to magnifying glasses and contain several National Biodiversity Data Centre species swatches to help with proper identification.

Libraries provide Home Energy Kits for lending to the public and work closely with the Kerry County Council Energy, Climate Change, Biodiversity and Facilities Management Officers with a view to improving efficiencies. An SEAI Energy clinic took place at Killarney library in February and free public events were held in libraries to promote Biodiversity Week in May.

Energy conservation is closely monitored, with a standard system set up for monitoring individual library energy usage.

Local History & Archives

A Strategic Objective of the Kerry Library service is to continue the active collection programme for Kerry local studies and archive material - including published books, maps, calendars, audio, postcards, prints, photographs, manuscripts and archive records. Kerry Library is the leading institution for local history genealogical research relating to Kerry and this is facilitated by trained staff, a walk in public service and an online platform. Kerry local books are acquired once published.

The Irish Newspaper Archive is one of the free services provided to users of the Kerry Library service. It gives online access to 15 newspapers published in Kerry since the early nineteenth century. Current Kerry newspapers and advertisers are collected each week and made available to the public as well as retaining file copies for future consultation.

Among the important book and archive items donated during 2024 were:

- Material on 'The Manse', Tralee and a book of poems by Mary Chestnut [relates to the Tralee Presbyterian community].
- 25 food ledgers containing food records for local hospitals dating from the 1930's.
- A private archive relating to the Rose of Tralee Festival.
- 19th century Workmen's Account Ledger from the Crosbie Estate
- Camp N.S. Roll Book 1947 - 1953
- A framed photograph with a bi-lingual biography insert of Kerry native and Irish revolutionary, barrister, politician and judge Fionán Lynch. It was presented by his grandson Professor Tim Lynch on behalf of Fionán's son Dr. Dermot Lynch and it is on permanent display at Caherciveen library.

While donations are welcome, the ongoing collection of Kerry related archives is placing pressure on space and storage and provision needs to be made for future collections. Kerry County Council is actively assessing options in this area.

Decade of Commemorations funding facilitated the commissioning of an artwork to commemorate the 1913-1923 period in Kerry. Following an open competition the commission was awarded to Dublin based artist Róisín McGuigan and this artwork is now on display in the

Local History Section at Library Headquarters. The proceedings of the Civil War Centenary Conference held in Kerry will be published in 2025.

Kerry Local Enterprise Office

The Kerry Local Enterprise Office continued its one stop shop function for small businesses throughout 2024. There were ongoing client support measures with referrals to other support mechanisms such as the Local Development Companies, Údaras na Gaeltachta, Fisheries Local Area Group Schemes, New Frontier Programmes (MTU) and Enterprise Ireland.

Key Achievements 2024

- The Approvals & Evaluation Committee met on five occasions in 2024 and 19 projects were approved funding of €308,801.

In time, this support has the capacity to yield over 60 new jobs within these companies.

- The year was a challenging year for businesses where there were some job losses due to retirements and bereavements. Businesses showed higher levels of vacancies with difficulty in recruitment.
- 2 business clients were transferred to Enterprise Ireland to support their further internationalisation plans.
- 7 businesses were supported in trade fair participation attracting overseas buyers.
- Over 60 training programmes were delivered to 1,491 individuals.
- 341 businesses availed of mentoring supports across a range of disciplines.
- The Trading Online Voucher Scheme continued to be busy supplemented with website health checks and over 114 applications were received and 71 applications approved amounting to €141,328. Approvals are ongoing but the scheme formally closed in December 2024.
- Microfinance Loans – 14 client businesses were assisted in making loan applications to Microfinance Ireland.
- Student Enterprise Awards – 15 schools participated in the Student Enterprise Awards with over 60 mini-businesses being established by students.
- The 2024 Local Enterprise Week was delivered in the first week in March. Over 300 people attended various events across the week.
- The LEO delivered the Regional National Women's Enterprise Day Conference with the South West Regional LEO network.
- LEO Kerry was represented by the company Valentia Vermouth at the National Enterprise Awards.
- Ongoing support was provided to the Original Kerry Craft Network, Kerry Business Women's Network and Network Kerry.
- The LEO continues to work closely with the network of enterprise hubs. There is ongoing engagement and referral of businesses to the individual hubs.
- A series of new programmes were introduced including the Digital Start Programme, Green for Micro and Lean for Micro and 32 businesses participated in these programmes.

- The National Food Academy Programme and Food Starter initiative was coordinated from Kerry as a joint initiative of Musgraves SuperValu and LEOs.
- The LEO supported business participation at the National Craft Showcase Event in the RDS and the National Ploughing Championship.
- LEO Kerry continued to support the LCDC/LAG, Fisheries Local Area Group, New Frontiers Programme, South West Regional Skills Forum, South West Regional Skills Forum and a number of other regional initiatives.

Kerry County Museum

Kerry County Museum plays an important role in promoting and preserving the distinct culture and heritage of the county. Housed in the Ashe Memorial Hall in Tralee, the facility comprises 1,500 square metres, which includes the permanent gallery, temporary exhibition space, Medieval Experience, reception, collections stores, and education space. The Museum's staff members include those with professional qualifications in archaeology, history, education, and museum studies, as well as extensive experience of visitor services. The Museum tells stories that are unique and specific to Kerry, giving both locals and visitors a compelling insight into what makes the county tick. We promote a strong local culture, confident in its own worth, and this plays a vital role in giving visitors a sense of place, encouraging them to go out into the landscape with a greater sense of what Kerry is all about. Our core functions are collections, exhibitions, education, and marketing.

Key Activities and Achievements 2024

Collections

The Museum dealt with eighty-two enquiries for information from members of the public specifically about objects in the collection and generally about historical research topics. We also facilitated fifty-six visits to the reserve collections.

There were forty-nine new objects accessioned into the collection in 2024, and loan agreements were renewed for two objects. The Museum's collection received excellent coverage when a selection of objects was featured in ten-minute segment on RTE's 'Today Show' in January. We were invited to contribute a short film on an object in the collection to the Many Memories, Many Voices project, an engagement project led by Queen's University Belfast, in partnership with ArtsEkta and the Irish Museums Association. The project gives people living on the island of Ireland a chance to share memories, stories, and objects related to colonialism and the British Empire, and to explore the complex afterlives of empire, and how they shape social identities today. It aims to support UN Sustainable Development Goal 16: promoting just, peaceful, and inclusive societies, by fostering equality, helping to combat racism, and promoting decolonisation.

The Museum submitted its application for Maintenance of Accreditation in the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland. This is a Heritage Council-operated programme dedicated to raising standards in museum management, care of collections and visitor services. Involvement in this Programme is a condition of grant funding from the Department of Tourism and Culture, and from the Heritage Council, which are the main sources of funding for the museum sector in Ireland. Professor Fiona Kearney, University College Cork and

Director of the Glucksman Gallery, was the external assessor and conducted her site visit in September. The results of her assessment will be announced in 2025.

Dig Tralee!

This was the third year of Dig Tralee, a community archaeology project that takes a hands-on approach. The 2024 dig ran over five weeks from 1 July and covered 510 square metres and included forty-six community volunteers. The project gives volunteers, working in partnership with the Archaeology Section in Kerry County Council and Kerry County Museum, an opportunity to literally dig into their area's past at the prehistoric monument complex of Knockanacuiig on the outskirts of Tralee, and find a connection to those who lived in the same place thousands of years ago. It was once the site of an enclosure of significant size and height that commanded a view of the surrounding area for miles around. But now, as the modern town encroaches on all sides, the landscape context in which the monument sits is being lost bit by bit. The aim of the project is to explore this ancient monument and uncover what role it might have played in the origins of Tralee.

The Museum is responsible for recruiting volunteers from the community, providing information, training, and resource materials in the run-up to the dig, looking after volunteers on site and matching them with the expert team of archaeologists. It also includes keeping participants informed about post-excavation research as well as maintaining interest and enthusiasm for the project between excavations. The project was supported by Creative Ireland Kerry which provided funding for a filmmaker to document the participants' journey through the dig, tracing their hopes and expectations, what they learned and what surprised them.

We were delighted that many previous participants volunteered again for this year's dig, and there was a fifty/fifty balance between old and new. Both seasoned campaigners and new participants were interviewed for the film. All spoke positively of their experiences on the dig and expressed an interest in returning next year. We hosted an end-of-dig party a week after it finished and everyone who could showed up and we had a most enjoyable evening with everyone swapping stories. They all turned up for the public lecture at the Museum, and the informal WhatsApp group set up last year was expanded to include the new volunteers, and it remains an active resource for the group to keep in touch with each other and encourage interest in heritage and the environment.

Festive Hall

The Museum was delighted to celebrate the return of our much-loved, revamped Festive Hall, with a winter wonderland setting bigger and better than ever. It is a Christmas event for schools and families run by the Museum, with the entire Medieval Experience fully decked out as a Christmas setting for visitors to make their way around and meeting different characters on the way. Since it first opened its doors over a decade ago, the Festive Hall has attracted families from far and wide, becoming a favourite December pilgrimage for many, and making it a centrepiece of Tralee's Christmas experience. But rather than resting on our laurels, we continue to improve the spectacle every year. This year we invited families to enjoy a different kind of festive experience, one that didn't include the stress of expensive tickets, booking times and queues. We are always keenly conscious of the fact that Christmas is an expensive time for

everyone, and our aim has always been to provide a quality yet affordable Christmas experience for all. The Festive Hall is non-profit, and all proceeds go back into improving the experience every year. Approximately 2,000 children visited the Festive Hall with their schools during the month of December, and there was an average of 2,000 visitors each weekend over the four weekends of the festive season.

New roles at the Museum

In 2024 we had the opportunity to create new roles within the Museum while keeping the overall number of staff at the same level. It was seventeen years since any new roles were created in the Museum. In that time, the role of the Museum itself has changed enormously in response to the increased demands for professionalisation of its services, and the expansion of those services to meet the needs and expectations of its audience. The two new roles are Education Assistant, and Public Engagement Assistant. The Education Assistant supports the Education Officer to deliver learning, public programming, learning resources, and services at Kerry County Museum. The focus is on schools, outreach, community projects, access, equality, and integration projects. The Public Engagement Assistant's role is to devise, develop and implement projects relating to the Museum's website, social media network, image, and media archive, and to assist with its events and exhibitions programmes. The focus is on events, exhibitions, interactivity, social media, and daily operations.

Heritage Hunters Award & The Kerry Young Historian Award

The Museum runs two heritage competitions in conjunction with the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society and Kerry County Council: The Heritage Hunters Award, a competition for primary schools, and The Kerry Young Historian Award, an annual outreach project for Secondary Schools. These projects are supported by Tralee Education Centre, the Heritage Council of Ireland, the History Teacher's Association Kerry Branch & Radio Kerry. Joint project leaders are Victoria McCarthy, Architectural Conservation Officer, and the Museum's Education Officer, Claudia Köhler.

In 2024, ten primary and four secondary schools participated in the competitions. An online award ceremony took place in May for Heritage Hunters, and in September as part of the Architecture Kerry Festival for the Kerry Young Historian Award. Curranes NS won the 2024 Heritage Hunters Award with their project on Castleisland Castle, and Rory O'Flaherty from Mercy Mounthawk Secondary School is the 2024 Kerry Young Historian. His essay highlighted soldiers' lives in Tralee during the revolutionary period. As part of the award prize, winning essays in the junior and senior categories are published in the Kerry Magazine. Heritage Hunter schools are given the exciting opportunity to have their projects turned into professional podcasts. To date, Radio Kerry, with a listenership of 88,000, has broadcast fourteen Heritage Hunters podcasts.

Articulation Ireland

Kerry County Museum is the cultural partnership organisation for Articulation Ireland, a public speaking competition for secondary schools under the auspices of the National Gallery London. It promotes the appreciation and discussion of Art, Architecture and Artefacts in secondary schools throughout Ireland and the UK. The competition seeks to engage students to develop the confidence and ability to express their opinions and conclusions. In 2024, Eoin

Cashman from Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra, Rathmore, and Naledi Hlongwane from Presentation Secondary School, Tralee represented Kerry at the All-Ireland Final at the Bernal Institute, University of Limerick and won second place and highly commended respectively.

Embracing Our Heritage: A celebration of Irish Traveller Identity

On 30 May 2024, the Museum launched a temporary exhibition entitled “Embracing Our Heritage: A Celebration of Irish Traveller Identity”, as part of Traveller Pride Week in Co. Kerry. A partnership between Kerry Traveller Health Community Development Project and Kerry County Museum, the exhibition provided an opportunity for families, both Traveller and Settled, to learn more about the traditions, values and culture of the Traveller community in Co Kerry. The exhibition was launched by renowned author and Traveller Rights activist Oein DeBhairduin, who works with the National Museum of Ireland as Curator of Traveller Culture. On display were a collection of photographs of Travellers at Puck Fair from the Kennelly Archives, artisan tinsmith products and other traditional crafts, two scale model traditional wagons, and a scale model of a Traveller camp set at Puck Fair alongside an assortment of other items traditionally used as part of the nomadic life of a Traveller family. The specially commissioned Puck Fair scale model is now on permanent display at the Museum. Brigid Quilligan, Project Manager at Kerry Travellers Project said; “We are proud to be working in partnership with Kerry County Museum, bringing the rich traditions of Traveller Culture to a wider audience, and ensuring they can be appreciated into the future.”

Our Place: A socially engaged art project championing human rights of people living with intellectual disabilities

On Culture Night, Friday 20 September 2024, ‘Our Place’, a socially engaged art project by artists Alan James Burns and Sinead McCann, in collaboration with Liffey St John of God Community Services and Kerry St John of God Skills for Life, was launched at in the Museum. Funded by Rethink Ireland’s Disability Participation and Awareness Fund with consultation support by Create, ‘Our Place’ champions the human rights of people living with intellectual disabilities, creates access to cultural expression and cultural space by placing the ideas, talents and lived experience of people with intellectual disabilities at the centre of artmaking and exhibition design.

The Mindful Museum: A new dementia-inclusive community outreach initiative

The Mindful Museum is a new community outreach initiative by the Museum. It is aimed at people living with dementia and their families and carers. During Covid, several museum staff members participated in online training delivered by Age and Opportunity, with the aim to develop and deliver dementia-friendly programming at the Museum. In 2024, funded by Kerry County Arts Office as part of the Creative Communities programme, the Museum team delivered closed group guided tours of the Museum’s exhibitions, as well as workshops at the monthly Kingdom Dementia Café at the Rose Hotel, Tralee. Our experienced external facilitator, Silke Michels, also delivered a series of dementia-inclusive workshops at Baile Mhuire Day Care Centre. A special visit to see our Festive Hall by the participants of the Kingdom Dementia Café took place in December 2024. At the most recent meeting of the Tralee Dementia Friendly Interagency Group, of which the Museum is a member, the progress of the café in 2024 and the increasing numbers attending each month was emphasised in the

minutes of the meeting. Feedback from attendees continues to be very positive and the friendly and welcoming environment of the hotel, and the collaboration with the Museum which facilitates a reminiscence section for each café are two significant factors in the success of the café.

Participation in Regional and National Festivals and Events

As in previous years, Kerry County Museum continued to participate in regional and national festivals and events such as St Brigid's Day, Tralee Chinese New Year Festival, St Patrick's Day, Easter, Bealtaine, National Drawing Day, Biodiversity Week, International Museum Day, Park Festival, Cruinniu na nOg, Heritage Week, Feile Tralí, Architecture Kerry, Culture Night, Halloween, the Kerry Homecoming Festival, Skellig Coast Archaeology Festival and the National Circus Festival.

Town Regeneration Unit

The Town Regeneration Unit operates within three core pillars:

- Town Centre First
- THRIVE
- DRCD Capital Delivery Team

These efforts are guided by the broader Town Centre First policy, a key policy framework designed to transform town centres into thriving, vibrant, and sustainable hubs. The policy emphasises making town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.

Town Centre First

Key to the success of Town Centre First, are Masterplans collaboratively developed by local Town Teams, Kerry County Council and the wider communities.

During 2024, progress was made on developing a Town Centre First Masterplan for Milltown with funding also secured to deliver masterplans in Kenmare and Castleisland, which will be advanced during 2025. Town Team structures established in these towns brought together representatives from the community, businesses, and public and private sectors to oversee the implementation of the Town Centre First approach.

Funding was secured under the DRCD Town & Village Renewal Scheme during 2024, to support the delivery of Town Centre Health Checks in the towns of Dingle and Ballybunion. Delivery of these Plans will be advanced during 2025.

The Town Regeneration Unit proactively assesses and identifies potential funding streams to support the revitalisation and development of town centres.

THRIVE

Kerry County Council was successful under the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme (THRIVE Strand 1) and secured funding of €197,094 for each of the towns of Killarney and Tralee. The funding under THRIVE Strand 1 supports the revival and adaptive re-use of

derelict / vacant or under-utilised heritage buildings in both towns. THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027.

The development of Integrated Urban Strategies will be advanced for both towns during 2025 which will emphasise the conservation and revitalisation of the towns' rich heritage, reinforcing the critical role of the town centres and its heritage status. As part of developing these strategies, the Council in collaboration with the community will prioritise, design, and develop a specific project proposal focused on the adaptive re-use of a publicly owned heritage building in each town centre that is vacant, derelict or under-utilised.

