

Meath County Council

2021

ANNUAL BUDGET



for Year Ending 31 December 2021
Statutory Budget Meeting
30 November 2020



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Introduction

The formulation of Budget 2021 is taking place against the background of continued economic, financial and wider societal fall-out from the COVID-19 pandemic and against the threat of a disorderly UK withdrawal from the European Union.

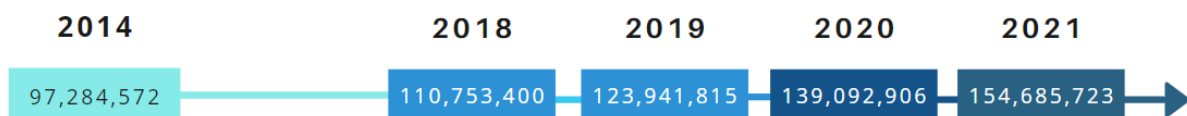
These provide great uncertainty and significant consequences for the operating environment of Meath County Council. The impacts of the pandemic are already considerable on both our income and expenditure and I expect they will continue to be in 2021. In terms of our income, the pandemic has eroded a portion of our take from the provision of goods and services and has had a major impact on the collection of commercial rates. Similarly, our operating costs continue to rise, while there has been increased expenditure to deal with the consequences of the pandemic and ensure a continuity of service delivery.

Budget 2021 is the eight that I have had the pleasure, as Chief Executive, to present to the members of Meath County Council. In that time, the Council has undergone considerable change and has faced various challenges in the delivery of essential services in Meath. None greater than the challenge we now face.

The preparation of this budget is unprecedented. There is great uncertainty, there are a number of variables not in our control and we have had to make a number of assumptions based on the containment of the COVID-19 virus, its potential lasting impact on the local economy and the political will at national level to ensure that the local government sector is fully supported financially. The coming into effect of Brexit, with or without a trade deal, and what that will mean for key economic indigenous sectors in County Meath will also become more apparent during 2021.

EVOLUTION OF BUDGET EXPENDITURE

2014 - 2021



In being statutorily required to produce a balanced budget, my key focus for Budget 2021 is to:

- Support business continuity and enhance our contingency capacity;
- Maintain our key service levels and enhance some essential services, where possible;
- Identify savings in non-service areas; and
- Maintain a sustainable rate base, into 2021 and beyond.

Budget 2021 provides for expenditure of €154,685,723 an increase of over €15.5m (or 11.2%) on last year's budget. Given the context, this is still a very positive position and has been possible through a continued focus on maximising the use of resources at our disposal, strong budgetary management processes, and greater effort in securing higher levels of grant funding.

During the last eight years 2014-2021, in my time as Chief Executive, the annual Budget has increased by over 45%, which has brought enhanced service levels and provided additional human and financial resources in critical and emerging areas.

Budget Preparation

Budget 2021 has been prepared in the statutory format and in consultation with the Corporate Policy Group for consideration by the Elected Members. The process of compiling the budget involves a number of key stages which include:

- A series of meetings with the Corporate Policy Group to consider Budget Strategy and the Local Property Tax variation;
- A public consultation process from July 4, 2020 to August 7, 2020 in relation to the variation of the Local Property Tax rate;
- The meeting of the Council on September 7, 2020 to consider and decide on the variation of the Local Property Tax rate;
- The submission of a preliminary estimate of current and capital income and expenditure to the Department of the Housing, Local Government and Heritage by September 18, 2020, to comply with national budget and EU reporting requirements;
- Notification to the Revenue Commissioners and Department by September 30, 2020 of the decision of the Council in relation to the Local Property Tax rate;
- Agree overall General Municipal Allocations – the discretionary funding available at Municipal District (MD) level (six MD meetings held between November 11 – 13, 2020);

- Detailed reviews of all aspects of the budget with Directors and Budget Holders, to develop the draft local authority budget.
- The final stage in the budget process is consideration of the budget, as presented, by the Elected Members at the Annual Budget Meeting on November 30, 2020.

Budget 2021 was prepared in the statutory format and in consultation with the Corporate Policy Group for consideration by Elected Members.



The Elected Members have a number of reserved functions in relation to the overall budget process as follows:

- Local Property Tax - Members have the power to vary the Local Property Tax Rate (Local Adjustment Factor) by a factor of up to plus/minus 15%.
- Adoption of Budget - Members may adopt the Budget with or without amendment and must approve the sums provided for transfer to the Capital account.
- Determination of Rate - A separate motion in relation to the determination of the Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV) must be considered by the Members at the Budget Meeting.
- Rates on Vacant Premises - In accordance with Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, Members have the power to determine the proportion of rates refunds applicable on vacant commercial premises.

In preparing the budget each year, the Council takes account of the context within which it operates, identifies particular areas where increased investment is required, and puts in place a targeted programme to address these needs. It also considers the costs of doing business and the potential

impacts that changes in the economy may have on future income. However, it should be noted that the significant majority of any local authority's budget is fixed and non-discretionary in nature.

Context – Economic Outlook

The outlook for the national economy remains highly uncertain and will depend not only on the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its containment, but also on the nature and impact of the future trading arrangements between the EU and the UK, around which there still remains considerable uncertainty (Central Bank of Ireland, Oct 2020).

The path ahead for the economy is tied with the path of the virus, the immediate and longer-lasting effects on behaviour and economic activity and the extent to which there is lasting damage to the productive capacity of the economy.

On the assumption that containment measures remain targeted and less severe than during the first lockdown, and that consumers and businesses continue to gradually adapt, the forecast in response to the COVID-19 shock is for activity to continue to slowly recover from its earlier lows, though not necessarily without setbacks. For 2020, GDP is now forecast to decline by 0.4%.

It is likely that the interaction of Brexit and COVID-19 will be different across sectors. There are vulnerable sectors, such as tourism, hospitality and food services, which are important to Meath and already experiencing large demand shortfalls due to COVID-19. Exports have proved remarkably resilient and continue to grow, while some sectors, such as agri-food, are more exposed to the negative shocks from Brexit.

The prospects for domestic demand, the backbone of the county's economy, are linked directly to the level of containment measures required for COVID-19. While consumer spending declined by 22.8% year-on-year in Q2, 2020, the retail sector experienced a strong recovery in activity once containment measures were relaxed. Overall, domestic demand is expected to decline by 7.1% in 2020 but projected to increase by 1.6% next year and by 4.8% in 2022. GDP growth would recover to 3.4% in 2021, increasing further to 4.7% in 2022.

In terms of the labour market, such a recovery would see unemployment increase initially from 5.3% this year to 8% in 2021 before declining to 7.5% in 2022, a rate well above the pre-crisis level of about 5%. On a COVID-adjusted basis, which includes all recipients of the pandemic unemployment payment, unemployment is projected to average 15.1 per cent this year.

Meath County Council's revenue budget and capital programme provide services and investment which aim to improve the county as a place in which to live, work, invest in and visit. It is also worth noting that the Council's spending brings an important stimulus impact to the local economy. The role that the Council plays in providing a stimulus to the local economy has been brought to the fore by a number of measures introduced nationally to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

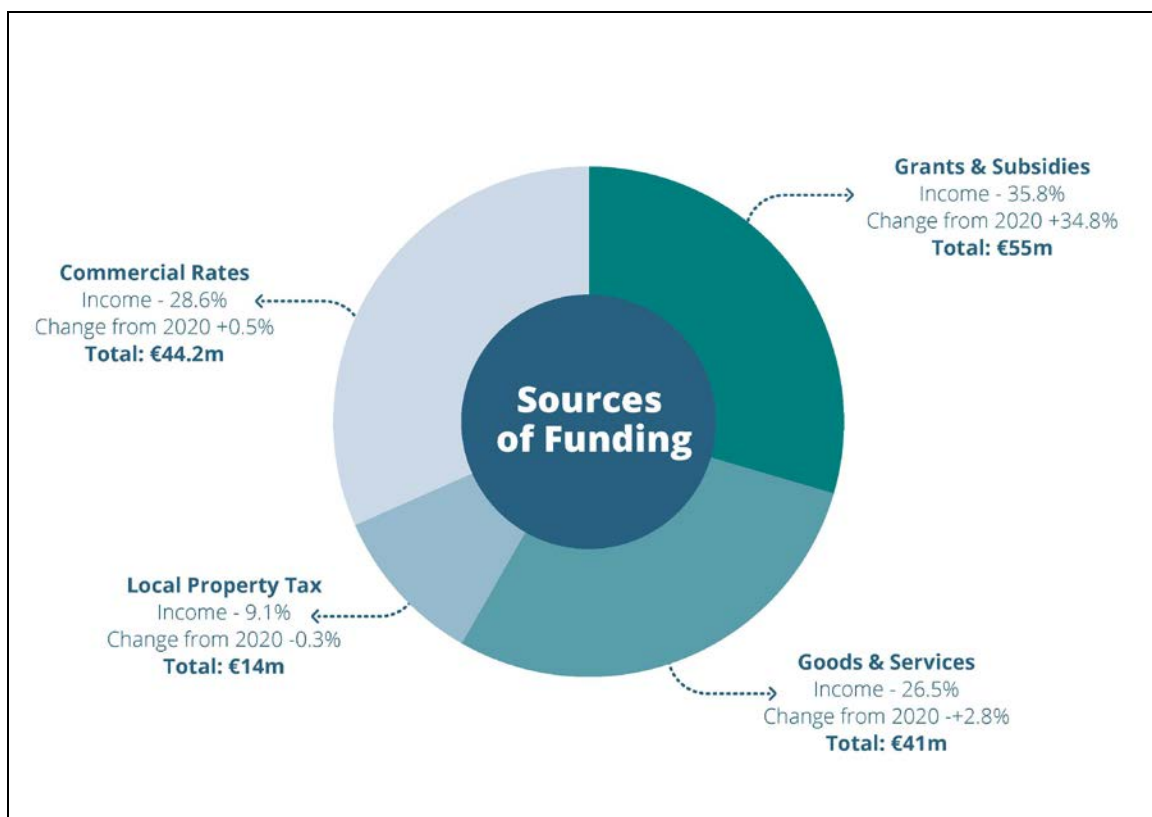
Meath is home to the third youngest population in the country and also one of the fastest growing. This places a considerable demand on the provision of essential services, which has not been sufficiently recognised by the allocation method for Government funding, although the level of Government funding received in recent years has increased.

As a Council, there is an onus to balance the needs of all stakeholders in the business and enterprise sector, residents and community groups, as well as, visitors to the county.