DRCD Capital Delivery Team

Complementing this work, the DRCD Capital Delivery Team, supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development, will ensure the timely and budget-conscious delivery of vital rural projects funded through initiatives such as ORIS, CLAR and the Town & Village Renewal Scheme. This enhanced staffing and funding framework allows the Council to pursue transformative projects in partnership with communities, ultimately creating town centres that are not only economically prosperous but also culturally vibrant and sustainably managed

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**DIRECTORATE OF
COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AND
WATER SERVICES**

Acting Director of Services: JOHN KENNELLY

**COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

WATER SERVICES**

INTEGRATION DEPARTMENT

Community Integration Forum (CIF)

In 2024, the Community Response Forum was reconstituted as the Kerry Community Integration Forum as it transitioned from a temporary response to the Ukraine crisis to a longer-term, integration-focused more sustainable structure expanding its scope to include International Protection Applicants (asylum seekers), Those with Status, Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (Ukrainian refugees), and persons qualifying under the International Refugee Protection Programme. Coordinated by Kerry County Council, the Community Integration Forum, comprises 58 organisations which enables collaborative local-level supports for migrant resettlement and integration.

Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT)

During 2024, Local Authority Integration Teams were established in all local authorities including Kerry County Council. The goal of LAITs is to help international protection applicants and refugees become independent, settle into their new communities, and participate in Irish life. The Kerry LAIT does this by connecting people to important services that can help them integrate into the community emphasising "nothing about us without us" through co-design and collaboration.

The Joint Mission Statement of the Kerry Community Integration Forum and the Kerry LAIT
To support the principle of Integration from Day 1, to empower people to live and work independently in the Kerry community and to ensure equality of opportunity through the principles of human rights, equality and inclusion.

Our target groups are:

- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs),
- International Protection Applicants (IPA) and Those with Status (TwS),
- Individuals under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP),
- Vulnerable migrants,
- Community Sponsorship beneficiaries.

Current Population: There were approximately 10,500 new arrivals resident in Kerry in 2024 comprising both International Protection Applicants (925) and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection from Ukraine (9,575).

Structures: To ensure effective coordination the Community Integration Forum (CIF) and the Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) coordinate the following substructures:

- A Coordination Team
- 4 x Local Area Response Teams
- Pathways to Employment Subgroup
- Kerry English Language Subgroup
- Activities Subgroup
- Musical Instrument Subgroup

- Child Safeguarding Subgroup
- Bereavement Subgroup
- Accommodation Providers Network
- Offer a Home Programme

The CIF also includes a HSE led in-reach team, which provides frontline supports to those entering or leaving the county

Key Achievements in 2024 include:

Integration Surveys and Action Plan Development

We completed an *Integration Survey* among Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs) and, for the first time in Kerry, an *Integration Survey* among International Protection Applicants (IPAs). The results were extracted, analysed, and collated to inform the development of an *Action Plan for 2025 and beyond* for all support organizations. Additionally, the findings from both surveys were submitted for inclusion and consideration in the *Kerry Migrant Integration Strategy*, ensuring that the voices and needs of migrant communities are reflected in future integration initiatives.

Kerry English Language Support (KELS) website - www.KELS.ie

KELS.ie serves as a comprehensive, one-stop online resource for English language support in Kerry. The platform is designed to assist migrants, refugees, and other non-native English speakers in accessing the language resources they need to integrate successfully into their communities. The website provides up-to-date information on available English language classes across the county. It also features a wide range of learning resources, such as online courses and self-study materials.

Kerry Together - www.kerrytogether.ie

We strengthened the Kerry Together initiative by establishing a dedicated online presence through our website (www.kerrytogether.ie) and social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram (@kerrytogether). Through our digital presence, we continue to promote integration, celebrate diversity, and build a stronger, more connected Kerry.

Regular CIF Member Bulletin

To ensure consistent communication and engagement, we introduced a Regular Bulletin for all CIF members. This bulletin serves as a key information resource, providing updates on ongoing initiatives, upcoming events, policy developments, and relevant opportunities for collaboration.

Independent Living Guide

We developed the *Independent Living Guide* to support migrants as they transition from state-provided accommodation to independent living. This comprehensive guide provides practical information on key aspects of independent living, such as securing accommodation, understanding tenant rights and responsibilities, financial management, accessing essential services, employment support, and community integration.

The County Kerry Activity Brochure

This is a valuable resource for newly arrived communities, encouraging them to explore and engage with the rich cultural and natural heritage of Kerry. The guide is already available in English, French, and German, and to promote further inclusivity, it was translated into Ukrainian in 2024. The Guide provides essential information on local attractions, outdoor activities, and key points of interest across the county. [County Kerry Activity Brochure v2 \(kerrycoco.ie\)](https://kerrycoco.ie)

Training for Support Organisations

We delivered targeted training for associated organisations, including: Department of Social Protection Briefing – Overview of key supports available for migrants. Introduction to Immigration Law (NASC) – Foundational session on immigration processes and rights.

Reflections and Projections Event

To mark the formation of the Kerry Community Integration Forum and Local Authority Integration Team, a Reflections and Projections event was held in December 2024 which brought together key stakeholders to provide a critical opportunity for reflection, strategic planning, and mutual recognition of the progress made in community integration efforts. By bringing together representatives from our 58 participating organisations, the event underscored our commitment to collective action, shared learning, and continuous improvement in supporting migrants and refugees in our community.

Offer a Home

Kerry County Council also worked to support Ukrainians accommodated in Kerry by coordinating the Offer a Home Programme. In 2024, more than 1,200 Ukrainians were successfully accommodated by the scheme, which represents one eighth of the national figure.

Community Recognition Fund

In 2023, the Department of Rural and Community Development allocated €4,403,073 to Kerry aimed at supporting the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution made by communities across the county in welcoming and hosting beneficiaries of temporary protection (Ukrainian refugees) and international protection applicants (asylum seekers). This fund is managed by the Local Authority Integration Team. A total of 41 community have benefitted from this fund

Banna Community Rescue Boats: The Banna Community Rescue team has significantly enhanced its emergency response capabilities through the strategic purchase of essential lifeboat equipment.

TORC Community and Family Resource Centre: Through targeted improvements, the TORC Community and Family Resource Centre has transformed its therapeutic meeting spaces into professional-grade facilities.

St Brendan's Trust & Local Community Groups: The renovation of the historic temperance hall into a modern community hub represents a significant investment in local community infrastructure.

Ballybunion Castle Green: Works funded by the Community Recognition Fund have significantly improved public access to the Castle Green area.

In 2024, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced a further €3,946,095 for Kerry under the Community Recognition Fund 2024 which is again aimed at supporting the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution made by communities across the county in welcoming and hosting New Arrivals. With projects to be delivered over the course of 2025 and 2026, this fund will support a further 40 community projects across the county. This will bring the total investment in Community projects in Kerry under the Community Recognition Fund to €8,349,168.

Ní neart go cur le Chéile

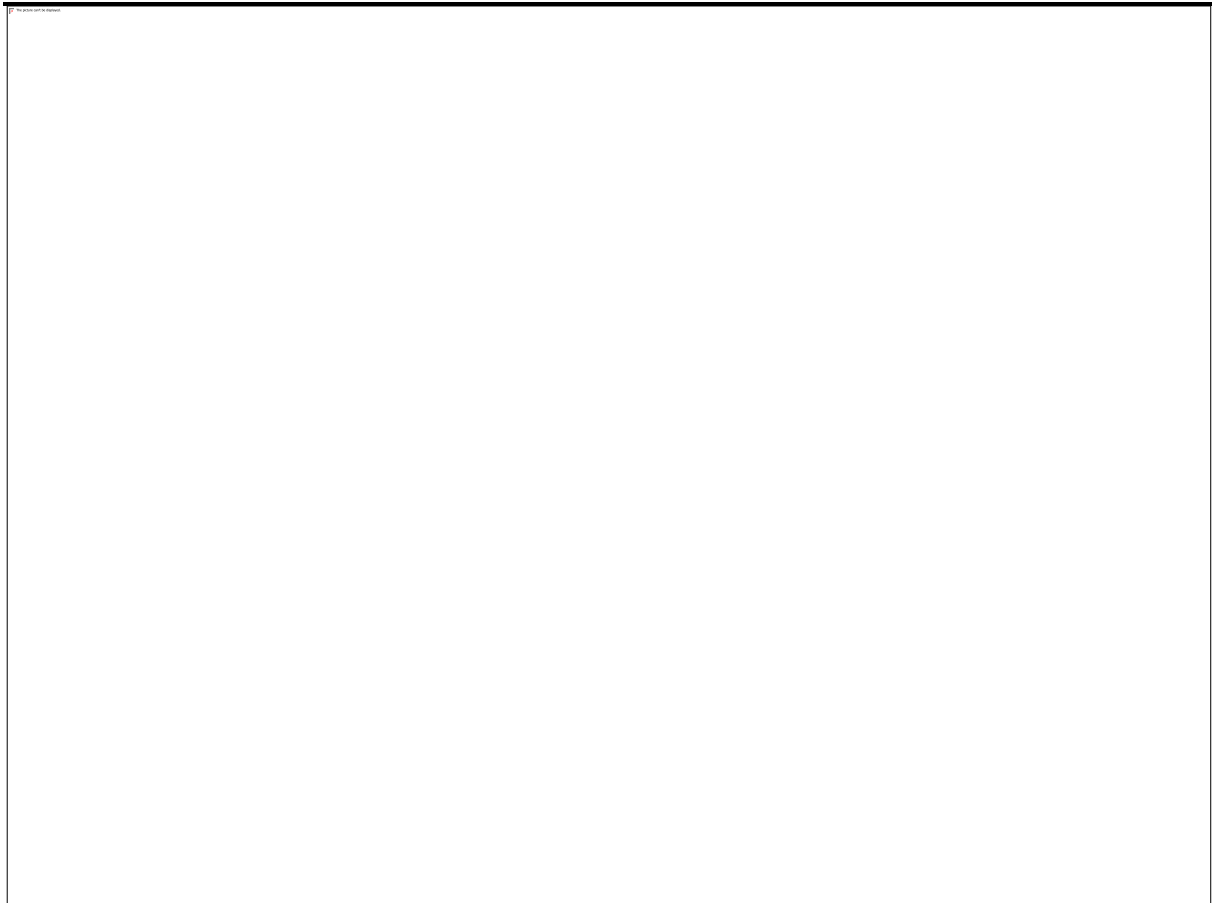


Fig. 1 – Structure of the Kerry Community Integration Forum

WATER SERVICES

Public Water Services In Kerry

In line with the Government Framework for the Future Delivery of Water Services, Kerry County Council continued to operate a Master Cooperation Agreement with Uisce Éireann in 2024 which supersedes the 2014 Service Level Agreement. The Master Cooperation Agreement provides for Uisce Éireann to take full responsibility for all public water and wastewater services in Kerry.

Over 130 Kerry County Council staff to continued to work in Water Services in 2024 under the management and direction of Uisce Éireann and this arrangement will continue until the end of 2026 after which time Kerry County Council will cease to have any role in the provision of public water services in Kerry.

Under the Master Cooperation Agreement, the following public water services in Kerry have now come under the management and direction of Uisce Éireann:

- 47 Public Water Supply Schemes with over 90 water sources supplying 28 million cubic metres (28 billion litres) of drinking water to over 126,000 customers
- Over 2,600 km of water distribution mains across the county including associated reservoirs and pumping stations
- 48 Public Wastewater Treatment Plants treating a peak population equivalent of 190,000
- 430 km of public sewer networks including associated pumping stations
- Water Conservation & Leakage Management
- Capital Project Delivery under the Water Services Capital Investment Plan

Kerry county Council continues to provide residual services to Uisce Éireann through the Support Services Agreement which was signed in October 2024. This covers the following work areas:

- Payroll and Staff Supports
- ICT Support
- Facilities including offices and depots
- Stores and Inventory
- Laboratory Services sampling and analysis
- Legal and statutory obligations support

The support services will continue up to 31 December 2026 after which time Uisce Éireann will assume full responsibility for all public water services in the county. The expiration of the Master Cooperation Agreement at the end of 2026 will finally end over a century of involvement by Kerry County Council in Water Services delivery in the county.

Rural Water

The administration and development of the Group Scheme sector remains a function of Kerry County Council under the guidance and supervision of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through the Rural Water Programme. 508 Group Water Schemes

have been developed over the last 50 years in Kerry, of which 277 have been taken over and are now maintained by Uisce Éireann.

Key developments in 2024

- 48 applications for subsidy payments (for operation and maintenance costs) for Group Water Schemes were received and a total of €222,948.40 was paid.
- 87 applications for Individual Well Grants were received. Payment of €337,622.15 was made to applicants where works were completed.
- 17 new applications for funding under the Domestic Wastewater Treatment System Grant Schemes were received and a total of €154,780.33 was paid to fifteen applicants where works were completed. The updated Domestic Wastewater Treatment grant scheme was launched by the Department in late 2023 and led to increased activity throughout 2024
- There was one payment made under the Lead Remediation Grant Scheme to the value of €2,043.

Further upgrade works were carried out on Bonane/Dawross GWS and Clanmaurice GWS prior to takeover submissions to Uisce Éireann.

Multi Annual Rural Water Programme (MARWP) 2024-2026.

Kerry County Council received approval for €3.66m under the MARWP 2024-2026. The aim of the programme is to provide the necessary funding to improve the quality, quantity and reliability of the water services relied upon by rural dwellers, where no public water services are available.

A further announcement is expected during 2025 confirming additional funding under the programme

**DIRECTORATE OF
PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT
AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Director of Services: JAMES NOLAN

PLANNING

ENVIRONMENT

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Forward Planning

A key role of the Planning Policy Unit is in the formulation of economic, social and infrastructural policies and objectives which give effect to the delivery of sustainable and planned development in County Kerry. These policies/objectives are contained within the County Development Plan/Municipal Area Local Area Plans.

During 2024, the following areas were progressed:

- Kenmare MD LAP 2024-30 was adopted
- work progressed on the Draft Plans on the Tralee, Killarney, Listowel and Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne MD settlement Plans.
- Input into the preparation of Local Transport Plans for Tralee and Killarney.
- Preparation & publication of the Residential Zoned land Tax (RZLT).
- Preparation of the successful THRIVE applications. Kerry County Council received funding for an Integrated Urban Strategy for Tralee & Killarney town, which explores opportunities to adaptively reuse key heritage buildings in the towns.

Development Management

Activity in Planning Control remains consistent year on year, with 1,314 valid planning applications received during 2024, a decrease of 31 from 2023. However, there has been an increase in the complexity and size of applications, particularly multi-unit residential applications.

In Addition, there were 28 (No.) extensions of duration of existing planning permission processed and 124 decisions in respect of a Declaration and Referral on Development and Exempted Development under Section 5 of the Planning & Development Act were issued during the year, an increase of 16 from 2023. There were 17 notifications issued in 2024 under Article 10(6)(a) of the Planning & Development Regulations, which relate to the change of use of vacant commercial premises to residential use.

In 2024 a total of 919 valid planning applications were received via the Online Planning Portal, which is 69% of all valid applications for 2024. This figure is expected to increase annually as agents become more familiar with the portal.

There were 350 pre-planning consultation held in 2024, by phone or email including 7 consultations in respect of Large-scale Residential Development.

Planning Enforcement

Activity levels in this area remained constant during 2024 with a significant number of new complaints being received and processed during the year. The following is a summary of enforcement activity levels for 2024:

| | |
|--|-----|
| New Enforcement Files Opened | 338 |
| Warning Letters Served | 255 |
| Enforcement Notices Served | 49 |
| Files Referred to Initiate Legal Proceedings | 11 |
| Files Closed | 337 |
| Open Files at Year End | 756 |

A strong culture of enforcement is critical to ensure that all the goals and objectives of the planning function work to a high standard and for the benefit of the whole community. Where there are significant and real cases of non-compliance the full rigours of the law are applied by the Enforcement Unit to ensure that the integrity of the planning system is maintained.

Housing Estates Unit

The following are the details of the 8 Housing Estates that were advertised for taking in charge by Kerry County Council in 2024. These 12 no. housing estates were taken in charge at the Municipal District meetings held in early 2025:

| Estate Name/Address | Number of Houses |
|---|-------------------------|
| Killarney Municipal District | |
| Knockearagh, Killarney | 4 houses |
| 'Kilcoolaght Place', Killarney | 25 houses |
| | |
| Kenmare Municipal District | |
| "Beaufort Valley", Cullenagh Lower, Beaufort, Killarney | 5 houses |
| | |
| Listowel Municipal District | |
| "Hazelbrook", Doonard Lower, Tarbert | 8 houses |
| "Derra West", Derra East, Balybunion Road, Listowel | 3 houses |
| "Dromin Green", Ballygowlogue, Listowel | Green Area |
| "Kenny Heights", Cahirdown, Listowel | Green Area |
| | |
| Tralee Municipal District | |
| "Lios Ard", Lisloose, Tralee | 28 houses |
| "Lios na Lohart", Ballyvelly, Tralee | 10 houses |
| | |
| Castleisland Chorca Dhuibhne | |
| Bawnluskaha, College Road, Castleisland | 12 houses |
| Bawnluskaha Drive, College Road, Castleisland | 7 houses |
| Tithe Bhaile an Mhuilinn, Baile an Mhuilin, Daingean Uí Chúis | 5 houses |

Conservation Office

The Heritage Officer is responsible for the delivery of technical advice and guidance in relation to the protection of the County's built heritage.

The objective is to conserve Kerry's rich architectural heritage while ensuring its sustainability into the future. The County has 1,263 protected structures along with a wealth of vernacular heritage which plays a vital role in terms of tourism, landscape character, the local economy and sense of place. The Heritage Officer provides technical input into Development Management and Forward Planning proposals along with outreach work with various local heritage groups and secondary level and third level students.

Under the 'Historic Structures Fund and Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2024', which is managed and administered by Kerry County Council on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 21 structures received funding to carry out conservation works. A total of €456,512 was spent on these projects, which includes both public grant and private match funding.

Summary of key Heritage Office achievements in 2024

- A Seminar was held at Coláiste Íde, Daingean Uí Chúis, in partnership with the Irish Georgian Society and the Cairde Choláiste Íde Teo which highlighted Kerry's Big Houses, historic demesne landscape and their role in development of tourism in Kerry.
- The Architecture Kerry festival delivered a programme of events promoting architectural heritage and culture across County Kerry. Public tours included a mix of contemporary architecture, heritage buildings and walking tours, focusing on high quality examples of adaptive reuse and renovation of town center properties, to highlight exemplars of town center sustainable residential development. Architecture Kerry, in partnership with the Kerry Local Creative Youth Partnership, also engaged with Kerry's International community to promote social inclusion. The project engaged with children in Killarney Direct Provision centre, aged 3 to 15 years, completing an art-based creative projects to celebrate the built environment of their locality.
- The Heritage Office hosted the Kerry Choral Union in Valentia Slate Quarry, and a traditional music concert in a thatched house in Finuge, showcasing sustainable culture and heritage.
- An Art in Architecture project was held with primary and post-primary schools. The objective of the project was to create a medium-scale structure e.g. building, bridge, castle, business, amenities etc., to raise awareness of architectural and cultural heritage with primary school children.
- The Heritage Office delivered the Kerry Young Historian award in partnership with the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society, History Teachers' Association, Kerry Branch, Kerry Education Centre and Kerry County Museum. This is a county-wide project open to second level students to research a topic of local history and heritage. It forms part of the student's Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) for the subject of History.

County Archaeologist

The County Archaeology Section has engaged in several significant archaeological and planning projects within 2024, including:

- **Knockanacuig Community Archaeology Project** –The third season of excavations at Knockanacuig were undertaken in 2024 in association with the Heritage Council and Creative Ireland. Over 80 people applied to be volunteers on the project and 39 people from the locality and wider Tralee area eventually took part for periods ranging from 3 days to 5 weeks. The excavation of the monumental, central barrow was completed and confirmed that it was constructed over 3,500 years with phases of development in the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age. The Iron Age saw a massive remodeling of the central barrow with the addition of two earthen banks and an intervening ditch, the enlargement of the central mound and the construction of the outer enclosure. A ritual pond, identified during the excavations this year, was also constructed and will be excavated in 2025. The Late Bronze Age redesign saw the erection of a substantial ring of around 140 posts erected around the mound and with the permission of the landowner, Mr. Jerry Clifford the 76 excavated post holes have now had wooden posts re-erected. The excavation results show that the site has a long and complicated history and that it was a major geo-political and ritual centre in later prehistory
- **Community Monuments Fund 2024:** Funding for a total of six projects was secured in 2024 – Killagh Priory Conservation Works (€99,607), Cill Buaine Conservation works (€46,623) and conservation management plans at Ahamore Abbey, Abbey Island (€28,290), Killobarnaun Oratory, Cahersiveen (€26,199), Kyrie Eleison Abbey, Abbeydorney (€29,397) and The Hermitage, Lixnaw (€29,912). The conservation work and reporting have now been completed. All works were tendered, overseen, recorded and reported on in-house
- Archaeological Assessment/Screening of 45 projects/proposals.
- Recommendations made in relation to 418 planning applications (including comments following FI submission), 4 Large-scale Residential Developments applications and 5 Strategic Infrastructure Development applications.
- Reviewed and commented on 154 Forestry Referrals
- Reviewed and commented on the works programmes in relation to 27 applications for Graveyard Maintenance funding.
- Continued to advise in relation to works in Historic Graveyards, arrange for remedial work where necessary and meet with and assist local committees regarding signage etc.
- Served as local authority representative on the Built & Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan review committee and subsequently on the objective working groups
- Continued to work with Kerry County Museum in raising awareness of the archaeological heritage of the county including two public lectures given in the museum.

Environmental Assessment Unit (EAU)/Biodiversity

The Biodiversity Action Plan drafted as part of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 guided the work of the EAU / Biodiversity Office during 2024. As part of this, the office played an increasingly important role in guiding other sections of the organisation to avoid and minimise environmental impact.

During 2024 the EAU / Biodiversity Office reviewed a significant number of planning applications within the zone of influence of Natura 2000 sites, enforcement cases and Section 5 referrals. The office also inputted into pre-planning meetings including for Large-scale Residential Developments proposals and other significant / strategically important planning applications.

The EAU/ Biodiversity Office completed the Strategic Environmental Assessments/Habitats Directive reports for the Draft Kenmare MD Local Area Plan, in addition to various environmental reports for the Planning Policy Department.

The EAU / Biodiversity Office prepared environmental reports, EIA / AA screening reports and determination statements in support of several Council projects during 2024 including the active travel and public realm enhancement projects, sports centre proposals, road schemes; car parks, housing proposals and other local authority works.

The EAU / Biodiversity Office also prepared environmental reports, EIA / AA screening reports and determination statements for projects funded by both TII and Uisce Éireann.

The EAU/ Biodiversity Office continued to work with and support the Kerry UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

EAU / Biodiversity Office also oversaw the successful implementation of the Local Biodiversity Action Fund for 2024 in collaboration with the DHLGH. This included delivery of nine projects ranging from invasive species management to surveys and coastal conservation works.

EAU / Biodiversity Office continued to work with various Community Groups, including Tidy Towns committees, coastal conservation groups and church groups on biodiversity projects; funding applications and initiatives around the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

During the year the EAU / Biodiversity Office also played an increased role in dealing with invasive species queries, specifically Japanese Knotweed and other environmental issues including climate change.

Climate Action and Energy

Kerry County Council Climate Action Plan was adopted in January 2024, a month ahead of the statutory requirement, the adopted plan 2024-2029 sets out 146 actions aimed at achieving the ambitious targets that Government has set for Local Authorities in respect of energy efficiency and emissions. Following the adoption of the plan, a new Governance structure was established within the Local Authority to implement and monitor the actions.

The Climate Action Unit has continued the sectoral engagement momentum which had been built up during the consultation phase of the plan. These linkages are the foundation of the leadership role Kerry County Council are taking on the implementation of Climate Action

The first round of funding for the Community Climate Action Programme was opened for applications in Q1 2024. Owing to the successful awareness campaigns rolled out by the Climate Action Unit, €3.3 million worth of applications were received from community groups throughout Kerry. In all, 27 Projects were funded and the total fund of €663,000 was allocated. Project delivery began on 1st September 2024 with 8 projects being fully completed by end of 2024. The remainder are on track for completion within the 18-month window allowed for under the grants programme.

Energy Unit

The Energy Unit successfully maintained ISO50001:2018 certification of its Energy Management System in 2024. An onsite surveillance audit was completed during the year by the NSAI to ensure continued compliance with the requirements of the certification. This is a recognised badge of excellence for the organisation, demonstrating our exemplar status among Local Authorities in Ireland. The 2024 surveillance audit was an extensive assessment of our operating procedures and management system and was completed successfully with no adverse findings or recommendations.

The Council continues to achieve reductions in energy usage and is on course to achieve our Climate Action Plan target of a 50% energy efficiency improvement by 2030, with 48.1% energy savings reported in 2024. Kerry County Council achieved these reductions in 2024 through building upgrades, improvements to the Council fleet, transformation of the public lighting network and the promotion of behavioural change among staff.

In addition, in 2024, Kerry County Council collaborated with the Tipperary Energy Agency on the TRESS Project, funded by the EU LIFE Programme, to produce investment grade audits of three nominated buildings in Kerry with the objective of accelerating the retrofitting of public buildings to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency. The Energy unit worked with Corporate Services to assist in the analysis and validation of the energy consumption of the new Modular Building at Áras an Chontae, proving the net zero energy consumption profile of the newly constructed building.

Environmental Protection

The Environmental Services Section is responsible for the protection of the environment of the County through implementation and enforcement of the many Regulations, Directives and Legislation dealing with Waste Management, Pollution Control and litter abatement, the provision of Veterinary Services, Environmental Awareness Programmes, Laboratory services and Beach Management. The activities of the Environmental Services Section in 2024 continued to play a crucial role in maintaining our reputation as being a pristine place in which to live and to visit given the significant role which tourism plays in the economy of the county.

Environment, Climate Action, Marine & Emergency Planning SPC

Environment, Climate Action, Marine & Emergency Planning SPC met on 3 occasions during 2024. Two meetings were chaired by Cllr Michael Foley while Cllr Sam Locke chaired the third.

The following items were considered by the SPC during 2024

- Climate Action Plan
- Solar Street Lighting
- National Waste Management Plan for the Circular Economy 2024 - 2030
- 2023 Litter Report
- Optimal uses for North Kerry Landfill
- Beach Permits
- Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029 high-level Framework and Implementation Plan

The first SPC following the 2024 Local Elections was held on 12th December 2024 wherein members were briefed on the role of the SPC and the key functions of the Planning, Environment and Emergency Management Directorate.

Waste Management

Waste Recycling

Waste and Recycling facilities were provided in 2024 at the Civic Amenity Sites in Milltown, Coolcaslagh (Killarney), Kenmare, Dingle/ Daingean Uí Chúis and Cahersiveen, as well as at an extensive Bring Bank network for glass bottles and steel and aluminium cans throughout the county. Countywide, the use of the Bring Bank services has been impacted by the introduction of the Deposit Re-Turn scheme in February 2024, with a reduction of 50% in the number of drinks cans being deposited in Bring Banks. Glass figures for 2024 are similar to 2023.

At the end of 2024, there were over 90 Bring Bank locations throughout the county. These are maintained by Kerry County Council staff and there are also 44 Community Groups involved in the “Adopt a Bring Bank” Scheme.

Historic Landfills & North Kerry Landfill

Kerry County Council has completed a number of detailed environmental reports on proposed works to remediate the 13 Historic Landfills throughout the County. Draft Certificates of Authorisation have been issued by EPA for Ahascra, Dingle/ Daingean Uí Chúis and Tralee Historic Landfills. Kerry County Council continues to engage with the EPA and final Certificates of Authorisation are awaited.

The North Kerry Landfill has been closed to the public since 2014, and Kerry County Council is exploring the potential to develop alternative activities which optimise the land use and provide a potential revenue stream to the Council to help with ongoing management costs, Kerry County Council is continuing to examine optimal use(s) for the site, that are compatible with the ongoing license and aftercare management requirements.

Environmental Regulation

Litter, Water Quality, Air, and Noise Pollution Monitoring and Enforcement

The Environment Section provides a wide range of regulatory and enforcement services throughout the County in relation to waste, litter, water quality, air, and noise issues. These services include responding to environmental complaints received from the public and state

agencies, regulating a range of waste related activities and monitoring, and enforcing of water quality standards etc.

The table below shows a breakdown of complaints received during 2024 and prosecutions and convictions that resulted during the year.

| Type of reported pollution | Number | Prosecutions | Convictions |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Litter Pollution | 566 | 19 | 12 |
| Noise Pollution | 43 | 1 | 0 |
| Water Pollution | 152 | 9 | 2 |
| Air Pollution | 25 | 1 | 0 |
| Waste Pollution | 382 | 1 | 1 |
| Total Number | 1,168 | 31 | 15 |

Litter Management

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

Known dumping and littering black spots around the county are monitored on a regular basis to identify offenders and to act as a deterrent against unauthorised dumping.

There were 92 litter fines issued during the year, including 2 for dog fouling, with 46 of these paid at the end of 2024.

- The principal litter challenges facing the county include
- Illegal dumping in the countryside in the bogs, mountainside, rivers, and forests
- Discarded Litter along roadways by passing motorist and pedestrians
- Dog fouling along walking routes and in housing estates
- The growing amount of Litter discarded from convenience food outlets etc
- Cigarette, Vapes and Gum littering

The Tidy Towns competition, County Clean-up Day and the annual National Spring Clean took place during 2024. The teams of dedicated volunteers that make up the Tralee Tidy Towns group were rewarded for their efforts as Tralee came second in the national Large Urban Centre category, increasing their score from 347 to 383 points in just two years.

Kerry County Council distributed 965 litter pickers and almost 11,600 bags to volunteers during 2024 who together with the Litter Wardens, collected approximately 102 tonnes of litter/waste throughout the county.

Environmental Awareness in the Area of Litter and Waste Management

In the area of Environmental Awareness, we continued to operate a comprehensive programme of activities informing all sectors of the community on good environmental practices that will have an impact on issues such as waste collection, litter, water conservation and food waste. Environmental awareness is promoted via several key programmes and activities including

Green Schools Programme: Kerry has 162 Green Schools registered across the county including 37 renewal flags awarded in 2024.

Climate Literacy Course: - 5 schools supported to learn about eight different environmental topics, ranging from fast fashion to plastic use, with the course culminating in a project that saw them taking environmental action. It is a train the trainer style course and examples of topics include climate change, climate justice, fast fashion, sustainable transport, biodiversity loss, and food and soil.

Killarney Coffee Cup Project: Kerry County Council along with other stakeholders supported this project which has seen local businesses move away from single use coffee cups, instead opting for a deposit and return system using reusable cups. This was further supported by Green Business Hub Funding which promotes commercial waste segregation.

Dog fouling campaign: schools conducted dog fouling ‘audits’, which involved students patrolling their school’s surrounding areas and spraying dog foul spotted. This project was further highlighted by Killarney Looking Good and a local school to spray footpaths with messaging to remind people to pick up after their pets.

ReLove Fashion: Open to secondary schools and youth groups. Entrants in the competition immerse themselves in the world of sustainable fashion and have the opportunity to engage hands-on with sustainable fashion, exploring creative reuse options such as upcycling, repairs, alterations and mending.

Rubbish Film Festival: Five schools across the 5 MDs were supported where students create a one-minute film focused on key environmental topics such as responsible production and consumption (SDG 12), climate (SDG 13), waste management, and protecting nature. They also design posters and social media content to help spread their message.

European Recycling Platform (ERP) Recycling Days: Promotion of ERP Free Recycling events in the county which offered householders an accessible central collection point to bring their electrical waste and used batteries for recycling.

National Food Waste Recycling Week 2nd to 9th June: Encouraged everyone to recycle food waste by providing practical advice along with hints and tips on how easy it is to recycle and get everyone involved.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week 20th – 29th September: Communicated about SDG Week which celebrated and raised awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Musical Instrument Project: collaboration between Environment Awareness Office, Arts Office, Library Services (Killarney, Tralee, Cahersiveen, and Listowel) and Music Generation

Kerry to take unwanted musical instruments, refurbish them and redistribute them back into the community.

Online composing and food waste workshops: communities offered workshops on how to compost correctly and how to deal with food waste.

FoodShare: take quality surplus food from supermarkets and food producers and make it available to organisations to redistribute it to those in need.

Tralee Food Festival: supported the festival on their journey to reduce waste and promote best practice. Sponsored wash stations for the event.

Tidy Towns Seminar: In person event held with over 60 people in attendance. The theme focused on was 'Climate' and 'Climate Action'.

County Clean Up: annual campaign is facilitated by KWD and took place in April 2024 where approximately 4,000 volunteers collected over 4,200 bags of litter.

National Spring Clean: a national clean-up was held in 2024 where various groups and individuals registered through An Taisce to carry out clean ups throughout the county.

Waste Regulation and Enforcement 2024

Kerry County Council currently has a range of responsibilities across the areas of waste regulation and enforcement. In addition to responding to complaints about unauthorised waste issues, the Council also has responsibility for regulating a variety of waste-related activities in County Kerry. This includes the authorisation and monitoring of various waste facilities throughout the County, as well as the regulation of waste collection activities. The waste types which are subject to regulation include household and commercial waste, inert and other construction and demolition wastes, end-of-life vehicles etc. In addition, Kerry County Council coordinates its activities in this area with several other state agencies, including the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authority (WERLA), the Regional Waste Management Office, the National Waste Collection Permit Office, The National Transfrontier Shipment Office etc.

Other areas of activity include implementation of the Waste Presentation Bye-Laws for County Kerry and monitoring of the various Producer Responsibility Initiatives (PRIs) such as the Waste Tyres and Waste Batteries schemes. Kerry County Council carried out in excess of 1,900 waste and litter-related inspections in 2024.

Anti-dumping initiative 2024

In 2024 the Dept. of Communications, Climate Action and Environment made funding available, via the Regional Waste Enforcement Lead Authorities, to Local Authorities to tackle illegal dumping in the country. €91,666 was drawn down by Kerry County Council in 2024 and this funding was used to collect illegally dumped waste, a Mattress Amnesty Event and for the purchasing of stock items and equipment to be used in waste removal.