This budget has been prepared with a focus on addressing the key challenges, balancing the various needs, understanding the constraints and delivering on the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan. It is informed by key national policy frameworks and by the national and local economic context. The key aim is to ensure that Meath is best positioned to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis with the potential to grow and prosper, to support economic development, avail of future investment, address the county's housing needs, foster sustainable and resilient communities and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

Sources of Funding

Budget 2021 provides for expenditure of €154,685,723 to fund our services. The main sources of income available to fund this expenditure are set out here:



Grants and Subsidies

The Council has over previous years highlighted the legacy of low government grant funding to Meath. That said, 2021 will see very significant increases in grant funding to offset the cost of increased activity in areas such as housing and roads.

For example, our expected housing grant in 2021 will be €26,639,168 which is an increase of over 68% on what we received last year. Similarly the roads grant allocation continues to grow to €21,380,924 in 2021 (it was just over €13m in 2015).

The Council will continue to maximise its drawdown from national competitive grant funding streams, as it has done in recent years.

Goods and Services

The projected income from Goods and Services has increased from last year, with positive growth in income from housing rents, loans and charges. These growth areas will help off-set significant impacts on income from other revenue streams, such as parking charges and amenity charges, which will continue to be affected by any public health restrictions in 2021.

Budget 2021 has been prepared and balanced without any increase in commercial rates or local charges. This is the eight consecutive budget that I have presented to Council during which time rent charges and commercial rates have not been increased, despite the rising costs of doing business, the increased demands on most of our services and the very significant challenge that the pandemic has presented in terms of the Council's revenue streams.

Local Property Tax

The Members resolved at their meeting on September 7, 2020 not to vary the basic rate of the Local Property Tax. This followed consideration of a statutory report covering:

- the financial position of Meath County Council;
- an estimate of the income the Council will receive and the expenditure it will incur in the period for which the varied rate is to have effect;
- the financial effect of a varied rate; and
- feedback from the public consultation held.

This decision has had a beneficial impact on the preparation of the 2021 Budget. As Meath County Council has not varied the basic rate of Local Property Tax for 2020, the budget has been prepared on the allocation of €14,022,808 as notified.

The benefits of the Council's decision to continue to retain the Local Property Tax at its current rate has enabled the Council to protect the financial provision in key service areas such as housing, roads, the environment and community.

Commercial Rates

Commercial Rates continues to be a significant contributor to the Council's budget, although less so in 2021. Ensuring that all commercial properties in the county are included on the rates records and are properly rated remains a focused objective of the Council, in order to apply the burden of commercial rates in an equitable manner to business owners across the county. That said, the focus for the Council has been determined by efforts to counteract the negative impacts of the COVID-19 and the resultant public health restrictions placed on society and business.

The six month commercial rates waiver announced by Government in July and the additional Government support provided at the time of the national budget on October 13th, through the three-month additional waiver was much welcomed by both business and the Council.

Through the six-month rates waiver Meath County Council has supported 3,628 businesses and waived rates to the value of €11.8m. The three-month waiver will result in a further €5.9m being waived by the end of the 2020.

Businesses in Meath have also been supported through the various Business Restart Grant schemes. To date, the Council has processed and paid €16.5 m with a further €3.2m to be paid to the end of 2020 under the latest Restart Plus scheme.

The key objective of these measures is to maintain a sustainable rate base into 2021 and beyond.

In preparing this budget, there is significant uncertainty in respect of commercial rates and the collection rates for 2021. The Council and local government sector generally is engaging with the Department to secure support for the sector for 2020 and 2021. While there is still no certainty on this, there has been re-assurance by central government that sufficient support will be forthcoming. It is unlikely that we will have full confirmation of this until Q1, 2021, but Budget 2021 has been prepared on the understanding that there will be sufficient support from central government to offset losses to our rates income.

The following table provides an overview of the Rates calculation for 2021 as set out in the statutory budget tables.

Calculation of Rates 2021	
Effective Valuation 2021	€228,270,897
Annual Rate of Valuation	€0.1938
Total Rates for 2021	€44,238,898

It is also worth noting that Meath County Council is one of the top five local authorities in the country for the collection of rates, with a 93% collection level 2019, up from 85% in 2015. This compares with an average across the 31 local authorities of an 86% collection rate. The Council will continue to liaise with rate payers and improve collection rates, where possible.

I am, as Chief Executive, recommending that there will be no change in the current 100% rate rebate policy and that Budget 2021 has been prepared on this basis. The rationale for this approach is that there is too much uncertainty as to the viability of a number of businesses sectors, plus the collection of any additional income from the owners of vacant properties would present particular challenges in a county that has just gone through a Revaluation by the Valuations Office and is now also dealing with the consequences of the pandemic.

The Business Support Scheme has proven to be very successful and will continue. It has now evolved into a measure to encourage and assist businesses throughout Meath with a particular emphasis on small business. In order to qualify, businesses are required to fully discharge their rates by a prescribed date in the due year.

Budget Objectives 2020

It is worth underlining that Meath County Council is an efficient local authority, in terms of range and quality of the services it delivers with a very low, in fact the lowest, expenditure per capita of any local authority in the State.

Ideally, as Chief Executive, I would like to be in the position of make financial provision to meet the expectations of the elected members and citizens alike in terms of more and better services and enhanced delivery of a range of measured across the county and in all local communities.

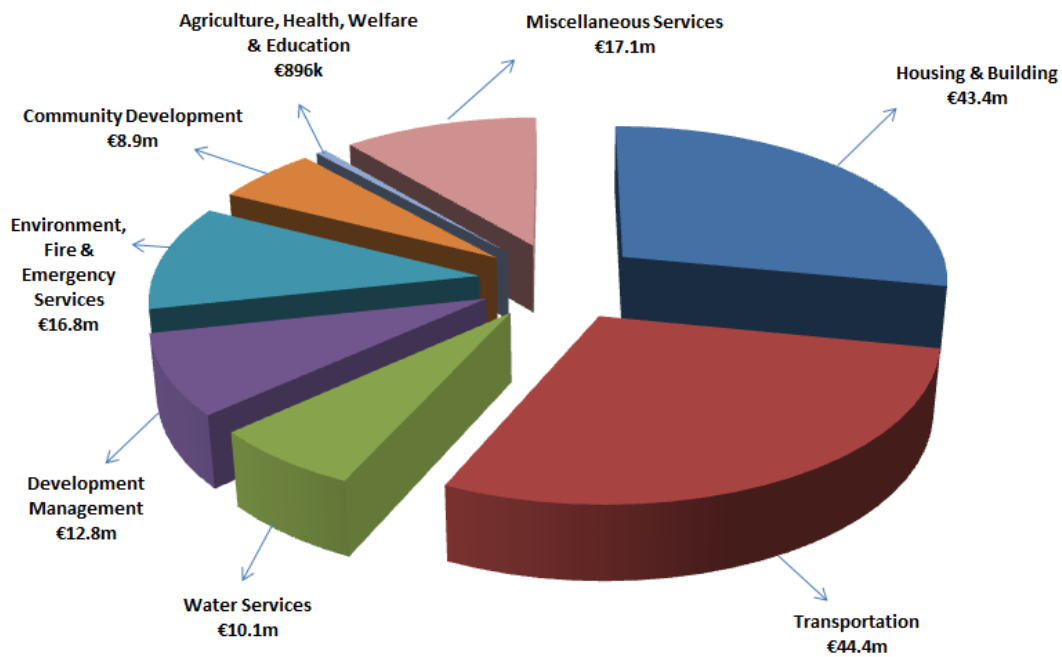
Unfortunately, this is not possible this year. The overall objectives of Budget 2021 are:

- to protect our essential frontline services;
- to make modest additional provision for some service areas;
- to identify savings in non-service areas;
- to build-in a contingency for dealing with the consequences of the COVID-19 virus; and
- to protect our rate base and support the resilience of the local economy, where possible.

EXPENDITURE PER HEAD OF POLULATION (HOP)

	EXPENDITURE	% OF BUDGET	SPEND PER HOP
Housing & Building	€43,456,698	28.1%	€222.80
Transportation	€44,446,785	28.7%	€227.88
Water Services	€10,106,268	6.5%	€51.82
Development Management	€12,896,103	8.3%	€66.12
Environment, Fire & Emergency Services	€16,825,103	10.9%	€86.26
Community Development	€8,917,425	5.8%	€45.72
Agriculture, Health, Welfare & Education	€896,198	0.6%	€4.59
Miscellaneous Services	€17,141,143	11.1%	€87.88
	€154,685,753	100%	€793.08

HOP - Head of Population - Population = 195,044 (Census 2016)



Where additional financial provision has been possible, this has been targeted on three areas in particular:

1. Housing – Increased Provision for Housing Maintenance

Responding to the national housing situation locally, by helping families and individuals to meet their housing needs remains a crucial challenge for Meath County Council. The Council was set a target of delivering 1,251 additional social housing units between 2017 and 2021 and is working towards this through a combination of construction, acquisition, leasing and through partnerships with Approved Housing Bodies working in the county. The Council's five-year target will be exceeded by the end of 2020, with a total of 1,518 new social housing units delivered for the period 2017-2020.

The Council currently has a strong construction pipeline with the Housing Capital Programme for new social housing currently at 503 units, many at various stages of planning and construction and the Council is also working to develop further opportunities to expand this.

In excess of 1,200 households had their accommodation needs met by Meath County Council in 2020, through various housing supports, up 9% on 2019. The Council has improved the operation of many of its housing services and advanced a number of its strategic priorities for homeless services, traveller accommodation, applicants with a disability and tenant liaison.

A key challenge for 2021 is the maintenance of our social housing units and estate management programmes, with work continuing on our existing housing stock in terms of energy efficiency works and other improvements. A systematic planned maintenance programme will continue in 2021, with an additional financial provision of €227,000. Further progress will be made in addressing the accommodation needs of people with a disability and providing more appropriate homes for older people.

2. Transportation – Road Maintenance and Improvements

Meath County Council manages and maintains over 3,500km of road, which includes the provision of routine and winter maintenance, surface dressing, public lighting, traffic management and safety and road improvements, including bridge works and footpath improvements.

The Council has achieved progress on a number of strategic national primary and secondary roads schemes in recent years and a number of major capital schemes will be further advanced in 2021. The Council will continue to realise efficiencies and maximise the resources at its disposal. The COVID 19 pandemic and related restrictions on construction work during 2020, in conjunction with the Jobs Stimulus packages announced by Government has resulted in increased demand for contractors, which could have a knock-on effect on prices for 2021. Provision has been made in Budget 2021 for modest increases for road maintenance and improvements, with most of this assigned for the local road network across the county.

Further, the National Transport Authority has engaged with the Council on a five-year plan for cycle facilities in the county as part of the Government's ambitious plan to fund €1.8bn for same during its time in office and this will be prioritised in 2021.

The Council will also participate in the appraisal of the extension of the rail line to Navan which is commencing in 2020 and will continue in to the early part of 2021. This infrastructure is a priority for the county, for many reasons, and we will continue to engage with the relevant authorities to advance the project.