Water Quality, Air & Noise Management 2024

Kerry County Council carries out a broad range of activities in this area, including the following: -

- Enforcement and implementation of water quality and air quality legislation.
- Monitoring of water quality throughout the county in accordance with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive.
- Implementation of the National Water Action Plan.
- Implementation of the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems.
- Provision of oil pollution response.
- Enforcement and implementation of the national solid fuel regulations.
- In addition to the above, the Council also responds to and investigates complaints regarding water pollution incidents, air quality and noise nuisance in the County.

Kerry County Council carried out in excess of 2,400 inspections across the water, air and noise areas in 2024.

Beach Management

Blue Flag Beaches

The 2024 season proved a very successful one with the county awarded 15 Blue Flags (including Portmagee Pontoons which is managed by Kilrush Maritime Ltd). Blue Flag status was awarded to the following beaches: Baile an Sceilge, Fenit, Rossbeigh Ballybunion South, Ballybunion North, Inch, Kells, Ballyheigue, Maharabeg, Banna, Doire Fhionáin (Derrynane), Ceann Trá, White Strand (Caherciveen) and Fenit Marina. In order to achieve a Blue Flag status awarded by An Taisce, each beach must meet stringent criteria in the areas of Environmental Education and Awareness Provision, Water Quality, Environmental Management & Safety & Services.

Bathing Water Results 2024

Kerry County Council achieved ‘excellent’ Bathing water status in 2024. This means that out of 15 EU identified bathing areas in the County, which includes the blue flag beaches, 15 were classified as “excellent” bathing water quality by the Environmental Protection Agency. A further 5 exclusively green coast designated beaches were also monitored i.e. Baile an Sceilge, Castlegregory Littor Beal Bán and Waterville town beach and all were of “excellent” status. In the 2024 bathing season (which is designated as being from 1st June to 15th September), 232 samples were taken and assessed for microbiological and physico-chemical parameters by Kerry County Council’s Laboratory and reported to the EPA.

Water quality is assessed as per EU Bathing Water Regulations and is based on determining two microbiological parameters i.e. E coli and Intestinal enterococci and determinations of status are based on the previous four seasons using a statistical measurement known as 95 percentile. Thus, latest measurement was from 2021 to 2024. Samples are taken according to pre-determined schedule. However, extra samples are taken throughout season on foot of expected rainfall or pollution events.

The regulations state that the 95 percentile over four years should be:

Excellent status: E coli is Less than 250, Intestinal Enterococci is less than 100

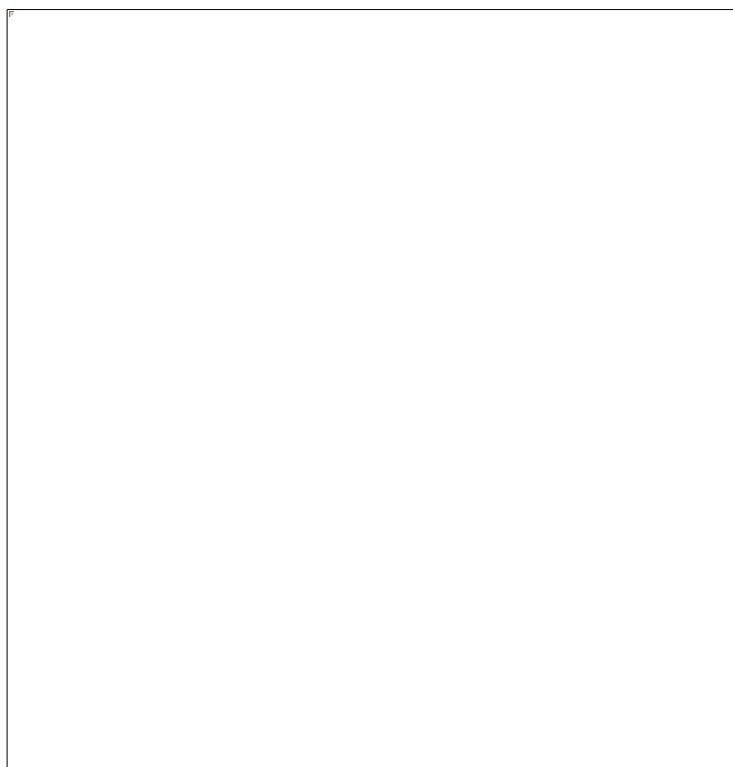
Good status: E coli is less than 500, Intestinal enterococci is less than 200

For Good and Excellent status 95 percentile measurement is used while 90 percentile is used to assess sufficient status

Sufficient status (using 90 percentile) E coli is less than 500, intestinal enterococci is less than 200.

If none of results meet above categories, then bathing water is classified as Poor status.

Latest 95 percentile values as assessed by Kerry County Council lab for period 2020 to 2024 in Table below.



Laboratory

The role of Kerry County Council's laboratory is to monitor the quality of drinking water, rivers, lakes, bathing waters, wastewater discharges and industrial licensed discharges in the county in accordance with National and EU legislation. The Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) has awarded ISO17025 accreditation to the Laboratory in December 2015, for analysis of a range of chemical and microbiological parameters in freshwater and drinking water.

The current scope of Accreditation currently covers at least 18 tests:

Microbiological tests

E coli/Coliforms, Enterococci,

E coli / Intestinal enterococci in Bathing water

Chemical tests

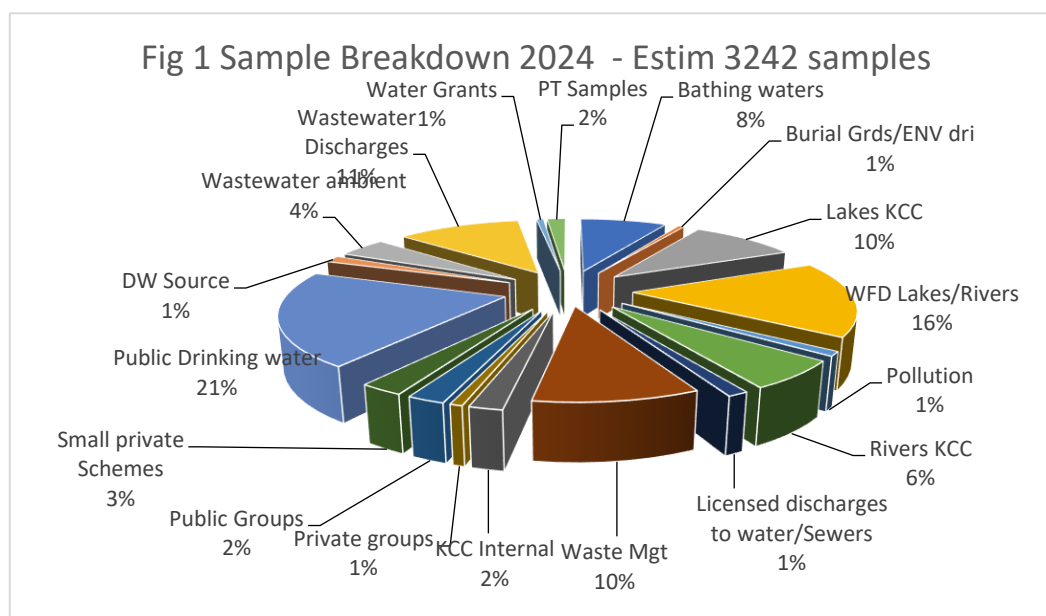
Ph., Conductivity, Turbidity, Colour, Fluoride, Total Oxidized Nitrogen, Nitrite, Ammonia, Chloride, Sulphate – (drinking water, freshwater, wastewater), COD (Wastewater), Suspended solids (Wastewater),

ISO 17025 is a much sought-after international management standard for laboratories.

Achieving this accreditation is formal recognition that the Kerry County Council laboratory delivers a high-quality service and is compliant with regulatory requirements and industry best practice. It also means that such data can be submitted to satisfy EU monitoring regulatory requirements. Kerry County Council had their annual INAB assessment in September 2024 and continue to be an accredited Laboratory.

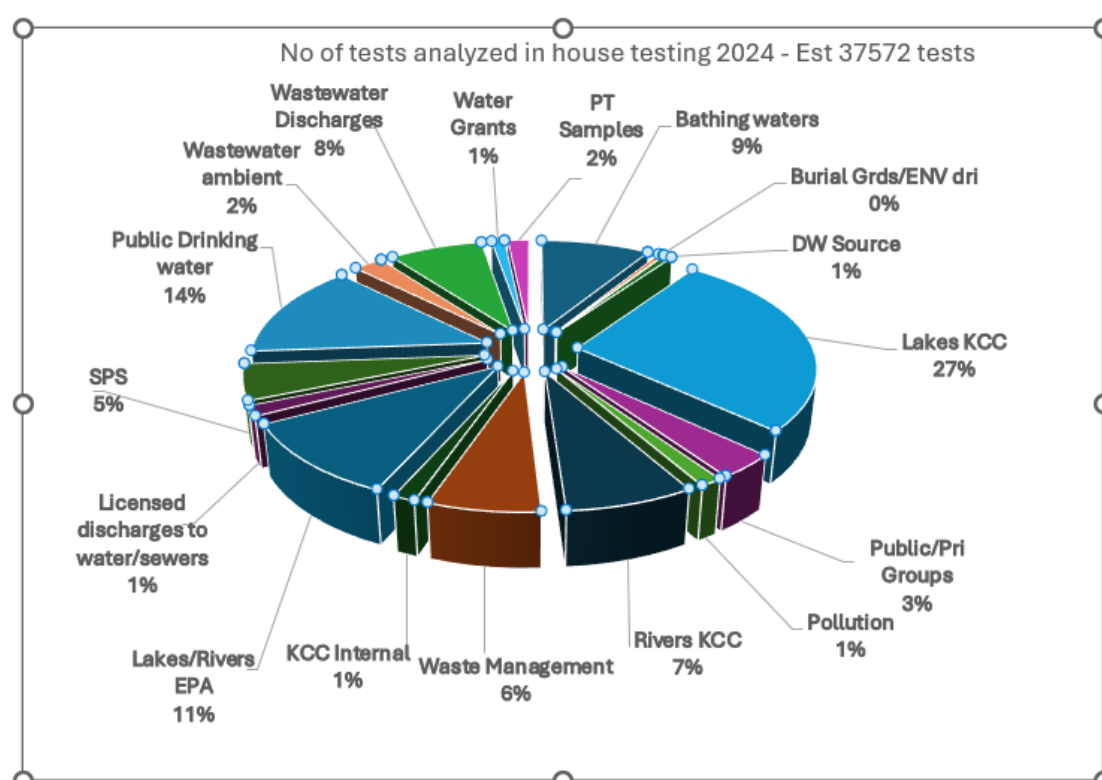
Laboratory activity is gauged by samples taken by staff, in-house testing activity and tests reported. In 2024, Laboratory staff took **3,242** samples, analysed **37,572** tests and reported on **4,462** samples (**56,000** tests).

Breakdown of Samples taken by Kerry County Council lab staff (Figure 1)



Of samples taken by Kerry County Council lab staff 65.35% were for Environment Services i.e. river, lakes, bathing water, licensed discharges to water, waste management facilities and burial grounds. 24.5% of samples were taken for Úisce Éireann and 10.15% were taken exclusively for Water Services i.e. Group schemes and small commercial schemes not managed by Úisce Éireann. Note that 16% of samples were taken from rivers and lakes exclusively for EPA labs.

Breakdown of tests analysed by Kerry County Council lab (Figure 2)



Of tests analysed by Kerry County Council lab staff 65% were for Environment Services i.e. rivers lakes, bathing water, licensed discharges to water, waste management facilities and burial grounds.

24% were analysed exclusively for Irish Water. Water Services (non Irish water) comprised of Public and private group water schemes, small private commercial schemes and water Grant applications and amounted to **10%**

Table summary for samples and tests below

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Table summary for samples and tests below

The above information is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an offer or recommendation of any financial product or service. Please consult your financial advisor for more information.

Burial Grounds 2024

Kerry County Council operates and maintains 158 burial grounds, 92 of which are classified as archaeologically protected sites under the National Monuments Acts including Burial Grounds previously operated by the Town Councils.

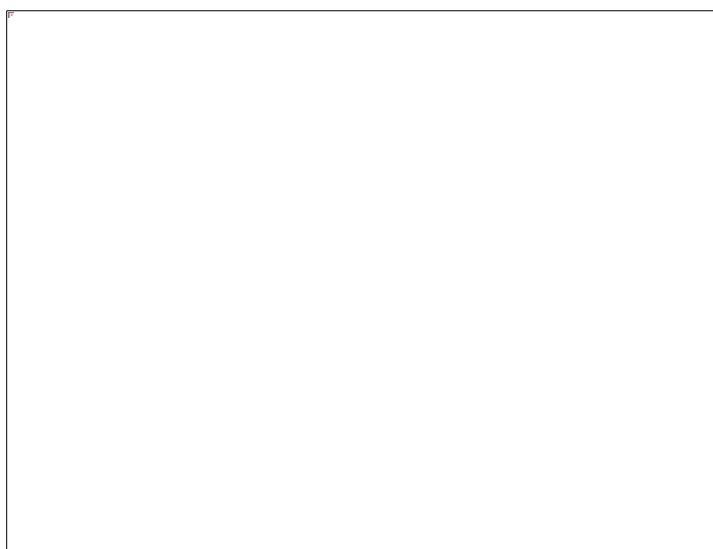
The Council worked with over 50 Committees and provided funding of €57,700 to these Committees for the added upkeep and maintenance of the Burial Grounds. This co-operation has contributed to substantial improvements in many Burial Grounds across the County and the Kerry County Council is highly appreciative of this assistance.

The Burial Ground Office works closely with the public to respond to all queries and ensure that customer complaints are dealt with in a satisfactory manner.

Substantial works were carried out in 2024 across our Burial Grounds, this included:

- Stone wall repairs in Rathduff
- Fencing works completed in Duagh
- New footpaths & path repairs in: Ballyheigue, Kilfeighney, Duagh, Galey, Gods Acre, Cill Maoilchéadair, Cill Bhreac, St Johns Ballybunion
- Land purchase completed for the extension of Churchtown
- Shed installed in Dun Urlinn
- Conservation & restoration works were done in Kilcolman Abbey
- Water connections were installed in Dun Quinn & Kilshannig
- Extension works completed for Cromane completed which involved land clearance works & paths installation
- Access road improvement works were done in Kilnanare Old
- Drainage works were undertaken in St Johns Ballybunion
- Appointment of numerous new caretakers.

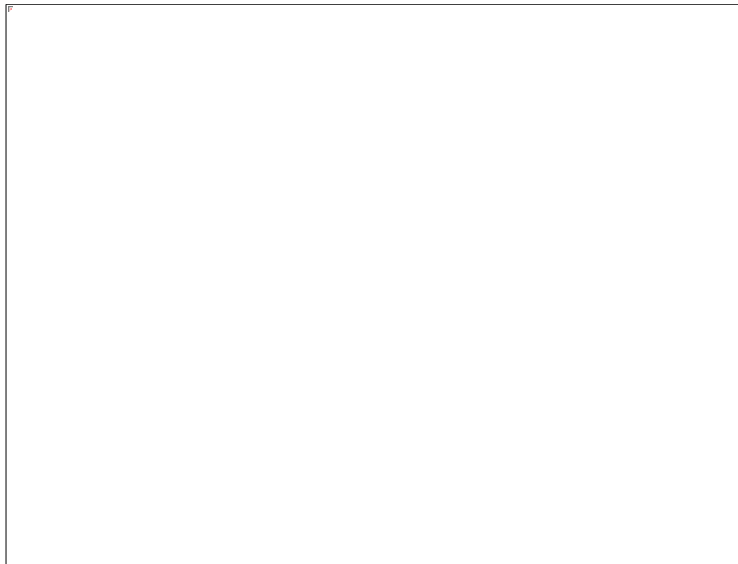
General Maintenance, landscaping and clean ups were undertaken across all Burial Grounds



Ballyheigue



Killeighney



Cromane

Veterinary Service 2024

The Council continued to operate a service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, however, many of the functions and staff of Veterinary Service transferred to DAFM from 1st January 2025. The Dog Pound will remain under the remit of Kerry County Council as will the Control of Horses.

During 2024, the Council worked closely with Limerick and Clare County Councils through a Section 86 agreement, providing veterinary cover. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland financed the provision of this service. The Council registered, approved and supervised 26 food businesses throughout the county. This included a wide variety of plants. These abattoirs are approved for the slaughter of bovine, ovine, porcine, and caprine as well as poultry such as chickens and turkeys. More produce ready-to-eat meat products such as salamis, cooked hams, and cure meats. These artisan food producers continue to suffer from a challenging

commercial environment during 2024, which was particularly exacerbated by the spike in energy costs. We will continue to provide every assistance, advice and support to help facilitate their continued success.

Flooding, Coastal & Marine Unit

Flooding /CFRAMS

Tralee Flood Relief Scheme (FRS) - Programme and works were ongoing in 2024 to complete the design of the scheme, carry out the necessary environmental assessments and progress same through the necessary planning consent process. Stage 1 (Identification and Development of a Preferred Scheme) of the project is scheduled for completion in Q1 2026. Stage 2 (Planning) of the scheme will follow thereafter.

Kenmare Flood Relief Scheme (FRS) - Programme and works were ongoing in 2024 to complete the design of the scheme, carry out the necessary environmental assessments and progress same through the necessary planning consent process. Stage 1 (Identification and Development of a Preferred Scheme) of the project is scheduled for completion in Q1 2026. Stage 2 (Planning) of the scheme will follow thereafter.

Listowel Flood Relief Scheme (FRS) - Flood attenuation works at Clieveragh are being progressed as an advanced project under the main Listowel flood relief scheme. Works commenced onsite in February and are expected to be completed by Q1 2025.

N70 Valentia Road, Caherciveen - Works to resolve recurring flooding issues associated with blockage adjacent to the Ring of Kerry Hotel were substantially completed. These works were funded by the

OPW under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works & Coastal Protection Programme.



Looking west into new diversion channel and connectivity to offline storage lagoon



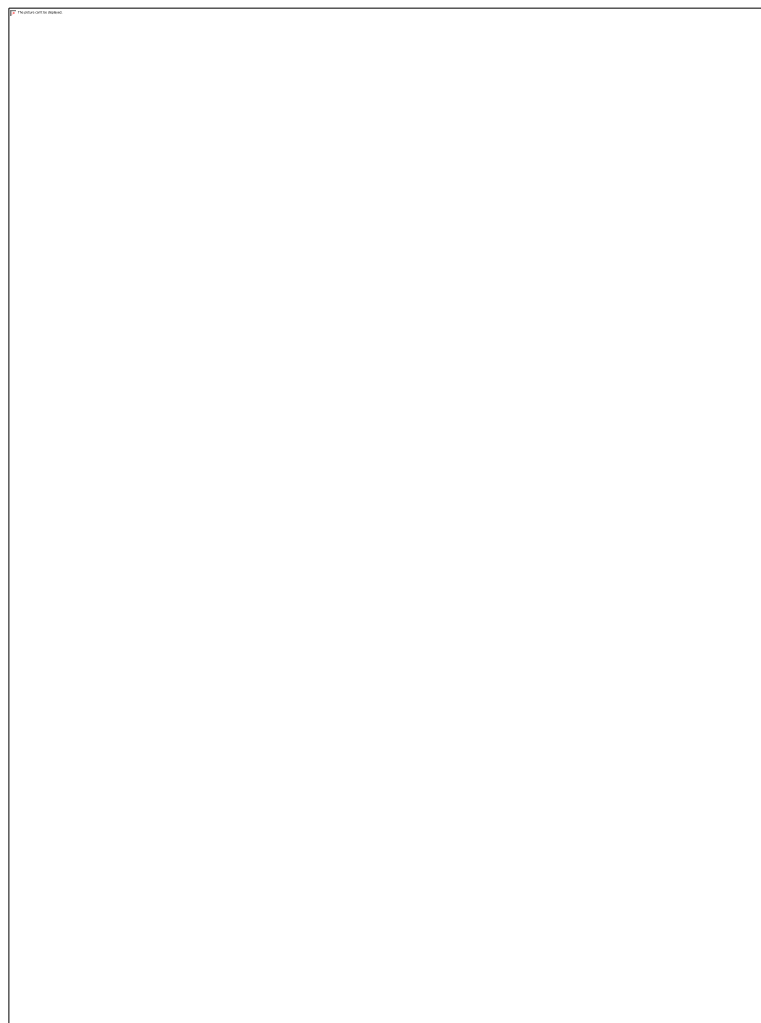
Outfall channel established with grass.

Marine

Reenard Pier - Remedial works were carried out to the pier at **Reenard**. The existing sheet pile envelope was badly corroded, thus allowing fill from within the structure to continually escape into the surrounding waters and thereby weakening the structure. This was exacerbated during stormy weather.

A new envelope of resin coated sheet piles was 'driven to refusal' into the seabed around the exiting piles, with the area between them filled using a tremie concrete pour. A new edge beam following the profile of the sheet piles and a new deck were incorporated to enhance the structural integrity of the pier. In tandem with this, new fenders offering greater protection to the structure and to visiting vessels were included. Bollards were also re-positioned.

A local fish processor requested the provision of a new 3 phase electricity supply so that visiting boats berthing at the pier could charge up their refrigeration units and this has been accommodated into the works. A new water supply together with repairs to the existing slip were also incorporated.



Reenard Pier – refurbished structure

Due to adverse weather incidents, the Civil defence Team have seen an increase in emergency call outs and activity in 2024. During adverse weather events, the Civil Defence Team are requested to provide assist to a Primary Emergency Response Agency (i.e. Kerry County Council, Kerry Fire and Rescue Service, H.S.E, and An Garda Síochána). The Civil defence Team have also witnessed an increase in requests to provide assistance to An Garda Síochána for missing person incidents.

Our increase in trained members, as well as our updated technology and equipment has proved very advantageous to aid these organisations in their operations. The table below provides a summary of activity in 2024.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Community Events covered | 102 |
| Emergency Call Outs by a Primary Response Agency | 21 |
| Certified Training Courses completed | 32 |
| Uncertified Trainings (Weekly/Monthly Trainings) | 59 |

- **Community Events:** The Civil Defence were exceptionally busy in 2024 when it came to aiding community events. The Civil defence team attended just under 100 different community events in 2024, which was predominantly to provide medical cover. The Civil defence team also provided boat and water cover, transportation, communications, welfare/catering, logistical planning and more operational supports.
- **Severe Weather Call Outs:** The Civil defence emergency response teams have responded throughout the year, to provide assistance to the primary response agencies.
- **Missing Person Searches:** The Civil defence trained Missing Person First Responders have been utilised on a number of occasions in 2024, as well as other resources, such as 4x4 off-road drivers, welfare/catering, and communications equipment to provide assistance and resources in missing person searches.
- **Drone Call Outs:** A trend that is being seen nationally, is the use of Civil Defence Drones by the Primary Response Agencies. Our IAA qualified drone pilots, along with our three drones (including our new top of the line, M30T Drone) have been to Cork and Clare supporting other Civil Defence Units, as well as providing services within Kerry on several occasions.
- **Supported Charities:** Supported multiple charity events and charitable organisations throughout the year. Our members always enjoy helping out great causes and we continue to help out where possible.

- **HSE/NAS Assistance:** In 2024, the Civil defence team transported both patients and staff on request of the HSE. We also transported blood from GPs to UHK, where there were time sensitivity issues.
- **Training:** 2024 saw us provide a large amount of training to our volunteers. From training courses ran internally (by our own instructors), to trainings provided by the Civil Defence college and other suppliers, our members have been very busy upskilling. See below for examples of training:
 - Medical: Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), CFR, FAR, EFR
 - Swiftwater and Flood First Responders
 - Missing Person Search Responders
 - Manual Handling and People Handling
 - Avian Flu Response Training
 - Portable Pump Operators

Additional Activities Levels in 2024:

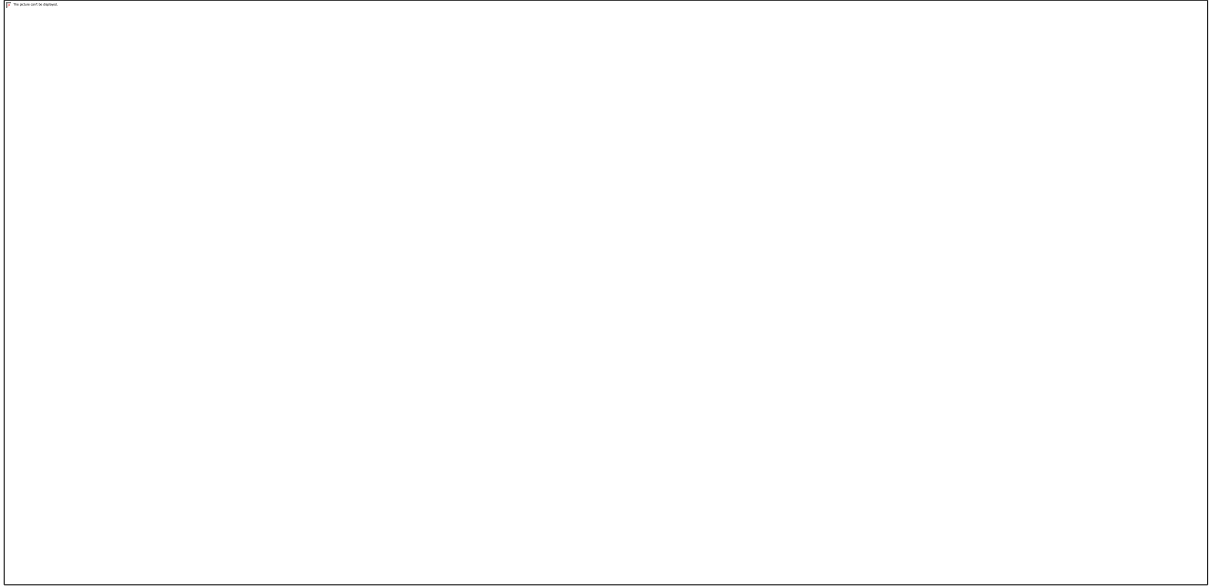
- 6 new Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) trained
- 2 new Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) qualified drone pilots
- 20 new volunteers inducted and now active (meeting all minimum training requirements)
- Procurement of new drone – DJI M30T,
- New emergency call-out PPE purchased
- Trained up 4 members to C Licence, using our Advanced Driving Instructor and Truck.
- Provided multiple Cardiac First Response (CFR) Courses to community groups across the county
- Procurement of a new ECG Monitor for our Ambulance.



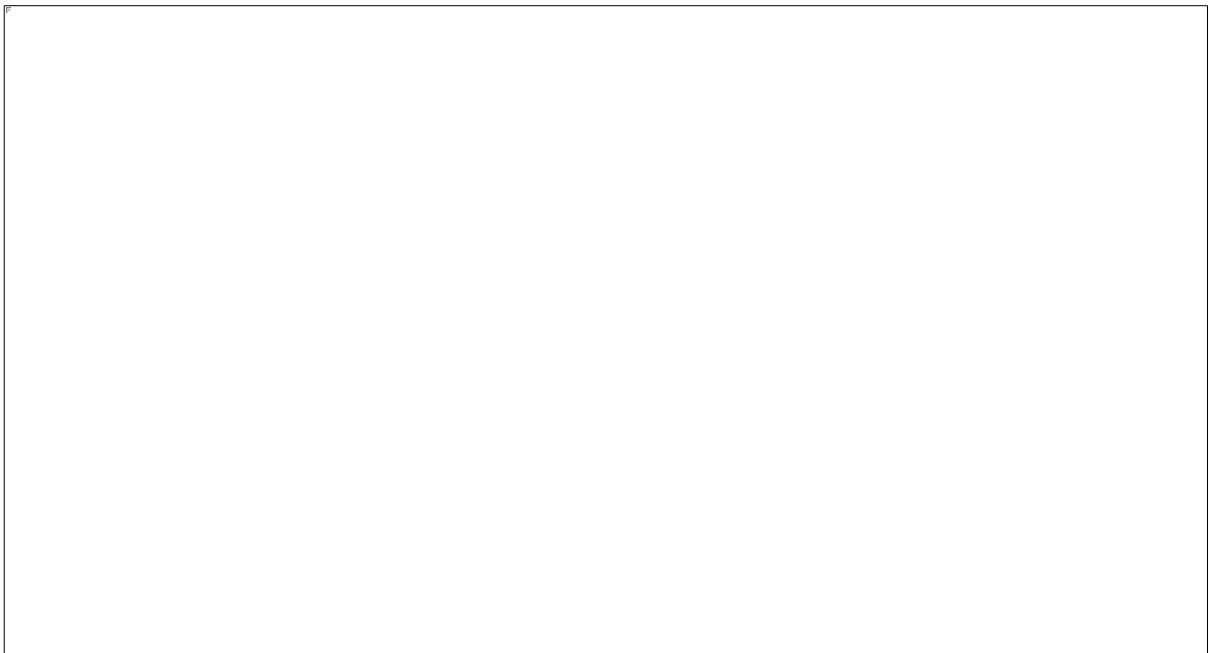
Civil Defence providing assistance to Kerry County Council Lifeguards at Ventry Beach



Kerry Civil Defence assisting Kerry Fire and Rescue Service at Listowel Flooding



Kerry Drone Unit responding to an Emergency Call Out in Glenbeigh



Kerry Civil Defence Boat and Water Rescue team providing Community Event assistance in Killarney

Fire Services and Building Control

Building Control And Fire Safety

The Building Control/Fire Prevention team promotes greater awareness of the Building Regulations in the county by ensuring a visible presence on building sites with a good geographical spread.

The main focus of this section is to:

- Inspect Buildings for compliance with current Building Regulations
- Provide advice on compliance with current Building Regulations
- Monitor the provision of access for all
- Further the conservation of fuel and energy in relation to buildings by requiring the submission of BER's (Building Energy Ratings Certificates)

Volumes of work in this area increased during 2024 when compared to 2023:

- 636 Commencement Notices/7 Day Notices were received in 2024 pertaining to 341 buildings of which 1,040 were new buildings (including multi-unit dwellings).
- 463 or 44.5% of the 1,040 new buildings notified in 2024 were inspected by officers with an overall total of 222 Building Control Inspections carried out
- 229 Fire Safety Certificates granted
- 139 Disability Access Certificates granted

As the Fire Authority under Fire Services legislation; our team of fire officers' co-ordinate and supervise the operational response to emergencies, including assistance to the National Ambulance Service, fire prevention and certification of building fire safety, together with pre-fire planning and major emergency management. Our response to 'ambulance assist' calls continued to increase during 2024 compared to previous years.

We also deliver a range of fire safety and fire prevention services. These include fire safety inspection of premises, fire safety management advice to owners or occupiers in our functional area and community fire safety outreaches throughout the year. A number of premises that were proposed to be used for refuge accommodation were also inspected and reports prepared on same.

The Wildlife Act prohibits burning of lands between 1st March and 31st August annually and this means that dry periods outside of these dates can be particularly busy with burning. Gorse fire attendances by the fire service during 2024 were low compared to the same period for 2023.

Additional fire fighters were recruited and trained during 2024 to meet the recommendations of the Fire Service Workplace Relations Commission Agreement.

It is essential that we try to keep the age of our emergency response vehicle fleet above a critical level each year. In 2024 we have procured with the assistance of the National Directorate of Fire and Emergency Management; two new Fire Service 4 X 4 vehicles, two new station vans, an electric van and an order was placed for two new fire appliances which are expected to be delivered in 2025.

The 3-Bay extension to our Killarney Fire Station was ready and awaiting contract signing, however due to significant cost increases the contractors who tendered for the project can no longer stand over their price. Additional NZEB legislation will now need to be taken into account so some design enhancements will be required prior to re-tendering. We will now need to seek to engage consultants to carry out this NZEB examination and update the tender documents with a view to moving ahead with this project.

In total, the Fire Service responded to 1,259 incidents in 2024 which represents an overall decrease of 2% on the 1,282 incidents in 2023:

- 345 Fire Incidents - decrease of 25%
- 62 Chimney Fires - decrease of 3%
- 46 Gorse Fires - decrease of 73%
- 231 Road Traffic Collisions - increase of 1%
- 212 Ambulance Assist Calls - increase of 16%

As the Building Control Authority under the Building Control legislation our team of senior fire officers inspect a % of all premises covered by commencement notices in Kerry in order to monitor and enforce as necessary Building Regulation compliance. Our team carried out 222 building control inspections during 2024.

Our fire officers assigned workload included the processing of 229 Fire Safety Certificate and 139 Disability Access Certificate applications. They also provided licencing support to the Courts as required.

Our administrative and technical personnel dealt with 636 Commencement Notices/7 Day Notices received in 2024. This is an increase of 37% from 2023. 341 of these Commencement Notices related to new builds and 34 commencement notices related to multiple building/housing estates/apartment blocks.

**DIRECTORATE OF
CORPORATE SERVICES**

Director of Services: CHRISTY O'CONNOR

CORPORATE SERVICES

ICT

INTERNAL AUDIT

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Section provided administrative support for the 33 elected members and to meetings of full Council and the five municipal districts throughout 2024. The section includes a number of business units – Media and Communications, Freedom of Information, Customer Relations, Corporate Support, Register of Electors and Facilities Management.

Media and Communications

During 2024, the Media and Communications Unit continued to deal with external communications, principally in liaising with the local and national media, and, occasionally, the international media. It issued press releases and information about events and projects in which the Council was involved during the year and assisted in organising publicity campaigns and policy launches.

The Media and Communications Unit oversees social media engagement on behalf of the Council and ensures that it maintains a strong profile and channels of communication with the media, customers, and the wider public.

During 2024, the unit continued to work closely with other statutory and development agencies and organisations on matters of mutual interest from a communications perspective. It also provided research support to management and elected cathaoirleach/mayor.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Unit deals with requests for records held by Kerry County Council from members of the public, journalists and organisations. Kerry County Council is a public body which is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, which allows for access to certain records held by the local authority subject to a number of exemptions. In 2024, Kerry County Council received 186 Freedom of Information requests, 150 of which were for non-personal records and 36 of which were for personal records. 24 requests were received from journalists and 2 were from Oireachtas members. 4 decisions were appealed to the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC). This Unit also deals with requests submitted under the Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) Regulations and in 2024, processed 12 applications under these regulations.

Register of Electors

Kerry County Council is responsible for compiling and publishing the Register of Electors for the county each year within the statutory timeframes.