3. Other COVID and Non-COVID Objectives for 2021

The Council has been on the frontline in terms of responding to the COVID-19 crisis, in supporting our communities and in terms of implementing many of the national initiatives to support the businesses sector; community resilience and coordinate the emergency responses at a local level. This effort has had an impact on our budget and will continue to do so in 2021.

Budget 2021 is therefore making some additional provision for some areas, such as increased coroners' fees. Similarly, during times of emergency, the county and its citizens rely on our excellent Fire and Rescue Service (the first fire service in Ireland to receive ISO 45001 accreditation) and the volunteer members of the Civil Defence. The Council's Fire and Rescue Service has one of the lowest per capita operating budgets in the country and its budget allocation is being increased. Similarly, we have invested considerable resources in a new Civil Defence headquarters, which opened in 2020, and this will be well used in 2021 and beyond.

Supporting indigenous businesses and SMEs is also a key part of our Economic Development strategy and we have really seen the benefit of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) model in 2020.

Meath LEO was on the frontline in terms of supporting local businesses to access the package of supports put in place by national government during the pandemic and to act as a local point of contact for schemes such as the Trading on-line Voucher, which assisted many businesses to have an online presence and to trade during the public health restrictions.

Our SMEs, the tourism sector and local food producers will be similarly challenged by Brexit but the efforts of our dedicated staff will assist in making the sector more resilient, to weather the effects of the pandemic and provide opportunities to diversify their markets.

Our ability as an organisation to provide the services our citizens require, and also the way in which our citizens interact with us, is increasingly reliant on technology. Our Information Systems Department has further enabled our workforce to work in new and very different ways during the COVID-19 crisis and these models of working will continue to be supported. We will also continue to deliver business improvements, including security upgrades, enhanced data analysis capacity and better online customer support in 2021.

As a public body, there is an obligation on us to engage, inform and communicate with all stakeholders. Again, our capacity to do so was tested during the COVID crisis and we have developed new and more engaging means of informing our citizens and engaging with them more directly using video, social and traditional media. We will continue to seek improvements in our communications roles in 2021.

Finally, the Council has a responsibility to support the elected members in their role and to facilitate the range of statutory and other meetings. We have had to adapt how we do our business in line with the public health restrictions and with the support of new legislation and technology. The publication of the Moorhead Report in 2020 also provides for an increase in financial provision for elected members and this is factored into Budget 2021.

Acknowledgements

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Cathaoirleach Cllr. David Gilroy and his predecessor Cllr. Wayne Harding and the Councillors of Meath County Council for their contribution and support over the past financial year. I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Elected Members on the delivery of a high quality public service for the people of Meath and developing the resilience of the county and all its communities, as we emerge from the pandemic in 2021.

I would like to pay tribute to all the staff for their commitment and enthusiasm in the delivery of these services across the county. 2020 has been a challenging year but as an organisation we have managed to remain open, delivering a wide range of services to the public, many of which are on the frontline and many of which have responded directly to the COVID-19 emergency.

The preparation of the Budget is a difficult and demanding task at the best of times, but even more so this year. It is co-ordinated by the Finance Team and involves all Departments. In this regard, I would like to thank all staff involved in the Budget process but in particular the Management Team for their on-going cooperation, with a special acknowledgement of Ms. Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance, and to Ms. Sheila Harkin and Mr. Paul Timoney and their colleagues for their tremendous work in relation to the detailed preparation of this Budget.

Finally, I formally recommend Budget 2021 as presented to the Council for adoption.

Jackie Maguire,



Chief Executive

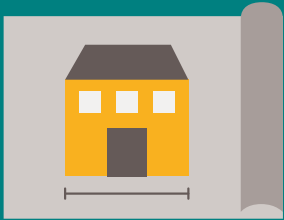


Transportation
€44.4m

Road Maintenance & Improvements, Public Lighting, Car Parking and Road Safety.

Development Mgt.
€12.8m

Planning, Community, Economic Development & Tourism



Housing

€43.4m



Maintenance & Improvement of LA Housing Units, RAS & Leasing, Housing Loans and Housing Grants.

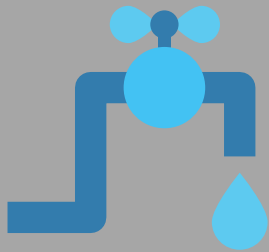


Environmental Services

€16.8m

Environmental Management, Climate Action, Waste, Fire Services, Civil Defence

Budget 2021 Expenditure
€154.6m



Water Services
€10.1m

Water, Waste Water, Drainage



Agriculture & Welfare
€896,198

Veterinary Services, Consumer Protection, Dog Licensing and Control

Recreation & Amenity
€8.9m



Libraries, Leisure Facilities, Parks, Playgrounds, Open Spaces & the Arts

Miscellaneous Services
€17.1m



Customer and Corporate Services, Communications, Facilities, Health & Safety

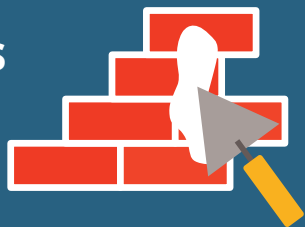
TABLE A - CALCULATION OF ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR

Summary by Service Division	Expenditure €	Income €	Budget Net Expenditure 2021 €	%	Estimated Net Expenditure Outturn 2020 €	%
Gross Revenue Expenditure & Income						
A Housing and Building	43,456,698	43,787,022	(330,324)	(0.6%)	358,203	0.6%
B Road Transport & Safety	44,446,785	25,783,081	18,663,704	32.0%	18,708,718	32.2%
C Water Services	10,106,268	9,165,521	940,747	1.6%	822,926	1.4%
D Development Management	12,896,103	5,543,776	7,352,327	12.6%	7,275,333	12.5%
E Environmental Services	16,825,103	5,757,754	11,067,349	19.0%	10,951,992	18.9%
F Recreation and Amenity	8,917,425	765,314	8,152,111	14.0%	8,637,502	14.9%
G Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	896,198	485,895	410,303	0.7%	425,959	0.7%
H Miscellaneous Services	17,141,143	5,135,654	12,005,489	20.6%	10,867,292	18.7%
	154,685,723	96,424,017	58,261,706	100.0%	58,047,925	100.0%
Provision for Debit Balance	-		-			
ADJUSTED GROSS EXPENDITURE AND INCOME (A)	154,685,723	96,424,017	58,261,706		58,047,925	
Financed by Other Income/Credit Balances						
Provision for Credit Balance		-	-			
Local Property Tax		14,022,808	14,022,808			
SUB-TOTAL (B)			14,022,808			
AMOUNT OF RATES TO BE LEVIED (A)-(B)			44,238,898			
Value of Base Year Adjustment			-			
AMOUNT OF RATES TO BE LEVIED (GROSS OF BYA) (D)			44,238,898			
Net Effective Valuation (E)			228,270,897			
GENERAL ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION (D)/(E)			0.1938			

Delivery in 2020

Building Homes

€14.7m



A total of 68 units are due to be delivered by the end of 2020 across three sites



1,518

Total of new social housing units delivered for the period 2017 - 2020

Capital Projects

€37.4m



Total funding approved to date in 2020 regarding capital project

158 Approved Housing Bodies

Collaborative work has yielded delivery of 158 units in 2020



Housing Service Division A

€43.4m

for 2021



Tenant Liasison

310

Total number of anti-social behaviour cases that have been investigated by the Tenant Liaison team to date in 2020



Allocations
1,200

In excess of 1,200 households will have their housing needs met by Meath County Council in 2020

Housing Grants

€1.9m

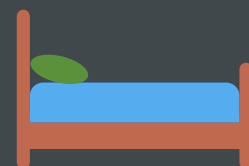
280 Housing Grant Applications to date under a variety of schemes.



Homeless Services

216

Total number of households that required emergency placement to date in 2020



SERVICE DIVISION A

Housing & Building

Achievements in 2020

Housing Capital

Direct construction programme for the period 2017-2021 comprises 22 sites throughout the County, totally 503 units (€122,432,209), with 68 units due to be delivered by the end of 2020 across three sites (€14,701,228).

Meath County Council's Rebuilding Ireland delivery target for 2017 – 2021 is 1,251, and is to be delivered across the key delivery mechanisms, including direct construction, Part V, Approved Housing Bodies, the acquisition programme and leasing. Meath County Council's five year target will be exceeded by the end of 2020, with a total of 1,518 new social housing units delivered for the period 2017-2020.



Funding approval was received from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in respect to a number of capital project submissions made during the year, including direct construction, Part V, turnkey acquisitions and regeneration projects. Total funding approved to date in 2020 regarding capital project totals €37,419,624 (152 units), representing future pipeline delivery.

Collaborative work with Approved Housing Bodies has yielded significant delivery during 2020 (158 units), with a further 288 units granted approval, with expected delivery in 2021.

Refurbishment works were carried out on over 60 casual vacancies to date in 2020.

Works on 45 units under the Local Authority Adaptation Works Scheme will be completed by year end.

Affordability Measures

The disposal of seven cost reduced units in Broadmeadowvale, Ratoath was advanced in 2020, realising the affordability dividend associated with the Ratoath LIHAF project.

Nine low cost private sites were advertised, as incorporated in the current phase of Lagore Lawns, Dunshaughlin, representing a further affordability measure undertaken directly by Meath County Council.

Housing Grants

Approval has been granted to 280 housing grant applications to date under the following schemes: Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability and Housing Aid for Older People and Mobility Aid Grants, to a combined value of €1,931,882.

Housing Allocations



In excess of 1,200 households will have their accommodation needs met by Meath County Council in 2020, through various housing supports, including Housing Assistance Payment, the Rental Accommodation Scheme, Approved Housing Bodies, as well as through direct allocations by Meath County Council.

Tenant Liaison

In excess of 216 tenants completed pre-tenancy training during 2020, obtaining a variety of information concerning their tenancy with Meath County Council.

310 anti-social behaviour cases have been investigated by the Tenant Liaison team to date in 2020.

Homeless Service

Some 216 households have required an emergency accommodation placement to date in 2020, with a significant increase in the presentation of single adult households.

Progress was made during 2020 with the roll out of Housing First in the County, while the Homeless HAP Placefinder Service has supported 131 tenancies to date.

An Isolation Plan was devised and subsequently implemented, in response to Covid-19, and the designation of homeless persons and members of the Traveller Community as vulnerable persons. A number of units within stock have been set aside, and fully furnished, for the purposes of isolation, as and when the need arises. In addition, four units have been handed over to Meath Women's Refuge in order to allow their services to victims of domestic violence continue unaffected, outside of their traditional communal refuge setting.

Traveller Accommodation

Work continued to bring forward the proposed refurbishment of St Francis' Park halting site, which has Departmental approval for a €2,856,336 grant. Departmental approval is currently being sought in order to proceed to the Part 8 planning process, with a revised cost of €3,923,736.