In 2024, two referendums were held on 8 March 2024 on proposed amendments to the Constitution of Ireland, Local Elections were held on 7th June 2024 and a General Election on 29th November 2024. The Register of Electors office continued on the updating and maintenance of the register. There were approximately 129,000 individuals registered to vote in Kerry.

Local Elections 2024

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2001 as amended, local elections are held every five years. Local elections were held on 7th June 2024. A total of 77 candidates were nominated for election in the six Local Electoral Areas. The County Returning Officer was Mr Martin

O'Donoghue. Counting of ballots took place at the Killarney Sports and Leisure Centre and the John Mitchels GAA Complex in Tralee.

The electoral areas in County Kerry are as follows:

- Castleisland Local Electoral Area
- Corca Dhuibhne Local Electoral Area
- Kenmare Local Electoral Area
- Killarney Local Electoral Area
- Listowel Local Electoral Area
- Tralee Local Electoral Area

For the purposes of Municipal Districts, the Dingle and Castleisland Local Electoral Areas are brought together to form Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District while the other Municipal Districts of Tralee, Kenmare, Killarney, and Listowel correspond with the Local Electoral Area boundaries

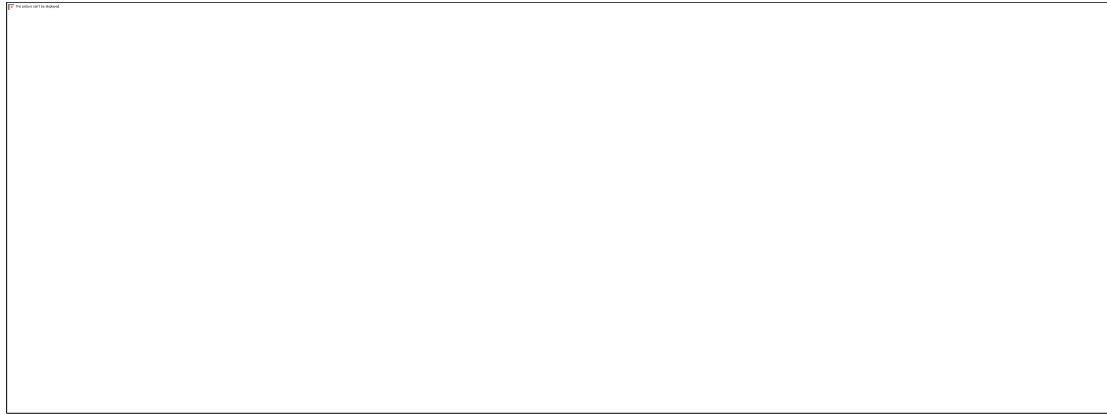
Information and Communications Technology

The role of the ICT Department is to ensure the reliable, secure delivery of IT services to support the work of the Council. Modern ways of working and digital transformations have increased the Council's reliance on IT infrastructure and services. This section outlines some of the ICT initiatives and projects implemented during 2024 to support, maintain and improve these services.

The ICT Department manages the IT infrastructure including the networks, storage, servers, information systems and applications such as email and teams that are required to support the operation of the Council's services.

There was significant investment in IT in 2024 that allowed us to progress the following projects as well as maintain day to day operations:

- Multiple application and software Upgrades - iHouse, iPlan & iReg.
- IT Support for the local elections
- IT Support for the new Council and councillors
- Upgrades to in-house developed systems MEET (Support the management of the Council meetings and councillors) and Planning Enforcement System.
- New Cybersecurity Awareness Training Platform
- New Endpoint Protection solution.
- A significant number of systems were migrated from legacy platforms to supported technology.
- Over 11,000 cases were logged with the IT Service desk.



- Support over 950 staff, 1000 end user devices, 160 Servers and 70 network locations.

Another priority for 2024 was to continue to improve our security posture. The Public Service Cyber Security Baseline Standards were issued in November 2021, and the standard presents a set of measures which are intended to create an acceptable security standard which can be revised over time to address new threats and vulnerabilities and to keep pace with new technologies and suppliers. This Council are working towards this as part of their cyber security programme and the standard will put the Council in a much better position to identify, protect, detect, respond to, and recover from an attack, minimising damage and impact.

Maintaining our security posture and responding to new alerts continued to require considerable time and resources. Phishing and ransomware threats have noticeably increased, responses have included the introduction of new controls and training to raise awareness of cybersecurity risks among staff.

Internal Audit Unit

The role of the Internal Audit Unit within Kerry County Council is to provide independent, objective assurance to management on the operations of the local authority.

It is a key source of assurance and part of the governance and control measures to ensure that significant operational risks are identified, managed and effectively controlled. It helps the organisation achieve its objectives, as set out in the Corporate Plan, by bringing a systematic disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

As part of this, the Internal Audit Unit works closely with Senior Management and the Audit Committee to identify areas for review each year, which forms part of the audit work programme. In 2024, the Internal Audit Unit completed eight audits, on a broad range of topics, and a further four audits were underway at year end.

In addition, the unit undertook a comprehensive checking programme in a diverse range of areas such as; Motor Tax, Area offices, Civic Amenity Sites, Kerry County Museum, Fenit Harbour, Stores, pay parking, revenue collectors, and libraries

Audit Committee

As set out in the Local Government Act and Statutory Instrument SI 244 of 2014, the Audit Committee forms an important part of the overall control assurance framework within the Council.

The work of the Audit Committee, which is set out in its charter, ensures that it has an independent role in the provision of assurance to the Council. This includes oversight responsibilities consideration of the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control systems, control environment and control procedures, financial reporting, monitoring compliance with governance procedures within the Council, reviewing the effectiveness of the Internal Audit Unit and providing advice and professional guidance in relation to the development of the unit.

The Audit Committee comprises of two elected members and three external members. During 2024, the term of office of the elected members of Kerry County Council ended, and under legislation, this also resulted in the term of the existing Audit Committee also ending. Following the Local Elections in June 2024, a new Audit Committee was established (as agreed and approved by the Council at its meeting in September 2024).

The Audit Committee met on six occasions in 2024. Focus areas throughout the year included the financial performance of the Council, delivery of the Internal Audit 2024 Plan, reports from the Internal Audit Unit, tracking of closing of outstanding internal audit recommendations, risk management, financial management, cybersecurity and data protection with the committee receiving regular detailed presentations on these topics.

In addition to the agenda items covering all aspects of the committee's role, management provided detailed briefings and presentations from the different directorates on a range of relevant issues impacting on control and governance issues within the Council and this informed the work of the committee and facilitated audit planning and reviews of audit reports, findings and recommendations.

Oifig Na Gaeilge

Acht Na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú), 2021

Is é an reachtaíocht is déanaí a rialaíonn údaráis áitiúla maidir leis an nGaeilge in Éirinn ná An tAcht um Theangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú), 2021, a ritheadh an 22 Nollaig 2021. Leasaíonn an tAcht seo An tAcht um Theangacha Oifigiúla, 2003, agus tugann sé isteach roinnt forálacha a bhaineann go díreach le húdaráis áitiúla agus comhlachtaí poiblí eile.

I measc na bpríomhfhorálacha tá:

- Seirbhísí i nGaeilge sa Ghaeltacht: Éilíonn an tAcht go gcuirfear gach seirbhís phoiblí sa Ghaeltacht ar fáil trí mheán na Gaeilge. Cé nach bhfuil spriocdháta cinnte socraithe, beidh ar an Aire dátaí a shonrú faoina mbeidh oifigí poiblí i Limistéir Pleanála Teanga na Gaeltachta ag feidhmiú trí Ghaeilge.
- Caighdeáin Teanga: Cuireann an tAcht deireadh leis an gcóras scéimeanna teanga agus tagann caighdeáin teanga isteach ina n-áit. Tá na caighdeáin seo dírithe ar sheirbhísí níos comhsheasmhaí agus níos cuntasachtaí a chinntiú i measc comhlachtaí poiblí, lena n-áirítear údaráis áitiúla.
- Spriocanna Fostaíochta: Faoi 31 Nollaig 2030, beidh gá go mbeidh 20% de na hearcaigh nua sa tseirbhís phoiblí, údaráis áitiúla san áireamh, a bheith inniúil sa Ghaeilge. Tá an beart seo dírithe ar chumas na gcomhlachtaí poiblí seirbhísí a sholáthar trí Ghaeilge.
- Cumarsáid agus Fógraíocht: Beidh ar chomhlachtaí poiblí a chinntiú go mbeidh 20% dá bhfógraíocht bhliantúil i nGaeilge. Ina theannta sin, caithfidh ábhar margaíochta a roinneann comhlachtaí poiblí leis an bpobal a bheith i nGaeilge nó dhátheangach. Má fhaightear teachtaireachtaí i nGaeilge ar na meáin shóisialta, caithfear freagra a thabhairt i nGaeilge.
- Foirmeacha Oifigiúla agus Brandáil: Ní mór foirmeacha iarratais ó chomhlachtaí poiblí a bheith ar fáil i nGaeilge nó ar bhonn dhátheangach. Chomh maith leis sin, ní mór lógónna comhlachtaí poiblí a bheith i nGaeilge nó i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla araon, go háirithe agus lógónna nua á ndearadh nó lógónna atá ann cheana á n-athrú.

Tháinig forálacha deiridh an Achta i bhfeidhm ar an 21ú Nollaig 2024. Tá treoirlínte chun cabhrú le comhlachtaí poiblí na dualgais nua seo a chur i bhfeidhm le foilsiú ag an Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán faoi dheireadh Mhárta 2025.

Chun tuilleadh eolais a fháil faoi na hoibleagáidí ar údaráis áitiúla faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú) 2021, is féidir leat téacs iomlán an Achta a léamh ar Leabharlann Reachtanna na hÉireann. (irishstatutebook.ie)

The Irish Office

The most recent legislation governing local authorities concerning the Irish language is the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021, enacted on December 22, 2021. This Act amends the Official Languages Act 2003 and introduces several provisions that directly impact local authorities and other public bodies. Key provisions include:

- **Irish Language Services in the Gaeltacht:** The Act mandates that all public services in Gaeltacht regions be provided through the medium of Irish. While a specific deadline was not initially set, the Minister is required to specify dates by which public offices in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas will operate through Irish.
- **Language Standards:** The previous system of individual language schemes is replaced with binding language standards. These standards aim to ensure consistency and accountability across public bodies, including local authorities, in delivering services through Irish.
- **Recruitment Targets:** By December 31, 2030, at least 20% of new recruits to the public service, including local authorities, are required to be proficient in Irish. This measure seeks to enhance the capacity of public bodies to provide services in the Irish language.
- **Communication and Advertising:** Public bodies must ensure that at least 20% of their annual advertising is in Irish. Additionally, marketing materials distributed to the public should be in Irish or bilingual. Communications received in Irish on social media must be responded to in Irish.
- **Official Forms and Branding:** Application forms provided by public bodies are to be available in Irish or bilingually. Logos of public bodies should be in Irish or both Irish and English, especially when new logos are being designed or existing ones are updated.

The final provisions of the Act were brought into force on December 21, 2024. Guidelines to assist public bodies in implementing these new duties are expected to be issued by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media before the end of March 2025.

For detailed information on the specific obligations of local authorities under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021, you can refer to the full text of the Act available at irishstatutebook.ie.

Pleanáil Teanga don Ghaeilge i gCiarraí

Tá Contae Chiarraí aitheanta mar áit le cultúr saibhir ina bhfuil an Ghaeilge lárnach i saol laethúil na ndaoine, go háirithe sna ceantair Ghaeltachta i gCorca Dhuibhne agus in Uíbh Ráthach, áit a labhraítear an Ghaeilge go laethúil.

Tá plean teanga ag gach ceantar Gaeltachta nó Limistéar Pleanála Teanga (LPT) mar a thugtar orthu. Tá Oifig Pleanála Teanga (OPT) fostaithe sna ceantair seo chun na pleananna teanga a chur i bhfeidhm. Tá spriocanna leagtha amach sna pleananna teanga a chuimsíonn gach gné de shaol an phobail san LPT, bunaithe ar riachtanais an phobail. Tá go leor bainte amach ó cuireadh tús leis na pleananna seo sa mhéid is go bhfuil níos mó deiseanna úsáide Gaeilge cruthaithe sna pobail, níos mó feasachta ardaíthe sna pobail maidir le húsáid na Gaeilge, níos mó tacaíochta curtha ar fáil do theaghlach agus níos mó seirbhísí do dhaoine óga.

Tá pleananna teanga i bhfeidhm freisin do 3 bhaile i gCiarraí a fheidhmíonn mar Bhailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta (Bailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta – BSG). Is iad sin Daingean Uí Chúis, Trá Lí agus Cathair Saidhbhín. Tá pleananna teanga ag na bailte seo go léir agus is é CCC an Cheanneagraíocht do Phlean Teanga Chathair Saidhbhín. Bíonn Oifig na Gaeilge ag comhoibriú leis na heagraíochtaí éagsúla mar chuid den obair seo agus tá Coiste Fóram

Chiarraí ar bun chun na páirtithe cuí ar fad a bhfuil baint acu leis an bpleanáil teanga a thabhairt le chéile.

Seo a leanas na Pleananna Teanga atá á gcur i bhfeidhm i gCiarraí faoi láthair:

1. Corca Dhuibhne – Tobar Dhuibhne
2. Daingean Uí Chúis – Dúchas an Daingin, Baile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta
3. Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh – Brí Uíbh Ráthaigh
4. Cathair Saidhbhín le Gaeilge – Baile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta. Tá Comhairle Contae Chiarraí mar cheanneagraíocht ar an bplean seo.
5. Trá Lí le Gaeilge – Baile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta. Tá an plean seo faoi stiúir an Bhoird Oideachais & Oiliúna

Language Planning in Kerry

County Kerry is recognised as a place with a rich culture in which the Irish language is central to people's daily lives, particularly in the Gaeltacht areas of Corca Dhuibhne and Uíbh Ráthach, where Irish is spoken on a daily basis.

Each Gaeltacht area or so-called Language Planning Area (LPA) has a language plan. Language Planning Officers (LPOs) are employed in these areas to implement the language plans. Goals are set out in the language plans that cover all aspects of community life in the LPA, based on the needs of the community. Much has been achieved since these plans began in that more opportunities for Irish language use have been created in the communities, more awareness has been raised in the communities about the use of Irish, more support has been provided to families and more services for young people.

Language plans are also in place for 3 towns in Kerry which operate as Gaeltacht Service Towns (Gaeltacht Service Towns – BSG). These are Daingean Uí Chúis, Tralee and Caherciveen. All these towns have language plans and CCC is the Lead Organisation for the Cahersiveen Language Plan. Oifig na Gaeilge cooperates with the various organisations as part of this work and the Fóram Chiarraí Committee is set up to bring together all relevant parties involved in language planning.

The following language plans are currently being implemented in Kerry:

1. Corca Dhuibhne – Tobar Dhuibhn
2. Daingean Uí Chúis – Dúchas an Daingin, Baile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta
3. Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh – Brí Uíbh Ráthaigh
4. Cathair Saidhbhín le Gaeilge – Baile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta. Tá Comhairle Contae Chiarraí mar cheanneagraíocht ar an bplean seo.
5. Trá Lí le Gaeilge – Baile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta. Tá an plean seo faoi stiúir an Bhoird Oideachais & Oiliúna

Plean Teanga Chathair Saidhbhín Le Gaeilge

Faoi Acht na Gaeltachta 2012, bhí Cathair Saidhbhín ainmnithe mar bhaile seirbhíse Gaeltachta agus ceapadh Comhairle Contae Chiarraí mar cheanneagraíocht ar an bpróiseas pleanála teanga i gCathair Saidhbhín. Bunaíodh an Coiste ‘Cathair Saidhbhín Le Gaeilge’ chun an plean a chur le chéile i gcomhpháirtíocht le Comhairle Contae Chiarraí (CCC). CCC an chéad údarás áitiúil sa tír le tabhairt faoin ról mar cheanneagraíocht ar phlean Teanga, i gcomhpháirtíocht le Foras na Gaeilge agus Glór na nGael. agus táimid an-shásta go bhfuil Oifigeach Pleanála Teanga ceaptha agus go bhfuil an plean á chur i bhfeidhm faoi láthair agus go leor bainte amach cheana féin.

Under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, Caherciveen was designated as a Gaeltacht service town and Kerry County Council was appointed as the lead organisation for the language planning process in Caherciveen. The ‘Cathair Saidhbhín Le Gaeilge’ Committee was established to formulate the plan in partnership with Kerry County Council (KCC). KCC is the first local authority in the country to undertake the role of lead organisation on a Language Plan, in partnership with Foras na Gaeilge and Glór na nGael. and we are very pleased that a Language Planning Officer has been appointed and that the plan is currently being implemented and much has already been achieved.

Cúrsaí Gaeilge:

Cuireadh dhá chúrsa Gaeilge ar fáil d’fhoireann CCC, cúrsa creidiúnaithe TEG ag leibhéal B1 agus cúrsa comhrá agus cumarsáide Gaeilge a bhí ar fáil d’fhoghlaimeoirí ag leibhéal méanach chomh maith. Bhí na cúrsaí seo ar fáil d’fhoireann uilig Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí, ár gcomhairleoirí tofa san áireamh. Bhí an dá chúrsa seo á dteagasc ag cainteoirí dúchais ó Chorca Dhuibhne

Irish Courses

Two Irish courses were made available to KCC staff, the European Certificate in Irish (TEG) is an accredited course at B1 level and there was also a conversational and communication course in Irish for advanced learners. These courses were available to all staff of Kerry County Council, including our elected councillors. Both of these courses were taught by native Irish speakers from Corca Dhuibhne.