Considerable progress was made in addressing the extent of unauthorised families located within St Patrick's Park Halting site though a process of voluntary transfers and moves. The process involved the move of fifteen families in total, including to standard housing and to vacated bays on site, thus bringing the matter to a successful resolution.

Rented Minimum Standards

A significant number of private rented dwellings inspected by Meath County Council will be recorded for 2020, despite Covid-19 restrictions. In excess of 1,000 inspections will be conducted.

Initiatives and Challenges for 2021

Provision has been made in the 2021 Housing Budget for the following:

- Funding of grants under the Housing Grant Scheme to a value of €2,520,000;
- Response and Preventative Maintenance programmes;
- Increased delivery by the Approved Housing Body sector in terms of new social units and related Payment and Availability Agreements;
- Estate Management Initiatives.

The need for social housing continues to increase, with over 800 new applications for Social Housing received to date in 2020. A key challenge for 2021 will be to continue to address the demand for housing support in the context of the Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, in collaboration with all key stakeholders. In this context, the progression of all our current major capital projects will be a key priority for the Housing Department in 2021, including the development of further pipeline projects including land acquisition, and advancement of our Vacant Homes Action Plan and related regeneration projects.

Demand on our Homeless Service remains unabated, and will require increased funding at both local and national level in order to sustain the service provided, through the provision of emergency accommodation and preventative measures. The continued implementation of Housing First will be a priority in 2021, with a view to establishing multiple Housing First tenancies, thereby addressing the needs of a number of long term cyclical homeless clients.

The revision of Meath County Council's 'Strategy for Housing People with a Disability' in 2021 will renew our strategic approach in addressing the accommodation needs of applicants with a disability, and feed into future social housing provision. The related Age Friendly and rightsizing agendas will also be advanced through the opportunities that pipeline delivery will provide.



TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2021 and Estimated Outturn for 2020

Division & Services	2021				2020			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
A Housing and Building								
A01 Maintenance & Improvement of LA Housing Units	6,500,670	6,500,670	2,223,949	2,223,949	6,273,043	6,289,200	2,225,961	2,225,961
A02 Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer	28,128	28,128	-	-	28,104	28,112	-	-
A03 Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration	1,219,931	1,219,931	11,352,939	11,352,939	1,136,651	1,139,725	10,019,989	10,532,071
A04 Housing Community Development Support	448,490	448,490	197,235	197,235	533,061	536,407	296,477	296,477
A05 Administration of Homeless Service	3,192,010	3,192,010	2,460,159	2,460,159	2,122,110	2,924,888	1,558,739	2,098,739
A06 Support to Housing Capital Prog.	2,927,871	2,927,871	677,129	677,129	2,864,134	2,889,209	632,465	632,465
A07 RAS and Leasing Programme	23,514,960	23,514,960	23,530,439	23,530,439	13,750,181	14,648,128	13,729,472	14,592,682
A08 Housing Loans	2,886,319	2,886,319	1,233,813	1,233,813	2,715,856	2,671,293	943,933	1,037,768
A09 Housing Grants	2,524,538	2,524,538	2,016,095	2,016,095	2,523,352	2,552,457	2,015,138	2,038,338
A11 Agency & Recoupable Services	851	851	-	-	855	872	-	-
A12 HAP Programme	212,930	212,930	95,264	95,264	248,180	250,353	117,940	117,940
Division A Total	43,456,698	43,456,698	43,787,022	43,787,022	32,195,527	33,930,644	31,540,114	33,572,441

Table F - Expenditure

Division A - Housing and Building

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
A0101 Maintenance of LA Housing Units	5,112,000	5,112,000	4,882,000	4,882,000
A0102 Maintenance of Traveller Accommodation Units	271,134	271,134	269,014	269,014
A0103 Traveller Accommodation Management	61,700	61,700	61,700	61,700
A0104 Estate Maintenance	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
A0199 Service Support Costs	1,005,836	1,005,836	1,010,329	1,026,486
A01 Maintenance & Improvement of LA Housing Units	6,500,670	6,500,670	6,273,043	6,289,200
A0201 Assessment of Housing Needs, Allocs. & Trans.	27,763	27,763	27,738	27,738
A0299 Service Support Costs	365	365	366	374
A02 Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer	28,128	28,128	28,104	28,112
A0301 Debt Management & Rent Assessment	1,021,470	1,021,470	941,139	941,139
A0399 Service Support Costs	198,461	198,461	195,512	198,586
A03 Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration	1,219,931	1,219,931	1,136,651	1,139,725
A0402 Tenancy Management	178,324	178,324	164,317	164,317
A0403 Social and Community Housing Service	190,000	190,000	289,000	289,000
A0499 Service Support Costs	80,166	80,166	79,744	83,090
A04 Housing Community Development Support	448,490	448,490	533,061	536,407
A0502 Homeless Service	3,118,849	3,118,849	2,049,231	2,849,231
A0599 Service Support Costs	73,161	73,161	72,879	75,657
A05 Administration of Homeless Service	3,192,010	3,192,010	2,122,110	2,924,888
A0601 Technical and Administrative Support	2,194,270	2,194,270	2,122,850	2,122,850
A0602 Loan Charges	134,253	134,253	144,864	144,864
A0699 Service Support Costs	599,348	599,348	596,420	621,495
A06 Support to Housing Capital Prog.	2,927,871	2,927,871	2,864,134	2,889,209
A0701 RAS Operations	4,442,688	4,442,688	4,809,170	4,843,670
A0702 Long Term Leasing	3,151,814	3,151,814	179,070	660,914
A0703 Payment & Availability	15,908,975	15,908,975	8,750,401	9,131,768
A0799 Service Support Costs	11,483	11,483	11,540	11,776
A07 RAS and Leasing Programme	23,514,960	23,514,960	13,750,181	14,648,128
A0801 Loan Interest and Other Charges	2,400,912	2,400,912	2,211,134	2,153,236
A0802 Debt Management Housing Loans	106,187	106,187	117,241	117,241
A0899 Service Support Costs	379,220	379,220	387,481	400,816
A08 Housing Loans	2,886,319	2,886,319	2,715,856	2,671,293

Table F - Expenditure

Division A - Housing and Building

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
A0905 Mobility Aids Housing Grants	2,520,000	2,520,000	2,518,800	2,547,800
A0999 Service Support Costs	4,538	4,538	4,552	4,657
A09 Housing Grants	2,524,538	2,524,538	2,523,352	2,552,457
A1199 Service Support Costs	851	851	855	872
A11 Agency & Recoupable Services	851	851	855	872
A1201 HAP	173,467	173,467	209,261	209,261
A1299 HAP Service Support Costs	39,463	39,463	38,919	41,092
A12 HAP Programme	212,930	212,930	248,180	250,353
Division A Total	43,456,698	43,456,698	32,195,527	33,930,644

Table F - Income

Division A - Housing and Building				
Income by Source	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	26,639,168	26,639,168	15,784,843	16,671,253
Other	-	-	-	-
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	26,639,168	26,639,168	15,784,843	16,671,253
Goods & Services				
Rents from Houses	11,950,537	11,950,537	10,645,520	11,158,520
Housing Loans Interest & Charges	1,300,277	1,300,277	986,482	1,080,642
Superannuation	150,140	150,140	155,169	155,169
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	1,988,000	1,988,000	1,272,000	1,812,000
Other income	1,758,900	1,758,900	2,696,100	2,694,857
Total Goods & Services	17,147,854	17,147,854	15,755,271	16,901,188
Division A Total	43,787,022	43,787,022	31,540,114	33,572,441

Delivery in 2020



Road Safety
10

Safety Improvement works have been funded in ten different locations throughout the county

Jobs Stimulus Package

€3.1m

38 schemes to receive an allocation in response to Covid-19



Transportation
Service Division B

€44.4m

for 2021

Surface Dressing

22.23km

Regional Roads surface dressing



100.1km

Local Roads surface dressing

Road Improvements

€42.4m

Delivery of €42.4m road works programme and the completion of 16 Community Involvement Schemes and 5 Local Improvement Schemes



Road Works

18.65km

Regional Roads restoration works completed



62.54km

Local Roads restoration works completed

Sustainable Transport

12 Sustainable Transport Schemes Progressed in 2020



Road Schemes

National & Primary Secondary Road Schemes were advanced in 2020 **5**



12 Additional Non-National Schemes progressed in 2020

Bridge Works

8

Remedial Works carried out 8 bridges with design and repair works progressed for a further four bridges



SERVICE DIVISION B Transportation

Achievements in 2020

Road Improvements



Achievements on road improvements include the delivery of the circa €42.4m road works programme and the completion of 16 Community Involvement Schemes (majority of funding from Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTT&S)) and 5 Local Improvement Schemes (grant funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DR&CD)). These schemes showcase how partnership between the Council and communities can deliver meaningful improvements on roads, which otherwise would not receive maintenance/improvement funding.

Summary of Progress on Schemes in 2020

The following National Primary and Secondary Road Schemes were advanced in 2020:

- N2 Slane Bypass – Consultants progressing Phase 3 design. Initial landowner meetings have commenced;
- N51 Dunmoe Phase 2 – Notice to Enter was served on all landowners. Stage 2 & 3 Archaeology ongoing. The main construction contract will go to Tender in late 2020/ early 2021, subject to the required approvals and funding being in place;
- N52 Grange to Clontail Road scheme – Scheme currently going through the Part 8 process, with a decision due in Q1, 2021. Phase 3 design being progressed, and initial meetings have been held with landowners;
- N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon – Assessments and Surveys progressing to assist in identifying the Emerging Preferred Option. A third public consultation will then take place, scheduled for Q1, 2021;
- National Road Pavement Schemes – 3.8 km resurfacing constructed at 20 locations and 1.3km of retexturing completed at 6 locations by end of 2020.

Non-National road network maintained in 2020

Road Restoration:

- Regional Roads – 18.65 km and Local Roads - 62.54 km (including 8.9 kms for CIS);
- 3.25 kms of roads were completed under the Local Improvement Scheme.

Surface Dressing:

- Regional Roads – 22.23 kms (including road restoration lengths);
- Local Roads – 100.1 kms (including road restoration lengths and CIS schemes).

An additional element of funding, under the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport grant, was allocated to Meath County Council in 2020 in the amount of € 750,000 for works on former National Roads and 2.7 km of resurfacing has been completed in 2020, under this heading.

The additional Non-National Schemes progressed in 2020 are as follows:

- R150 Laytown to Bettystown Spine Road – Construction commenced in August 2020 and is expected to take 12 months approximately;
- LDR4 Abbeyland Navan - Formal applications for EIS and CPO lodged with An Bord Pleanála in July 2020. Submissions received and Oral Hearing for the CPO being held in December 2020;
- LIHAF - LDR6 Navan R153 to Ferganstown and Ballymacon – Construction works to be substantially complete by end of 2020;
- LIHAF - Ratoath Outer Relief Road Phase 1 - Construction works to be substantially complete by end of 2020;
- LDR1b –Consulting engineers appointed August 2020, reviewing Part 8 planning and preliminary design and preparing CPO documentation;
- R162 Kilberry- Construction works to be substantially complete by end of 2020;
- R155 Curragha – The works have been delayed pending works by Irish Water. Temporary ramps to be installed pending completion of the permanent works;
- Milltown Road Scheme – Construction works to be substantially complete by end of 2020;
- R154 Batterjohn Junction – Works completed Q3, 2020;
- Access Road Frontlands Kells – MCC application submitted to An Bord Pleanála for approval and the scheme was approved in June 2020;
- Designs progressed for junction improvements and traffic calming in Julianstown, Batterstown and Curragha;
- Bracetown Link Road - consultants appointed to prepare preliminary design and Part 8 documentation.

Bridge Remedial Works progressed in 2020

Remedial Works were carried out on Annes Bridge, Stoneyford Bridge, Annesbrooke Bridge, Skearke Bridge, Clonard Bridge, Kearntown Bridge, Cornmill Bridge and Maudlin Bridge.

Design of repairs to Kilmainhamwood and Donaghmore retaining walls and embankments have progressed, and repairs works to Danestown and Normansgrove culverts were carried out also.

Safety Improvement Works progressed in 2020

Safety Improvement Works have been funded at the following locations; R164 Kells Town, L2813 Cortown, R163 Drumbaragh, L5615 Minnistown Rd, L1625 Sallygardens Crossroads, L1600 Beauparc Junction, R161 Newhaggard Road, L1005 Oberstown Cross and R163 Scottstown, Gormanlough. Safety Schemes are being designed for the N52 at Johnsbrook Cross and Balrath Cross.

Jobs Stimulus Package

In addition to the €42.4m, in the latter half of 2020, Meath County Council was successful in securing funding under two Job Stimulus packages implemented by the Government.

The first is being managed through the National Transport Authority to support local authorities' response to Covid-19 challenges and assist with their work to equip local communities and businesses with improved walking and cycling infrastructure. A brief description of the 38 successful schemes receiving an allocation of €3.105m follows:

No.	Road Number /Street Name	Location of Proposed Scheme	Cost	Type of Works
1	R-159-89	Enfield	€120,000	Footpath Works
2	Ratholdren Road	Navan	€44,000	Pedestrian Crossing
3	R195 and The Square	Oldcastle	€30,000	Pedestrian Crossing
4	R151	Mornington adjacent to 'Harry's Shop'	€60,000	Footpath Works & Pedestrian Crossing
5	Lackanash Road	Trim	€40,000	Pedestrian Crossing
6	Church Road (R150)	Donacarney	€30,000	Pedestrian Crossing
7	R147	Clonee Main Street	€30,000	Cycle Lanes
8	R154	Townlands of Batterjohn, DerryPatrick Grange, Kiltale and BatterJohn	€1,220,000	Road Works
9	Jim Brunnock Rd	Kells Town	€50,000	Footpath Works
10	Kilcarn Court, Navan	Kilcarn Court, Navan	€90,000	Footpath Works
11	R-158-0	Bettystown Village	€40,000	Footpath Works
12	On the N2 near the M2 Rath Roundabout	Edge of N2 linking houses to existing footway Ashbourne	€40,000	Footpath Works / Pedestrian Crossing
13	R-125-2	Main St., Ratoath, Arkle House to SuperValu	€80,000	Footpath Works
14	Rockfield Green	Kells Town	€50,000	Walkway
15	Dean Cogan, Navan	Dean Cogan, Navan	€65,000	Footpath Works
16	R125	Main Street Ratoath	€250,000	Cycle Lanes / Walkway
17	R132-322	R132 Painstown-Colp Cross	€40,000	Footpath Works/Cycle Lanes
18	Castle Way access road	Castle Way, Ashbourne	€5,000	Footpath works
19	Castle Way access road	Garden City, Ashbourne	€7,500	Footpath works
20	Castle Street	Castle Street, Ashbourne	€7,500	Footpath Works/Cycle Lanes
21	R-158-0	Summerhill Road, Trim	€30,000	Footpath Works/Cycle Lanes
22	Church View	Athboy	€30,000	Pedestrian Crossing
23	L-34142-0	Dan Shaw Road, Navan	€45,000	Pedestrian Crossing
24	L16167-0	Sea fields(Corvallis) Laytown	€82,000	Footpath Works /Cycle Lanes
25	Castle Way access road	Garden City, Ashbourne	€10,000	Pedestrian Crossing
26	L1006	Skryne Road Ratoath (Cemetery Road)	€180,000	Road Works
27	R-161-0	Navan Gate Street, Trim,	€25,000	Footpath Works / Cycle lanes
28	Estate access road	St Oliver Plunkets Estate, Kentstown	€15,000	Footpath Works
29	Enfield Village	Various locations in the village	€50,000	Footpath Works / Cycle lanes
30	R150 Bettystown	Bettystown Square& Laytown	€85,000	Pedestrian Crossing
31	Deerpark estate access	Deerpark Estate, Ashbourne	€35,000	Pedestrian Crossing
32	Summerhill Village	Various locations in the village	€30,000	Footpath Works / Cycle lanes
33	Deerpark estate access	Deerpark Estate, Ashbourne	€25,000	Pedestrian Crossing
34	R156	Summerhill Village	€25,000	Footpath Works / Cycle lanes
35	L1617	Stamullen to Gormanstown road	€40,000	Road Works / footpath works
36	R135	Existing cycle lane on R135, Ashbourne North	€15,000	Cycle Lane
37	Ribbontail Lane	Longwood	€20,000	Road Works
38	Killegland Estate and	Ashbourne	€64,000	Footpath Works

The second, managed through DTT&S, is for measures to address the impact of climate change on the network. A total allocation of €517,000 was secured for 5 approved projects:

No.	Road Number	Location of proposed scheme	Cost 2020	Type of Works
1	L1002-37	Riverstown road	€100,000	Remedial Works - along road edges following heavy rainfall events
2	R151	R151 Mornington	€142,000	Altering the level of road to mitigate flooding & reduce road closure frequency
7	R-160-1	Trim ring road	€150,000	Remedial works due to severe damage -Storm Emma & subsequent severe weather events
9	R125	Dunshaughlin	€110,000	Remedial works where road has been damaged by recent severe weather events
14	R125	Greenoge, Donaghmore	€15,000	Broadmeadow River (floodplain) is making the embankment of the R125 road unstable causing gradual slippage over a 100m long section

Sustainable Transport Schemes progressed in 2020:

- Boyneside Trail – Planning application submitted to An Bord Pleanála in July 2020, currently awaiting a decision;
- Boyne Greenway – Oldbridge to Navan - Consultants appointed in March 2020 to prepare preliminary design and application for statutory approval. It is currently expected that a planning application will be submitted to An Bord Pleanala in late 2021. €750,000 funding allocated under DTT&S Strategy for the future Development of National & Regional Greenways;
- Boyne Valley to Lakelands County Greenway – Looped walks completed around Nobber and Castletown using ORIS funding. €500K of ORIS funding secured for Navan to Wilkinstown Section which is due to be tendered in Q4, 2020/Q1 2021 Funding application for RRDF allocation to be submitted Q4, 2020;
- Navan 2030 – Phase 1 construction contract for Railway Street complete. Phase 2 construction progressing on site – estimated completion Q2, 2021 Design works for Phase 3 which includes works on Ludlow St, Market Sq, Kennedy Rd & Kennedy Plaza progressing to Tender;
- Installation of Bus Shelters – Countywide project ongoing – Geophysical and Topographical Surveys being progressed;
- Cycle Parking - Site locations have been identified and tender documents prepared;
- Laytown Park & Ride Facility – Contractor appointed and works underway;
- Athlumney to Trim Road Cycle and Pedestrian Scheme – Topographical survey complete, drainage design ongoing. Scheme will be tendered for construction in 2021;
- Pedestrian & Cyclist footway – N52 Bypass, Kells – Works substantially complete and route open to the public;
- Navan Bus Stops – Tender for construction works associated with new town bus service on route N1 and N2 undertaken in Q4 2020;
- Part 8 for cycling and walking facilities in Ratoath commenced Q4, 2020;
- Part 8 commenced for Park and Ride facility on N51 in Navan.



Work continued on the delivery of other services:

- Ordinary Maintenance, Winter Maintenance Service and Maintenance of Plant and Machinery;
- Establishment of centralised contract for maintenance of traffic signals/lights
- Capital Programme of Footpath Improvement Works;
- Public Lighting Services, maintenance and capital programme of Public Lighting upgrades and Energy Efficiency Schemes across the county;
- Development Control / Transport Planning Advice;
- Road Safety Improvement Schemes, Promotion and Education;
- Road Opening Licences, Abnormal Load Applications, Roads and Services in Charge queries;
- Review of bus licences and Bus Stop locations;
- Additional funding was provided by DTTAS of €680,8674 for Drainage Schemes throughout the county

Initiatives and Challenges for 2021:

In preparing the Budget for 2021 we have made the assumption that Grant Funding from Government Departments will be at a similar level to what was allocated in 2020. The continuing challenge for the Council in 2021 will be to deploy the resources available in the most effective way to maintain the network and provide the best level of service possible to the public. The key will be to deliver this service in a manner that is safe for the public, for staff and for contractors alike.

The COVID 19 pandemic and related restrictions on construction work during 2020, in conjunction with Jobs Stimulus packages announced by Government has resulted in increased demand for contractors, which could have a knock-on effect on prices for 2021. This could impact the ability of the Transportation Department to maintain the current level of service provision and continue progress on the major schemes listed above.

Progression on all our major Capital Schemes will be a priority in 2021, with particular focus on commencing construction of the N51 Dunmoe – Phase 2 scheme; submitting the SID applications for the N2 Slane Bypass and the Boyne Greenway to An Bord Pleanála; completion of the R150 Laytown to Bettystown Spine Road; completion of the construction of Phase 2 of the Navan 2030 Scheme and commencement of Phase 3. The Council hopes that An Bord Pleanála will approve all schemes that have been submitted and that funding announcements for URDF and RRDF will allow LDR4, LDR1b and the Boyne Valley to Lakelands County Greenway to progress in 2021.

The NTA has engaged with the Council on a 5 year plan for cycle facilities in the County as part of the Government's ambitious plan to fund €1.8bn for same during its time in office.

MCC will participate in the review of the extension of the rail line to Navan which is commencing in 2020 and will continue in to the early part of 2021.