Ciste Turasóireachta na Gaeilge 2024:

Tacaíonn Oifig na Gaeilge go gníomhach le Turasóireacht na Gaeilge ar fud an chontae agus cuireann sí chun cinn í tríd an gclár ‘Ciste Turasóireachta’ ina bhfaigheann féilte agus imeachtaí Gaeilge maoiniú ar bhonn bliantúil. Braitheann go leor de na himeachtaí agus de na féilte seo ar mhaoiniú ó CCC ach cuireann siad eispéiris shaibhir chultúrtha agus teanga ar fáil do chuairteoirí agus do bhaill den phobal áitiúil araon. Tá Turasóireacht na Gaeilge aitheanta ag Fáilte Éireann mar thionscal atá ag dul i méid agus dá bhrí sin ba cheart tacú léi agus muid ag iarraidh turasóirí a mhealladh go dtí ár mbailte agus sráidbhailte i rith na bliana. I 2024, bhronn Oifig na Gaeilge maoiniú do bhreis is €15,000 ar 14 fhéile agus imeacht éagsúla ar fud an chontae.

Oifig na Gaeilge actively supports and promotes Irish Language Tourism throughout the county through it’s ‘Ciste Turasóireachta’ programme where Irish Language festivals and events

receive funding on an annual basis. Many of these events and festivals depend on KCC funding but provide rich cultural and language experiences for both visitors and members of the local community. Fáilte Ireland has identified Irish Language Tourism as a growing industry and therefore it should be supported as we attract many tourists to our towns and villages throughout the year. In 2024, Oifig na Gaeilge gave funding in excess of €15,000 to 14 festivals and events throughout the county.

Cur chun cinn na Gaeilge / Promotion of the Irish Language i gcóir Seachtain na Gaeilge:

Bhí ceol, craic agus comhlúadar in Áras an Chontae chun ceiliúradh a dhéanamh ar Sheachtain na Gaeilge.

Bhí clár imeachtaí ar fáil a spreag meas agus usáid na Gaeilge i measc fhoireann na n-údarás. Le breis is 1,300 duine fostaithe ag Comhairle Contae Chiarraí is cúis mhór dóchais é gur ghlac an oiread san fostaithe páirt sna himeachtaí go léir a eagraíodh. Cuireadh tús bríomhar leis an tseachtain le ceolchoirm agus céilí ón mbanna ceoil áitiúil ‘Culchie goes Cool’. D’ardódh sé do chroí daoine a fheiceáil amuigh ag damhsa agus bhí amhrán nó dhó againn chomh maith ón ár mbaill fóirne iontach. Lean na himeachtaí ar aghaidh i rith na seachtaine agus bhí go leor suime sna ciorcail chomhrá agus gan dabht i dTráth na gCeist. Bhí sé go diall ar fad na bailt fóirne a chloisteáil ag baint úsáide as a gcuid Gaeilge. Bhí an t-ádh dearg linn damhsóirí agus amhránaithe den scoth a bheith ar fáil le linn Seachtain na Gaeilge. Thug an damhsóir traidisiúnta Caoimhe Cawley taispeántas den scoth don fhoireann agus bhí sé thar a bheith soiléir an fáth go bhfuil sí ar dhuine de na damhsóirí Éireannacha is fearr ina aoisghrúpa go hidirnáisiúnta. Bhí an lucht féachana faoi gheasa ag beirt cailíní eile Mia Keane agus Evanne Kerin a rinne rince tap dóibh. Ar nós Caoimhe tá cáil ar an mbeirt seo go hidirnáisiúnta agus ba mhór an onóir iad a bheith inár measc. Chomh maith le sin, do Seachtain na Gaeilge bhí an comórtas ‘An Fhuinneog is Ghaelaí’ eagraithe in éineacht le Conradh na Gaeilge. Déanadh maisiúcháin as Ghaeilge ar bhfuinneoga na siopaí sna bailte ar fud an Chontae agus bronnadh duaiseanna de luach €1,600 ar na mbuaiteoirí.

Promotion of the Irish Language for Seachtain na Gaeilge:

There was music, fun and fellowship in Áras an Chontae to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge.

A programme of events was available to encourage the appreciation and use of the Irish language amongst staff. With over 1,300 people employed by Kerry County Council it is a great source of hope that so many employees took part in all the events organised. The week got off to a lively start with a concert and céilí from the local band 'Culchie goes Cool'. It would lift your spirits to see people out dancing and we also had a song or two. The activities continued throughout the week and there was a lot of interest in the conversation circles and of course in the Quiz. It was great to hear the staff members using their Irish. We were very lucky to have some excellent dancers and singers available during Seachtain na Gaeilge. Traditional dancer Caoimhe Cawley gave the team a great performance and it was very clear why she is one of the best Irish dancers in her age group internationally. The audience was captivated by two other girls Mia Keane and Evanne Kerin who performed tap dances for them. Like Caoimhe, these two are internationally renowned and it was a great honour to have them perform for us. In addition, for Seachtain na Gaeilge the 'An Fhuinneog is Gaeilge' competition was organised in

conjunction with Conradh na Gaeilge. Shop windows in towns across the County were decorated in Irish and prizes worth €1,600 were awarded to the winners.

Gradam na Gaeilge, Fiontar na Mac Léinn

Bhí sé seo eagraithe in éineacht leis an Oifig Fionntar Áitiúil, chuir meánscoileanna iarratas isteach le roinnt Gaeilge ag baint lena bhfiontar. Ní raibh gá do na mic léinn ach Gaeilge a úsáid mar chuid dá bhfiontar agus déineadh an iarracht sin a mheas de réir chritéir éagsúla. Bronnadh duais ar an trí fhiontar is fearr i gCiarraí in Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta i dTrá Lí mar seo a leanas:

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| Gradam Gaeilge | 1ú áit | Plaic & €250 |
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| Gradam Gaeilge | 2ú áit | Plaic & €150 |
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| Gradam Gaeilge | 3ú áit | Plaic & €100 |
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Student Enterprise Awards

This was organised in conjunction with KCC's Local Enterprise Office whereby Secondary School Students applied and used Irish as part of their enterprises. The students only needed to use Irish as part of their enterprise and that effort was assessed according to various criteria. The above prizes were awarded on the Student Enterprise Awards Day, which was held in MTU Tralee.

Blas Beo – Ranganna Gaeilge i gCiarraí Thuaidh

Mar chuid do thionscnamh nua cuirfeadh ranganna Gaeilge do Dhaoine Fásta ar fáil i Siamsa Tíre ar an bhFionnúig i gCiarraí Thuaidh, dar teideal ‘Blas Beo’. Fuair an tionscnamh seo tacaíocht ó Oifig na Gaeilge. Bhí na ranganna seo á dtairiscint ag bunleibhéal agus ag leibhéal idirmheánach agus bhí siad oscailte don phobal.

As part of a new initiative Irish classes for Adults were provided in Siamsa Tíre in Finuge, North Kerry, entitled ‘Blas Beo’. This initiative has received support from Oifig na Gaeilge. These classes were offered at Beginner and intermediate level and were open to the public.

**DIRECTORATE OF
FINANCE**

Director of Services: ANGELA MCALLEN

FINANCE

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONAL
PROCUREMENT CENTRE**

Kerry County Council's Finance Directorate plays a key role in promoting proper oversight and control of the organisation's finances and ensuring that each section and directorate maintains a strong ethos in relation to prudent financial management and debt management.

This includes assisting and guiding sections in developing efficient financial management practises throughout the Council, supporting each directorate and unit in ensuring careful consideration of all financial aspects of service delivery, and embedding into each unit financial strategies, policies and procedures which ensure adherence to key financial practises. In addition, the Finance Department oversees effective debt management throughout the organisation and produces policies and procedures to ensure that each section maximises revenue.

The Finance Directorate also has responsibility for producing key statutory financial documents, including the annual budget report and annual financial statement. These documents outline Kerry County Council's budgetary plans, and key financial figures, and give an overview of the financial status of the Council. Allied to this, statutory financial reports are also produced for central Government at regular intervals, as well as quarterly EU/IMF reports and regular reports to the Council's external Audit Committee and the elected members.

The ongoing challenging global economic environment continued to impact the Council's finances over the course of 2024. Close budget monitoring and management of expenditure and income levels throughout the year and strong revenue collections ensured that the Council finished 2024 showing a modest positive outturn. Financial provision has been made to safeguard where possible the Council's finances for the coming years and in part to meet current pressures on expenditure programmes due to the ongoing inflationary environment, geopolitical uncertainty and increased borrowing costs. These financial provisions will also support future Budgets and provide own resource funding to support programmes targeted to the sustained economic recovery of the County.

During 2024 the collection of commercial rates continued to be challenging impacted by the overall economic environment. The percentage collection for Rates was maintained at 88% in 2024 reflecting a sustained strong collection recovery post revaluation. The Council continues in the current environment to engage fully and constructively with our customers and all debtors are encouraged to continue engagement with the Council.

While the 2024 Annual Financial Statements reflects a minor surplus on the Revenue Account, however the financial outlook for 2025 both locally and globally, remains uncertain given the global political uncertainty, the impact of increased costs of goods and services and ongoing inflationary pressures on expenditure programmes and the evolving global economic environment. The financial stability of this Council is essential to meet and mitigate, where possible, the challenges arising from global events. Maintaining the financial stability of the Council is key to leveraging National Recovery Initiatives allocated and applied for to this County, aligned to the Local Economic and Community Plan and for securing loans. In addition, financial provision is being made to support current and future Budgets and financial planning for future liabilities, to safeguard the Council's finances in the years ahead.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Finance Directorate aims to further advance the funding of critical infrastructural projects. This Council remains fully committed to projects driving the strategic recovery of the economy aligned with the Local Economic and Community Plan and County Development Plan, as evidenced by the extensive Capital Programme. The Council is fully focused on meeting its targets under the Housing for All Action Plan aligned to the National Housing for All Plan, and this has been substantially delivered. The Council has a very significant Roads and Transportation Plan to deliver, including Greenway and Active Travel and sustainable roads programmes, over the course of 2025. The Climate Action Plan for the Council has set targets to be achieved over its lifetime. Projects which have secured national funding such as Rural Regeneration and Development Fund countywide, Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, Town Centre First, countywide Active Travel, Greenway Programme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Town and Village Scheme, Community Recognition Scheme, Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Projects are advancing. Many of these projects require a local funding element and the ongoing management and availability of financing is critical to ensure the advancement of these schemes.

Kerry County Council continues to play a leading role in the promotion of economic, community and tourism development in the County. Sourcing new funding streams to ensure delivery of these key projects within the current financial constraints remains a key priority for the Finance Directorate.

This Council will continue to closely monitor income and expenditure levels during 2025 and if required make financial adjustments to contain expenditure.

The Finance Directorate of Kerry County Council comprises of the following units:

Accounts Payable

This centralised unit is responsible for ensuring payments to external companies and organisations for services and goods provided. All payments by Kerry County Council to suppliers are made by this unit, following certification by the relevant section.

As part of their duties, the Accounts Payable unit is required to adhere to the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 as amended by Statutory Instrument 580 of 2012, (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions). Kerry County Council has met its targets in relation to this.

Financial Management Unit

The Financial Management Unit monitors Council spending, Capital and Revenue balances, and includes treasury management, bank reconciliation, loans and debtor management and maintenance of the Council's asset register. In addition, this unit ensures all sections adhere to regular drawdowns of grant funding. This unit also produces statutory annual financial and budgetary reports for the elected members, Council Management and Audit Committees along with departmental returns including the Public Spending Code.

Revenue Unit

The Revenue Unit is responsible for collecting commercial rates on behalf of Kerry County Council, as well as development levies and fees payable under the NPPR system.

Payroll

The Payroll Unit forms part of the Shared Services initiative across the Local Government sector, with the Shared Superannuation and Payroll Service Centre (MYPAY) administered centrally by Laois County Council. This centre, in conjunction with Kerry County Council's Payroll Unit processes all payroll payments for Kerry County Council employees, former employees in receipt of a Council pension and councillors.

Insurance

Kerry County Council's Insurance Unit ensures that the organisation has adequate insurance cover relating to the Council's areas of activity and service delivery, particularly in the areas relating to Public Liability, as well as Motor Insurance and Employers Liability.

In addition, the Insurance Unit continues to proactively investigate claims and liaises with various sections to ensure continual improvements to Council property and public areas, resulting in reductions in claims.

Motor Tax

Kerry County Council administers Motor Taxation, in Kerry, on behalf of the Department of Transport.

FMS Support Team

Kerry County Council uses the Agresso Financial Management System to rigorously capture and monitor all financial movements across the organisation. This FMS Support Team ensures that all Council staff are fully trained and that the relevant controls are implemented on the system and kept updated. Preparation of the Council's Annual Budget is also carried out by this Unit.

FMS Systems Development

The Council's Financial System requires ongoing upgrades and enhancements due to advancements in technology, statutory requirements and support issues. This is to ensure a continued reliable and adequate Financial Management System for the local Authority going forward.

Centralised Procurement Compliance Unit (CPCU)

This unit was established during 2018 to ensure compliance with Procurement policies and procedures and provide organisation support in the management of procurement processes. Initially Purchase requisitions for Plant Hire products, electrical, plumbing, cleaning and other categories of procurement were routed through the CPCU to check for compliance with procurement processes at an early stage in the purchase cycle. This has further extended in 2020 to include Purchase Requisition compliance checks for all LGOPC Frameworks & further categories of expenditure will be rolled out on an ongoing basis. The CPCU also includes a tender support team that provides training and advice to Council departments, on all aspects of the procurement cycle and implements Kerry County Council corporate procurement arrangements and promotion of best practice. The CPCU has a strategic role, to draft policies/procedures, provide advice and guidance to sections/individuals and working groups, pro-actively engage with the OGP, LGMA, and LGOPC representing the Council externally in the advancement of good procurement practice. The Procurement Unit promotes

best practice procurement across the organisation providing specialist advice and guidance where required.

Local Government Operational Procurement Centre

The Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) which is based in Killarney, is a national shared service with responsibility for managing, developing and promoting procurement best practice under the Local Government sector-led categories of Plant Hire and Minor Building Works & Civils. It acts as a central purchasing body under the auspices of Kerry County Council, co-ordinating the establishment of National Framework Agreements and Dynamic Purchasing Systems for the procurement of works, goods and services under these categories to meet the needs of the local government sector and other public service bodies.

The LGOPC maintains a dedicated public procurement portal at www.Supplygov.ie that provides an electronic platform for contracting authorities to operate and manage the procurement of works, goods and services from suitably qualified Suppliers in a compliant and effective manner. This is complemented by clear leadership, information and on-going training provided to the Contracting Authorities, that supports these activities.

In 2024, the LGOPC maintained eight (8) Live Framework Agreements and seven (7) Live Dynamic Purchasing Systems for Local Government and public service bodies under these categories, representing an estimated total annual spend in the order of €550m. These arrangements engage approximately 2,500 different suppliers, the majority of whom are micro and small local enterprises. Dynamic Purchasing Systems provide a reliable pathway for Micro and SMEs to participate in public procurement and greatly promote the tendering skills of such smaller entities.