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2021 and Estimated Outturn for 2020

Division & Services	2021				2020			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
B Road Transport & Safety								
B01 NP Road - Maintenance and Improvement	821,692	821,692	284,121	284,121	818,133	820,599	284,472	284,472
B02 NS Road - Maintenance and Improvement	375,412	375,412	303,549	303,549	357,916	359,472	300,981	300,981
B03 Regional Road - Maintenance and Improvement	13,112,548	13,112,548	9,829,794	9,829,794	13,082,739	13,083,546	9,040,353	9,215,458
B04 Local Road - Maintenance and Improvement	19,719,102	19,719,102	11,096,364	11,096,364	17,911,842	19,503,979	10,072,373	11,720,451
B05 Public Lighting	2,865,371	2,865,371	15	15	2,659,323	2,659,449	16	16
B06 Traffic Management Improvement	103,168	103,168	2,362	2,362	103,111	104,160	2,441	2,441
B07 Road Safety Engineering Improvement	333,679	333,679	280,298	280,298	333,447	334,447	280,475	280,475
B08 Road Safety Promotion & Education	374,892	374,892	8,511	8,511	374,034	376,688	8,796	8,796
B09 Car Parking	1,030,439	1,030,439	1,316,000	1,316,000	1,058,497	1,098,134	1,688,000	1,060,000
B10 Support to Roads Capital Prog	1,893,039	1,893,039	150,895	150,895	1,895,054	1,991,051	155,950	155,950
B11 Agency & Recoupable Services	3,817,443	3,817,443	2,511,172	2,511,172	3,810,658	3,812,888	2,406,655	2,406,655
Division B Total	44,446,785	44,446,785	25,783,081	25,783,081	42,404,754	44,144,413	24,240,512	25,435,695

Table F - Expenditure

Division B - Road Transport & Safety

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
B0103 NP - Winter Maintenance	103,546	103,546	104,091	104,091
B0105 NP - General Maintenance	177,204	177,204	177,204	177,204
B0199 Service Support Costs	540,942	540,942	536,838	539,304
B01 NP Road - Maintenance and Improvement	821,692	821,692	818,133	820,599
B0204 NS - Winter Maintenance	121,734	121,734	121,661	121,661
B0206 NS - General Maintenance	202,554	202,554	185,689	185,689
B0299 Service Support Costs	51,124	51,124	50,566	52,122
B02 NS Road - Maintenance and Improvement	375,412	375,412	357,916	359,472
B0301 Regional Roads Surface Dressing	822,500	822,500	699,010	822,673
B0302 Reg Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	4,734,774	4,734,774	4,676,200	4,734,774
B0303 Regional Road Winter Maintenance	139,634	139,634	339,570	139,570
B0305 Regional Road General Maintenance Works	4,626,019	4,626,019	4,620,046	4,620,046
B0399 Service Support Costs	2,789,621	2,789,621	2,747,913	2,766,483
B03 Regional Road - Maintenance and Improvement	13,112,548	13,112,548	13,082,739	13,083,546
B0401 Local Road Surface Dressing	2,465,369	2,465,369	1,951,900	2,465,369
B0402 Local Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	7,931,726	7,931,726	6,841,800	7,931,726
B0404 Local Roads Bridge Maintenance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
B0405 Local Roads General Maintenance Works	5,432,626	5,432,626	5,222,840	5,222,840
B0499 Service Support Costs	3,789,381	3,789,381	3,795,302	3,784,044
B04 Local Road - Maintenance and Improvement	19,719,102	19,719,102	17,911,842	19,503,979
B0501 Public Lighting Operating Costs	2,584,212	2,584,212	2,384,212	2,384,212
B0599 Service Support Costs	281,159	281,159	275,111	275,237
B05 Public Lighting	2,865,371	2,865,371	2,659,323	2,659,449
B0603 Traffic Improvement Measures	82,001	82,001	82,001	82,001
B0699 Service Support Costs	21,167	21,167	21,110	22,159
B06 Traffic Management Improvement	103,168	103,168	103,111	104,160
B0701 Low Cost Remedial Measures	275,000	275,000	275,000	275,000
B0799 Service Support Costs	58,679	58,679	58,447	59,447
B07 Road Safety Engineering Improvement	333,679	333,679	333,447	334,447
B0801 School Wardens	208,312	208,312	208,268	208,268
B0802 Publicity and Promotion Road Safety	54,124	54,124	53,504	53,504
B0899 Service Support Costs	112,456	112,456	112,262	114,916
B08 Road Safety Promotion & Education	374,892	374,892	374,034	376,688

Table F - Expenditure

Division B - Road Transport & Safety

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
B0902 Operation of Street Parking	739,000	739,000	771,000	810,637
B0903 Parking Enforcement	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000
B0999 Service Support Costs	206,439	206,439	202,497	202,497
B09 Car Parking	1,030,439	1,030,439	1,058,497	1,098,134
B1099 Service Support Costs	1,893,039	1,893,039	1,895,054	1,991,051
B10 Support to Roads Capital Prog	1,893,039	1,893,039	1,895,054	1,991,051
B1101 Agency & Recoupable Service	3,753,561	3,753,561	3,747,119	3,747,119
B1199 Service Support Costs	63,882	63,882	63,539	65,769
B11 Agency & Recoupable Services	3,817,443	3,817,443	3,810,658	3,812,888
Division B Total	44,446,785	44,446,785	42,404,754	44,144,413

Table F - Income

Division B - Road Transport & Safety				
Income by Source	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	-	-	-	-
TII Transport Infrastructure Ireland	21,380,924	21,380,924	18,982,646	20,761,146
Media, Tourism, Art, Culture, Sport & the Gaeltacht	-	-	-	-
National Transport Authority	-	-	-	-
Transport	-	-	-	-
Community, Rural Development & the Islands	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	21,380,924	21,380,924	18,982,646	20,761,146
Goods & Services				
Parking Fines & Charges	1,303,000	1,303,000	1,675,000	1,051,000
Superannuation	465,103	465,103	480,684	480,684
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	-	-	-	-
Other income	2,634,054	2,634,054	3,102,182	3,142,865
Total Goods & Services	4,402,157	4,402,157	5,257,866	4,674,549
Division B Total	25,783,081	25,783,081	24,240,512	25,435,695

Delivery in 2020

Drinking Water
47m



Meath County Council produces and distributes **47m** litres of drinking water each day to



165,000
residents and

7,000

businesses, schools, hospitals and nursing homes

Service Level Agreement

8

Entering into our 8th year of the 12 year Service Level Agreement with Irish Water



Water

Service Division C

€10.1m

for 2021

Direct Responsibility



- Storm Water Drainage
- Storm Flooding
- Group Schemes
- Private regulated Water Supplies
- Well Grants
- Lead Piping replacement grants

64

Treatment Plants



The council operates and maintains 64 water plants, over

2,000km

of pipe network, almost



40

reservoirs and numerous pumping stations



SERVICE DIVISION C

Water Services

In 2021, Meath County Council will enter year eight of the twelve year Service Level Agreement with Irish Water, which ensures the continued provision of day to day water and wastewater operation and maintenance and capital delivery services.



Under this Service Level Agreement, Meath County Council continues to operate and maintain all water services facilities and networks within County Meath and to project manage capital programmes on behalf of Irish Water. In this capacity, the Council continues to play a key role in the provision of Water and Wastewater services to the residents and businesses of the county.

The Council's 2021 Budget accounts for Water Services staff payroll, directly incurred costs and a representative proportion of the Central Management Charge, which will be recouped on a monthly basis from Irish Water during 2021. Irish Water has budgeted directly for the provision of the goods and services associated with the provision of Water Services.

Irish Water does not have responsibility for storm water drainage, storm flooding, group schemes, private regulated water supplies, well grants or lead piping replacement grants. Therefore, Meath County Council will continue to have direct responsibility for these matters and is providing funding for same in the 2021 Budget.

Group Scheme, well and lead piping grants are administered and paid by the Council and then recouped from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. 2020 saw the introduction of increased grants for the improvement of water supply to houses reliant on a private well.

During 2021, a number of Water Services capital projects will commence on site and this, coupled with the Council's on-going commitment to water conservation and continued close engagement with Irish Water to secure further capital investment in critical Water Services infrastructure, will serve to facilitate the planned development and growth of Meath into 2021 and beyond.

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2021 and Estimated Outturn for 2020

Division & Services	2021				2020			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
C Water Services								
C01 Water Supply	4,666,404	4,666,404	223,830	223,830	4,390,277	4,459,546	231,328	231,328
C02 Waste Water Treatment	3,632,014	3,632,014	122,335	122,335	3,702,467	3,731,760	126,434	126,434
C03 Collection of Water and Waste Water Charges	50,121	50,121	4,658	4,658	49,914	52,084	4,814	4,814
C04 Public Conveniences	59,179	59,179	21,921	21,921	59,048	59,432	21,986	21,986
C05 Admin of Group and Private Installations	317,524	317,524	230,882	230,882	315,084	314,367	191,079	227,401
C06 Support to Water Capital Programme	1,370,239	1,370,239	90	90	1,344,064	1,349,839	93	93
C07 Agency & Recoupable Services	8,287	8,287	8,561,805	8,561,805	8,299	8,512	8,350,684	8,541,558
C08 Local Authority Water and Sanitary Services	2,500	2,500	-	-	5,000	1,000	-	-
Division C Total	10,106,268	10,106,268	9,165,521	9,165,521	9,874,153	9,976,540	8,926,418	9,153,614

Table F - Expenditure

Division C - Water Services

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
C0101 Water Plants & Networks	2,562,977	2,562,977	2,282,566	2,282,566
C0199 Service Support Costs	2,103,427	2,103,427	2,107,711	2,176,980
C01 Water Supply	4,666,404	4,666,404	4,390,277	4,459,546
C0201 Waste Plants and Networks	1,571,573	1,571,573	1,236,323	1,236,323
C0299 Service Support Costs	2,060,441	2,060,441	2,466,144	2,495,437
C02 Waste Water Treatment	3,632,014	3,632,014	3,702,467	3,731,760
C0399 Service Support Costs	50,121	50,121	49,914	52,084
C03 Collection of Water and Waste Water Charges	50,121	50,121	49,914	52,084
C0401 Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences	52,183	52,183	52,183	52,183
C0499 Service Support Costs	6,996	6,996	6,865	7,249
C04 Public Conveniences	59,179	59,179	59,048	59,432
C0501 Grants for Individual Installations	45,000	45,000	85,000	45,000
C0502 Grants for Water Group Schemes	150,000	150,000	110,000	146,211
C0504 Group Water Scheme Subsidies	47,194	47,194	44,982	44,982
C0599 Service Support Costs	75,330	75,330	75,102	78,174
C05 Admin of Group and Private Installations	317,524	317,524	315,084	314,367
C0699 Service Support Costs	1,370,239	1,370,239	1,344,064	1,349,839
C06 Support to Water Capital Programme	1,370,239	1,370,239	1,344,064	1,349,839
C0701 Agency & Recoupable Service	-	-	-	-
C0799 Service Support Costs	8,287	8,287	8,299	8,512
C07 Agency & Recoupable Services	8,287	8,287	8,299	8,512
C0801 Local Authority Water Services	2,500	2,500	5,000	1,000
C08 Local Authority Water and Sanitary Services	2,500	2,500	5,000	1,000
Division C Total	10,106,268	10,106,268	9,874,153	9,976,540

Table F - Income

Division C - Water Services				
Income by Source	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	225,000	225,000	185,000	221,322
Other	-	-	-	-
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	225,000	225,000	185,000	221,322
Goods & Services				
Irish Water	8,561,458	8,561,458	8,350,326	8,541,200
Superannuation	359,063	359,063	371,092	371,092
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	-	-	-	-
Other income	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Total Goods & Services	8,940,521	8,940,521	8,741,418	8,932,292
Division C Total	9,165,521	9,165,521	8,926,418	9,153,614

Delivery in 2020



Broadband

9

The Council has secured support for the delivery of nine BCP's in Meath and sought approval for an additional five sites



Public Participation Network



There are currently over 1000 groups now registered to the PPN

1000

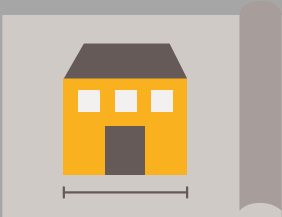
Development Management

Service Division D

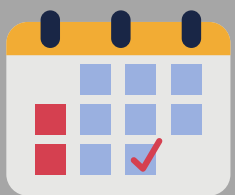
€12.8m

for 2021

Strategic Housing Development 5



Five SHD applications were approved by An Bord Pleanála totalling approx. 1600 units



Draft County Development Plan

A total of 2452 submissions were made during the public display which concluded on 6 March 2020



Meath LEO €500,000

Supported businesses in 2020 by providing funding of over €500k

Community Grant Scheme 479

Total number of applications approved under the various categories with a total fund of €165,500 allocated



SERVICE DIVISION D

Development Management

Achievements in 2020

Forward Planning

The public display of the Draft Meath County Development Plan concluded on 6 March, 2020. A total of 2452 submissions were made during the public display period with two of the submissions subsequently withdrawn.



The Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid 19) Act paused statutory timeframes by a period of 8 weeks. As a result of this and in light of the remaining statutory timelines, the citation of the Draft Plan was amended to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The Elected Members considered the Chief Executive's Report on the submissions received for 10 weeks in accordance with the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended.

The process was paused further to allow for the commencement of legislation to permit remote participation in statutory meetings and it is anticipated that a series of Special Meetings will be held in late November/early December whereby the Elected Members will accept or amend the Chief Executive's recommendations.

Development Contributions

Receipts from development contributions have slowed down on previous years, with a projected outturn in the region of €8m for 2020. The Financial Compliance Team continues to engage with debtors in order to seek compliance with the conditions of planning.

Compliance Activities

Complaints regarding planning compliance continues to form a large part of the work of the Planning Department. The Council continues to carry out its function in regard to the taking-in-charge of estates. The Planning Department is currently liaising with the Council's Water Services Department and Irish Water in relation to progressing the taking-in-charge of a number of residential developments.

Development Management

The number of applications received continues to increase year-on-year. Pre-planning clinics are now fully subscribed and the Planning Department continues to note an expansion in the scope and complexity of development proposals being considered.

The Planning Department also attended a number of formal Section 247 (pre-planning) meetings in An Bord Pleanála, relating to a Strategic Housing Development. Five SHD applications were approved by An Bord Pleanála totalling approximately 1600 units.

Quarry Regulation

The Planning Authority continues to monitor and assess quarrying operations in Meath.

Building Control

The Council's Building Control function is performed by the Building Control Officer who also leads the Planning Enforcement Team. The Building Control function plays a critical role in informing the Council's Financial Compliance Team.

Vacant Sites Register

Meath County Council continues to identify appropriate sites for the Vacant Sites Register. The register is available to view on <https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/planning-and-building/vacant-or-derelict-sites-and-dangerous-structures/vacant-sites>

The first invoices in relation to the vacant sites levy were issued in 2020. Invoices totalling €647,850 were issued to landowners who met the criteria set out in the legislation.

Initiatives and challenges for 2021

- Adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- Work will continue on placing sites on the Vacant Sites Register.
- The Planning Department will continue to ensure that a quality service is provided across all areas of the Planning function and continue to work closely and engage with all stakeholders.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE

Introduction

The implementation of our Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022 is now in its sixth year and there are very positive results and success stories across the county. Meath is now undoubtedly perceived both on the national and international stage as a prime business location, with additional investments in Foreign Direct Investment and local investment.

Achievements in 2020

The overall picture is very positive; the county continues to perform strongly in areas such as new indigenous investments and food production, as evidenced by data from Enterprise Ireland and being regular Foodie destination finalists.

Employment rates in the county continue to grow, with the 2016 census data showing the third highest employment participation rate in the county.

Business Supports

- Boyne Valley Food Strategy, in conjunction with Louth County Council, has been successfully continued and the dedicated Food Development Officer continues to drive the implementation of the strategy, working with a voluntary steering committee of local artisan food producers. Considerable national and international attention is being focused on the success of the Boyne Valley region.
- Meath LEO provided funding of over €500,000 to support businesses in 2020 and continued the successful rollout of training programmes, mentoring and business information seminars for SMEs during the year.
- The LEO continues to work with all business development stakeholders including Enterprise Ireland, IDA, LEADER, Solas, Údaras na Gaeltachta, INTREO and SkillNets.



However the full effects of COVID 19 cast a pall over projections for 2021. Meath County Council along with our partners and stakeholders have been rolling out new programmes and enhanced existing programmes to assist companies of all sizes to respond to the pandemic. Significant new resources have been made available by central Government specifically to counter the worst effects of the pandemic and the Local Enterprise Office is leading the effort to roll these out across the county.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Achievements in 2020



The 5-year Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy is in its final year. With the plan almost complete, the Covid-19 pandemic hit and has been strongly felt by the tourism industry. Due to this, an interim marketing plan was devised to focus on short term measures to support the tourism industry through marketing activity, while adhering to the latest Government advice in relation to restrictions.

Marketing and Promotion

In the early part of 2020, Boyne Valley Tourism promoted Meath at CMT Stuttgart, Belfast and Dublin Holiday World Shows. Attendance at the Incoming Tour Operator workshops provided an opportunity for the Tourism Officer to meet tour operators. However, from mid-March onwards, all international travel ceased due to the pandemic and Boyne Valley Tourism pivoted its plans to digital marketing, targeting domestic and Northern Ireland markets. During the

Summer 'The Escape to the Boyne Valley' campaign involved competitions with itineraries on each Meath town to inspire travel to the Boyne Valley, while radio advertising on 2FM supplemented the campaign message. Social Media Influencer Janet Newenham, Journalist on the Run, with 100k followers was invited to visit and produced a video and blog articles on the Boyne Valley.

Boyne Valley Tourism Recovery Taskforce

Meath County Council is a stakeholder on the Taskforce led by Failte Ireland which met virtually on a monthly basis throughout the Pandemic. Leading the Marketing subgroup, Boyne Valley Tourism Officer put together a marketing plan with Failte Ireland and their mentor team to aid recovery in the destination. The result was the Rediscover the Boyne Valley Campaign which ran over 7 weeks and had a reach of 350,000 through itineraries and social media advertising.

Business Supports

Evening Economy workshops were held in January around Trim and Drogheda, with Boyne Valley Tourism working with businesses to develop evening tourism offerings. This will be revisited once businesses can begin a recovery. A networking event was held in March attracting over 40 businesses to engage in a workshop.

Royal Canal Greenway

Picnic sets, benches and signage along the Royal Canal Greenway was completed during 2020 by the Transportation Department, while the Tourism Section completed mapboards and storyboards along the Meath stretch. By year end 2020, the Royal Canal Greenway will be fully complete with surfacing, signage, orientation signage completing the longest off-road greenway in Ireland with 130kms passing from Maynooth to Longford through Enfield, Longwood and the Hill of Down.

Púca Halloween Festival

Although the decision to cancel the Púca Halloween Festival was taken by Failte Ireland, a virtual festival took place and a new film to keep the festival fresh in the consumer's mind was released on 31st October. A PR push across 13 markets Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Nordics, Austria, Switzerland, US, Canada & GB through a virtual 'unboxing event' of local Boyne Valley producer foods was also implemented.

Initiatives and Challenges for 2021

- The Tourism Destination Towns project to create an outdoor amphitheatre at the Porchfields in Trim will be completed in 2021.
- Working with Waterways Ireland and the three Local Authorities, a comprehensive marketing plan to raise awareness of the new Royal Canal Greenway will be implemented.
- A new discoverboynevalley website and mobile website will be launched in 2021.
- Planning for the Puca Halloween Festival will recommence in 2021.

- Tourism recovery will be priority during 2021 and supporting tourism businesses to resume business. International business is not expected in the first half of 2021, campaigns to target the domestic market will be priority.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Achievements in 2020

Local Authorities have a strengthened role in local and community development with focus on promoting the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities.

Community Response Forum Covid 19

In response to Government, a Community Response Forum was set up comprising essential agencies, state-bodies and non-government organisations. The forum met regularly and was chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council. In addition, a Covid freephone number and email address were also set up and available 7 days a week to assist and co-ordinate queries received from the public in relation to Covid.



**Meath County Council
Community Call**

We're here if you need practical support or someone to talk to.

We can help with:

- Delivery of food, medication, fuel or other household items
- Someone to talk to or keep in touch with
- Other practical supports
- Signposting and referral to reliable information and services

FREE PHONE 1800 808 809

KEEP WELL
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

 comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

 Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The function of the LCDC is to implement the 2016-2021 Local Economic Community Plan, to co-ordinate, manage and oversee the implementation of local and community programmes on behalf of the government departments e.g. SICAP, LEADER Healthy Ireland scheme and the Community Enhancement Programmes.

Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021

The LCDC prepared a six-year Statutory Local Economic Community Plan in conjunction with the Council. This Plan serves as the primary strategy guiding development in Meath and the

targeting of resources under the direct management of the LCDC. Any funding applications for proposed projects must also be consistent with the objectives of the plan. Quarterly updates are sought from the agencies involved and presented to the LCDC.

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 - 2022

The SICAP Programme which is funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development aims to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and equality through local engagement and collaboration. This is the third year of the 5-year programme, with a budget at €405,136.00 in 2020. Meath Partnership was awarded the contract and continues to deliver the programme on behalf of the Council.