During 2024, the LGOPC completed the following key activities -:

- Migrated six Live Dynamic Purchasing System competitions, with an estimated spend of €300m, required as part of the transition from the previous etenders website to the new etenders website
- Advanced the preparation of tender documents for establishing a new Dynamic Purchasing System for Building Contractors for Non-Residential Minor Building Works
- Assessed 565 requests from Suppliers & Contractors to participate in LGOPC Dynamic Purchasing Systems
- Enabled the publication by public service buyers of 4,455 Requests For Tender on Supplygov.ie
- All new centralised arrangements provide discretion to the contracting authority to include multiple qualitative criteria, including environmental and social considerations in the contract award process. This provides a key mechanism for incentivising Supply market transition to sustainable solutions that will progress the ‘greening’ of the public procurement process

- Welcomed the addition of several other Public Service Bodies registering to use the Supplygov platform
- Further enhanced the Supplygov platform to strengthen useability, performance and cyber security resilience
- Provided day to day operational support to Live procurement activities via IT staff, Customer Service Helpdesk, Category Management and Engineering staff resulting in the exchange of c. 9,800 telephone calls and emails
- Participated in multiple external Working/Strategic Groups and public procurement events
- Advanced Stage 1 Gap Analysis Report for pathway to consideration of ISO 9001 Certification

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
(INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT)
FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure. It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year. Transfers to/from reserves are shown separately and not allocated by service division. Note 16 allocates transfers by service division in the same format as Table A of the adopted Local Authority budget.

| Expenditure by Division | Gross Expenditure 2024 € | Income 2024 € | Net Expenditure 2024 € | Net Expenditure 2023 € |
|---|---|------------------------------|---|---|
| Housing and Building | 49,029,718 | 43,157,543 | 5,872,175 | 2,685,475 |
| Roads, Transportation & Safety | 55,638,710 | 40,682,241 | 14,956,469 | 14,424,539 |
| Water Services | 16,788,526 | 15,456,819 | 1,331,707 | 1,167,750 |
| Development Management | 38,515,597 | 28,184,819 | 10,330,778 | 9,186,273 |
| Environmental Services | 23,409,390 | 5,762,426 | 17,646,964 | 17,575,498 |
| Recreation & Amenity | 10,776,815 | 1,123,337 | 9,653,478 | 9,205,646 |
| Agriculture, Food and the Marine | 2,386,162 | 1,358,074 | 1,028,088 | 757,868 |
| Miscellaneous Services | 17,659,034 | 19,338,624 | (1,679,590) | 247,589 |
| Total Expenditure/Income | 214,203,952 | 155,063,883 | | |
| Net Cost of Division to be funded from Rates and Local Property Tax | | | 59,140,069 | 55,250,638 |
| Rates | | | 53,874,990 | 48,526,912 |
| Local Property Tax | | | 16,613,362 | 15,041,982 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers | | | 11,348,283 | 8,318,256 |
| Transfers from/(to) Reserves | | | (11,264,270) | (8,235,294) |
| Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year | | | 84,013 | 82,962 |
| General Reserve at 1st January | | | 6,937,746 | 6,854,784 |
| General Reserve at 31st December | | | 7,021,759 | 6,937,746 |

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (BALANCE SHEET)
AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2024

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| | € | € |
| Fixed Assets | | |
| Operational | 863,730,213 | 843,670,778 |
| Infrastructural | 2,891,499,175 | 2,836,848,418 |
| Community | 13,977,372 | 14,184,387 |
| Non-Operational | 4,790,770 | 4,790,770 |
| | 3,773,997,530 | 3,699,494,353 |
| Work-in-Progress and Preliminary Expenses | 38,333,602 | 84,648,328 |
| Long Term Debtors | 82,311,791 | 78,632,350 |
| Current Assets | | |
| Stock | 2,086,806 | 2,049,339 |
| Trade Debtors & Prepayments | 24,982,971 | 14,530,183 |
| Bank Investments | 101,227,226 | 94,000,000 |
| Cash at Bank | 18,100,144 | 31,750,111 |
| Cash in Transit | 416,182 | 594,318 |
| | 146,813,329 | 142,923,951 |
| Current Liabilities (Amounts falling due within one year) | | |
| Bank Overdraft | - | - |
| Creditors & Accruals | 36,631,281 | 38,177,562 |
| Finance Leases | - | - |
| | 36,631,281 | 38,177,562 |
| Net Current Assets / (Liabilities) | 110,182,048 | 104,746,389 |
| Creditors (Amounts falling due after more than one year) | | |
| Loans Payable | 56,029,498 | 59,502,094 |
| Finance Leases | - | - |
| Refundable Deposits | 4,626,023 | 3,440,967 |
| Other | 48,108,152 | 43,802,877 |
| | 108,763,673 | 106,745,938 |
| Net Assets | 3,896,061,298 | 3,860,775,482 |
| Represented By | | |
| Capitalisation Account | 3,773,997,530 | 3,699,494,353 |
| Income WIP | 38,308,338 | 83,199,479 |
| General Revenue Reserve | 7,021,759 | 6,937,746 |
| Other Specific Reserves | - | - |
| Other Balances | 76,733,671 | 71,143,904 |
| Total Reserves | 3,896,061,298 | 3,860,775,482 |

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL (SIFC)

Introduction

I, Fearghal Reidy, Chief Executive (CE) of Kerry County Council am responsible for the Annual Financial Statement (AFS), prepared by the Director of Finance, in accordance with the Accounting Code of Practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Kerry County Council for the year ended 31 December 2024, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents fairly the financial position of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Kerry County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Kerry County Council overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2024.

The *Statement of Comprehensive Income* represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of the Kerry County Council.

The key sources of income for Kerry County Council are as follows:

| | Current Year | Previous Year |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | € | € |
| Goods & Services | 43,341,345 | 46,413,222 |
| Grants & Subsidies | 107,362,081 | 78,951,829 |
| Other Contributions (as appropriate) | 4,360,457 | 4,210,400 |
| Rates | 53,874,990 | 48,526,912 |
| Local Property Tax | 16,613,362 | 15,041,982 |

The Council's income is comprised of the above categories. Grants and Subsidies are in line with Government Department allocations for 2024 for targeted areas of expenditure and typically fluctuate from year to year. All other local income is critical to the overall financing of the council and collections are maximised through debt management protocols.

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2024 is as follows:

| | Current Year | Previous Year |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | € | € |
| Income | 225,552,235 | 193,144,345 |
| Expenditure | 214,203,952 | 184,826,089 |
| Transfers to Capital | 11,264,270 | 8,235,294 |
| Exceptional Item | - | - |
| Surplus (Deficit) for | 84,013 | 82,962 |
| Prior Year Adjustment | 6,937,746 | 6,854,784 |
| Opening Revenue Reserve | 7,021,759 | 6,937,746 |

Development of targeted government supports, close budget monitoring and management throughout the year and increased revenue collections ensured that the Council finished 2024 showing a modest overall surplus of €84,018.

The *Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)* represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
- Current and long term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets Kerry County Council, at the end of 2024 total €3.896bn and are as follows:

| | Current Year | Previous Year |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| | € | € |
| Fixed Assets | 3,773,997,530 | 3,699,494,353 |
| Works in Progress | 38,333,602 | 84,648,328 |
| Long Term Debtors | 82,311,791 | 78,632,350 |
| Current Assets | 146,813,329 | 142,923,951 |
| Current Liabilities | 36,631,281 | 38,177,562 |
| Net Current Assets / (Liabilities) | 110,182,048 | 104,746,389 |
| Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year) | 108,763,673 | 106,745,938 |
| Net Assets/(Liabilities) | 3,896,061,298 | 3,860,775,482 |

A *Statement of Funds Flow* was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

System of Internal Financial Controls

As Chief Executive of Kerry County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Kerry County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Kerry County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial Control Environment

As Chief Executive of Kerry County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As Chief Executive of Kerry County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement Compliance

Kerry County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal Audit and Audit Committee

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Kerry County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Kerry County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Kerry County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- i. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- ii. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- iii. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- iv. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and

v. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks. I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in [NAME] City/County Council.

Risk and Control Framework

Kerry County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk registers which detail the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

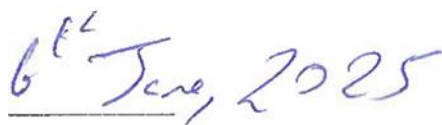
As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members by 30 April each year and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June each year.



Signed by:

Chief Executive



Dated:

Governance Statement

Purpose

The purpose of this governance statement is to provide relevant information on the governance structures and governance arrangements within the local authority including on council, committees, senior management and related areas. It demonstrates our commitment to effective governance, recognises key legislative and good governance requirements and affirms the Council's compliance with the Local Government Code of Governance obligations.

Good Governance

Fundamentally, good governance in the local government sector and wider public sector is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and government policy obligations. Governance refers to the framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes by which the local authority is directed, controlled and held to account and whereby authority within an organisation is exercised and maintained. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship and leadership, direction and control.

Good Governance Principles

CORE PRINCIPLE 1 - Good governance means focusing on the purpose of the authority, on outcomes that deliver sustainable economic, community and wider societal benefits and on implementing a vision for the local authority.

CORE PRINCIPLE 2 - Good governance means promoting and demonstrating public service values through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

CORE PRINCIPLE 3 - Good governance means members and officials working together to achieve a common purpose within a framework of clearly defined functions and roles.

CORE PRINCIPLE 4 - Good governance means developing the organisational capacity and the leadership capability and competencies of members and officials to operate effectively and fulfil the purpose of the organisation.

CORE PRINCIPLE 5 - Good governance means taking well-informed and transparent decisions and managing risks and performance.

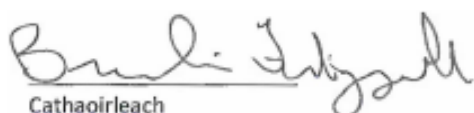
CORE PRINCIPLE 6 - Good governance means engaging openly and comprehensively with local people, citizens and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

CORE PRINCIPLE 7 - Good governance means actively contributing to the furtherance and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by delivering on the priorities and actions within the Climate Action Plan and the provisions of the Climate Act.

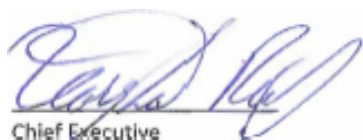
Our Commitment to Good Governance

As the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive of the Council, and on behalf of the elected members, management and staff we confirm that;

1. We have adopted the governance principles as the fundamental bedrock and philosophy on how we operate as a governing body and as an executive.
2. The Local Government Code of Governance has been adopted and the extent to which the Council is in compliance with the Code has been reviewed and assessed.
3. The Statement of Internal Financial Control is submitted by the Chief Executive to the Elected Members and to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee reviews the SIFC and provides an assurance on an annual basis to the Elected Members. Mechanisms are available to the Audit Committee to notify the Elected Members of any issues that arise outside of the normal annual reporting.
4. Compliance with legal and regulatory obligations are acknowledged and adhered to.
5. There is clarity of roles and responsibilities based on the reserved and executive functions and based on committee terms of reference.
6. Codes of Conduct and ethics declarations for members and employees are in place.
7. Procedures are in place for the making of protected disclosures in accordance with section 21(1) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and confirmation that the annual report required under section 22(1) of the Act has been published.
8. The Council and Committees review their own performance on a periodic basis.
9. We have instituted appropriate governance oversight arrangements in respect of subsidiary, associated and related companies.
10. As part of our commitment to effective oversight and accountability, we have developed and continue to enhance our overall assurance framework utilising external and internal assurance sources to ensure good performance as part of our governance culture.


Cathaoirleach

16/6/2025


Chief Executive

20/6/2025

SECTION 4 - APPENDICES

PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY

PAYMENTS TO ELECTED MEMBERS

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Public Sector Duty

As part of the annual report Kerry County Council has committed to providing a progress report on activities associated with our duties in relation to equality and human rights.

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 imposes a statutory obligation on public bodies in performing their functions to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination.
- promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services; and
- protect the human rights of staff and services

The 2014 Act requires a public body, having regard to its functions, purpose, size and resources available to it, to:

- 1) **Assess** – set out in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body.
- 2) **Address** – set out in its strategic plan the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues.
- 3) **Report** – report on developments and achievements in its annual report.

The groups identified for the Duty are covered by the grounds of gender (including gender expression, gender identity and sex characteristics), civil status, family status (including lone parents and carers), age, disability (broadly defined to include all impairment groups), sexual orientation, race (including migrants and international protection applicants), religion, membership of the Traveller community, and socio-economic status (at risk of or experiencing poverty and exclusion). This includes those at the intersections of these grounds. It further includes rights holders under the various human rights instruments relevant to the functions of the public body.

The functions of Kerry County Council encompass:

- Business and community development;
- Housing;
- Road, transport, and public realm;
- Planning, environment and emergency management;
- Human resources;
- Finance;
- Corporate; and
- County solicitor.

In 2024, a working group consisting of members of staff across the various departments of Kerry County Council was formed to review the Council's obligations under The Duty. The working group is chaired by The Director of Corporate Services.

As part of this process a Human Rights Value Statement was developed. The values of respect, participation, inclusion, and social justice were identified and act as a guide throughout the implementation of the Duty particularly when undertaking the Assess step.

An Assessment of Equality and Human Rights Issues relevant to the functions of Kerry County Council was developed in 2024. This involved reviewing local and national policy strategies, national research, international submissions and research. Together with the extensive practical experience of the working group. As part of this process consultation also took place with representatives of civil society groups in Kerry to confirm the issues identified were relevant.

The working group then identified several policies and plans which would be examined as part of the process in 2024 and 2025 and can confirm that the Equality and Human Rights Issues relevant to the functions of Kerry County Council has been examined in the following policies/documents:

- Implement of the Address step of the Duty in preparing the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan is foundational for the ongoing implementation of the Duty and sets out Kerry County Councils commitment to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights across all its functions.
- Implementation of the Address step of the Duty in preparing the Traveller Accommodation Programme.

An appropriate implementation structure is in place to drive the implementation of the plan as part of its strategic planning process. A system to review and monitor progress in relation to implementation of the plan is also in place. To assist in this process an Implementation Template has been prepared which can be utilised by the various Business Units when preparing or reviewing policies on an annual basis.

In addition, several initiatives identified in the Action Plan in areas such as Training, Policies & Procedures, Public Support, Participation and Awareness and Internal Processes have been implemented in 2024. These include the following:

- Public Sector Duty Training provided to Senior Management
- The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Public Sector Duty e learning module was rolled out to all staff within Kerry County Council.
- Kerry County Council are participating in the Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) Programme. The WAM programme is a work placement programme for graduates with disabilities and supports employers to integrate disability into the mainstream workplace.

Payments to Elected Members

| Travel and Subsistence | Foreign Travel (outside the state) |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| €103,063.12 | €4,855.71 |

| Allowance Type | Total amount paid |
|--|-------------------|
| Cathaoirleach Allowance | €29,687.55 |
| Leas Cathaoirleach Allowance | €5,937.61 |
| #mayor of Tralee and Cathaoirleach of MD | €35,901.58 |
| SPC Chair Allowance | €28,238.71 |
| Annual Allowance | €185,157.74 |
| LRA | €121,511.39 |
| Rep Payment | €984,892.67 |
| Gratuities | €274,754.72 |

Conference Attendance

| Date | Duration | Conference/Event | Location | Provider | Number Attended |
|------------|----------|--|---|--|-----------------|
| 19/01/2024 | 2 | LAMA Spring Seminar 2024 | Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town, Ireland | LAMA Donegal | 20 |
| 27/01/2024 | 1 | AILG In-Service Training Module 1 2024 - (SR) - Limerick (SAT) | Greenhills Conference and Leisure Centre, Limerick, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 12 |
| 07/02/2024 | 2 | Air 2024 - Association of Irish Regions | Fitzgeralds House Hotel, Adare, Ireland | Southern Regional Assembly | 15 |
| 14/02/2024 | 2 | AILG Annual Training Seminar 2024 | Arklow Bay Hotel, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 19 |
| 21/03/2024 | 1 | AILG In-Service Training Module 2 2024 - (SR) (Thurs) Kilkenny | Hotel Kilkenny, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 11 |
| 23/03/2024 | 1 | AILG In-Service Training Module 2 2024 - (Out of Region) - (Sat) Athlone | Hodson Bay Hotel, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 2 |
| 01/04/2024 | 1 | King Inns | Kerry, Ireland | King's Inns | 1 |
| 17/04/2024 | 3 | IPI Annual Planning Conference 2024 | Theatre Royal and Tower Hotel, Waterford, Ireland | Irish Planning Institute | 15 |
| 13/07/2024 | 1 | AILG Induction Training for Councillors | Radisson Blu Hotel, Little Island, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 15 |
| 11/09/2024 | 2 | AILG Autumn Training Seminar 2024 | Hillgrove Hotel, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 11 |
| 26/09/2024 | 1 | AILG In-Service Training Module 4 2024 - (SR) (Thurs) Tipperary | The Horse and Jockey, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 10 |
| 28/09/2024 | 1 | AILG In-Service Training Module 4 2024 - (Out of Region) - (Sat) Tullamore | Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 9 |
| 03/10/2024 | 1 | IPI Autumn Planning Conference 2024 | Gibson Hotel, Ireland | Irish Planning Institute | 13 |
| 17/10/2024 | 2 | LAMA Autumn Seminar 2024 | Newgrange Hotel, Navan, Ireland | LAMA | 16 |
| 02/11/2024 | 1 | AILG In-Service Training Module 5 2024 (SAT) (SR) Limerick | Radisson Blu Hotel, Ennis Road, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 9 |
| 14/11/2024 | 1 | AILG In-Service Training Module 6 2024 - (Thurs) - SR | Tower Hotel, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 7 |
| 16/11/2024 | 1 | AILG In-Service Training Module 6 - (SAT) - NWEMR | Claregalway Hotel, Ireland | Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) | 4 |

List of Overseas Events

| Date | Duration | Conference/Event | Location | Provider | Number Attended |
|------------|----------|---|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 01/11/2024 | 1 | Kerry Association Dinner Dance 2024 - Cathaoirleach Event | Hilton Hotel, Wembley, United Kingdom | Kerrymans Association | 1 |
| 12/09/2024 | 7 | Official Visit to West Springfield Massachusetts | West Springfield, United States of America | Kerry County Council | 2 |
| 12/09/2024 | 5 | Official Visit to West Springfield Massachusetts Advance | West Springfield, United States of America | Kerry County Council | 1 |
| 07/06/2024 | 2 | The Global Irish Festival Series - 2024 | Broughton Park, Hough Playing Fields, Manchester, United Kingdom | GAA President of Great Britain | 1 |
| 29/04/2024 | 1 | The Global Irish Festival Series 2024 | Embassy of Ireland, United Kingdom | Tourism Ireland | 1 |
| 15/03/2024 | 4 | Visit to London 2024 | London, United Kingdom | Kerry County Council | 1 |
| 14/03/2024 | 5 | Visit to the US 2024 - Advance | New York, United States of America | Kerrymans Association | 1 |
| 14/03/2024 | 6 | Visit to the US 2024 | New York, United States of America | Kerry County Council | 1 |