LEADER Programme 2014-2020

The LCDC and Council are responsible for monitoring/overseeing the delivery of the LEADER programme 2014-2020. Meath's allocation (including administration and animation under the programme is €6.9 million. This allocation includes grant approval capacity of €5.18 million. The LCDC agreed to a joint approach to LEADER with the LCDC as the Local Action Group (LAG) and Meath Partnership as the Implementing Partner (IP). The Council is the Financial Partner (FP). Currently there is 86% of the total budget committed with the remaining €706,312.69 to be allocated by year end and approvals of projects must be completed by the LAG by the end of December 2020. There has been a huge increase in the number of claims during 2020 due to the completion of projects. Over €1m has been paid out to date with 11 groups availing of phased payments. There is also the possibility that the existing programme might be extended as a result of Covid 19.

Public Participation Network (PPN)



There are currently over 1000 groups now registered to the PPN. These groups received regular updates on funding, consultations and events through e-bulletins and social media.

At the start of 2020, the PPN held workshops in the 6 Municipal Districts to seek feedback and collate information that will feed into the national Community Well Being Vision Programme Under the “Our County, Our Voice” network brand.

As part of the Community Response Forum for Covid the PPN facilitated community mobilisation by creating a response map of supports available across the county. This map has been continually updated to reflect the number of volunteers and services still available throughout the pandemic. Several virtual workshops were hosted which included Sustainable Development Goals and a Finance workshop. Both were well attended by the various community and voluntary groups of the PPN.

Meath Age Friendly Initiative



Under the current Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2020, the Council has been working in partnership with other relevant agencies. Age Friendly co-ordinated the distribution of over 1200 wellbeing packs to the most vulnerable and isolated during the pandemic in collaboration with members of the community response forum. The local authority set up an

Older Persons Committee (OPC) which has been working on rolling out Age Friendly initiatives as follows:

- Compiled bi-monthly newsletters which were circulated through the PPN.
- OPC members through their communities distributed packs to locals and their neighbours who were cocooning.
- A donation of an Age Friendly ACORN tablet specifically designed for the older person was made to the residents of Athboy Nursing Home to enable them to keep in contact with their families.
- The Age Friendly programme in collaboration with the Climate Action section launched the “Purls of Wisdom” knitting initiative using the colours of the changing climate for yarn crafting. These knitted and crocheted blankets were displayed in the Solstice Arts centre for eight weeks and will then be donated to Alzheimer and Dementia groups.
- The OPC also attended a virtual workshop on Climate Change where members volunteered to receive training on Climate Change and in turn spread this message to their groups and community.
- During Positive Ageing week, the OPC collaborated and organised virtual events such as music/singing through Trim Library, Biodiversity talks through the Heritage Section along with Tai Chi & Meditation classes organised by an OPC member.
- The Age Friendly accessibility audit carried out in Athboy which included a dementia audit, awarded €608,250k under RRD fund for the design of Athboy’s public realm which will include recommendations from this pilot Age Friendly/Dementia project.
- This pilot project has also been shortlisted in the Chambers Ireland awards.
- The annual Older Persons convention due to be hosted by Meath Age Friendly in May was deferred to 2021 due to Covid.

National Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service

The National Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service office is hosted in Meath County Council on behalf of the local government sector. The annual budget is cross departmental and sectoral with contributions by each local authority. The shared service office employs 4 core staff, two principal advisors, six Regional Age Friendly Programme Managers (on a pilot basis) and supports a team-based framework of 31 Age Friendly Programme Managers and 31 Age Friendly Technical Advisors across the local government sector.

The programme delivers four strategic objectives: (1) Strengthening and Embedding Local Programmes (2) Scaling up and Replicating Best Practice (3) Measuring Monitoring and Sharing Learning and (4) Supporting the development and delivery of National Policy.

The national Age Friendly Ireland Programme supports cities, counties and towns across Ireland to prepare for the rapid ageing of our population by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults.

It coordinates, supports and provides technical guidance to the 31-local authority-led, multi-agency Age Friendly Programmes.

Governance of the National Age Friendly Ireland Shared Services is anchored in a National Advisory Group comprising senior representatives from Government Departments and agencies, the local authority and business sectors and is chaired by Meath County Council Chief Executive Jackie Maguire.



In December 2019 Age Friendly Ireland reached an historic milestone which was marked by a ceremony in Slane Castle where the World Health Organisation, in partnership with then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, TD, formally acknowledged Ireland as the first fully affiliated Age Friendly Country in the world. A publication to mark this decade of progress was produced and can be accessed via the following link:

agefriendlyireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/10-Years-Delivering-For-Ireland-A-Decade-Of-Progress.pdf

2020 brought logistical challenges for the programme due to the global pandemic however the shared service through the 31 local age friendly programmes have facilitated and enabled the delivery of a significant number of supports to our ageing population via the national networks and structures ensuring that older people have been supported and their voices heard.

Comhairle na nÓg

The co-ordinator role for Meath Comhairle na nÓg, is the Youth Council for County Meath, Youth Work Ireland Meath. They have a service level agreement to co-ordinate the programme until end of 2020. The Comhairle committee continued meeting virtually during the pandemic and worked on their topic for 2018/2020 which is sexual health, body image and identity. Its AGM was also held virtually in October 2020.

Joint Policing Committee (JPC)

The JPC and sub-groups met several times virtually and face-to-face adhering to Covid guidelines. The annual report 2019 was adopted in February by the committee. A Community CCTV policy was also adopted by the group where it is noted under the policy that a steering committee shall be established to oversee the management of CCTV systems in Meath. Due to Covid 19 restrictions the annual public meeting was cancelled.

Unity Centre, Windtown, Navan

The Unity Centre provides a space for community activities as well as training and leisure activities. Due to the Covid-19 health emergency and resulting restrictions the centre was closed to the public from Monday 16th March until Monday 29th June 2020. In line with public health guidance the centre is operating on a reduced capacity but continues to host several organisations and bookings including; the preschool, HSE, Prosper Meath, Praxis, Navan Schools Completion Service, Springboard Family Support, Comhairle na nÓg, youth groups, addiction support groups and Meath Partnership.



Meath Local Sports Partnership

The Council continues to increase, year-on-year, its support for the local Sports Partnership, which works in partnership with the main sporting bodies. In parallel, the Council supports the engagement of development officers for the three main national sporting bodies.

Community Wellbeing initiative

The Pride of Place initiative did not proceed in 2020 due to Covid 19 restrictions, with a Community Wellbeing Initiative rolled out instead. The purpose was to recognise the great work all groups have undertaken in direct response to supporting their communities during the Covid-19 crisis such as small-scale maintenance of planted areas in estates during the restrictions, keeping in contact with older persons, arranging delivery/collection of groceries for those in an estate/village/area.

Prosper Meath Trim and Duleek Revival project were entered in the National Co-operation Ireland Awards. Judging took place with the groups through virtual interviews.

Grant Schemes

The following grant schemes were processed in 2020

- Covid 19 Government grant scheme - €88,912 allocation to Meath. 32 applications awarded funding totalling €37,000 under the scheme with the remaining amount allocated towards Covid initiatives.
- Community Grant Scheme 2020 - A total of 479 applications approved under the various categories with a total fund of €165,500 allocated.

- Carranstown Grant Scheme - 33 applications were approved with a total fund of €252,000.00 allocated.
- Knockharley Grant Scheme - Works continued on the Kentstown Village project and the facility is due to open late 2020.
- Regional Festivals and Participative Events, Small Grants Scheme 2020 - A fund of €11,000 allocated and to be drawn down by the approved applicants by year end.

The Community Amenity Project Scheme

The Community Amenity Scheme was available to new projects or for the refurbishment of existing facilities/amenities. There was an allocation of €100,000 per Municipal District, with a minimum grant application of €10,000 and the maximum of €100,000. No match funding was required for projects however the scheme was not intended to match fund or top-up other grant schemes. It was a requirement that all applicant groups must be registered with the PPN. 19 projects were recommended for approval for funding for this year.

Community Enhancement Programme

The scheme is being administered by the LCDC under the remit of the Local Authority with an allocation of €62,883 under the normal scheme, with flexibility to use this fund on COVID-19 related capital expenditure, where this is a priority. 47 grants were approved under the scheme. A separate fund under this scheme was announced which provides capital grants towards improvement works to community centres and community buildings with Meath allocated €157,594. The LCDC approved 15 projects under the fund. All works and claims to be recouped by March 2021.



Healthy Ireland Fund Scheme 2019-2021

This fund is administered by the LCDC under the remit of the Local Authority. The fund runs over two years from 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2021, 3 projects were approved. Additional funding was awarded by the Department of Health for a Mental Health theme, 3 projects under this theme were approved. Projects are progressing albeit using new methods of delivery due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) provides funding under 3 separate measures. Four proposed applications were submitted under Measure 1 to the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) with proposals under Measure 2 and 3 to be submitted by 30th November for consideration.

Town & Village Renewal Scheme

The Department introduced 3 funding accelerated measures under the scheme due to Covid 19. These measures are to assist communities with small capital works in order to continue with

their activities due to Covid restrictions. Works and drawdown under round 1 and 2 are to be completed by end of November with round 3 projects completed and recouped by 1st March 2021.

- Under Accelerated Measure 1, the following projects for Cormeen, Kells, Meath Hill and Moynalty were approved totalling €89,849.38.
- Accelerated Measure 2 saw Ballinabrackey/Castlejordan, Ardbraccan, Gibbstown and Dromconrath receive approval totalling €105,714 in funding.
- Under the Accelerated Measure 3, nine applications were submitted to the DRCD for consideration and await the announcement of these.
- Under the standard Town & Village Scheme, 10 applications were submitted for consideration.

Clár

Six applications were submitted to the DRCD for consideration and await the announcement of these.

Broadband

Work continued on the implementation of the National Broadband Plan and related initiatives in County Meath. The Council has secured support for the delivery of nine Broadband Connection Points in the county and sought approval for an additional five sites. Six of the approved sites are: Cormeen Sports Complex; Meath Hill GAA; Teach Raithneach; Castletown GAA; Meath GAA Centre of Excellence; and Boardsmill GAA, were activated in 2020.

The Meath Digital Strategy Implementation Committee met and continue to implement the plan.

SORD Data Systems won the tender to deliver the WIFI4EU Project in Meath. New connections and the equipment for the WIFI4EU initiative in Kells has been installed and are live. Due to COVID-19, the European Commission has granted an 8-month extension to the deadline for delivery of the programme with a review of the plans for delivery in other locations in Meath to take place.

Access Officer

The Access Officer works with Council departments and agencies to address any accessibility issues and promote awareness and the importance of accessibility. The main event held during the year was the launch of a video for "Make Way Day" on 25th September which is a National Public Awareness Campaign to highlight the issues people with disabilities face getting around their local communities. "Hey, this blocks my way!" was the message for 2020.

Joint Migrant Strategy 2019-2022

Meath and Louth County Councils completed a joint Migrant Integration Strategy. Projects identified for funding by both councils will link into the actions identified in the strategy. The joint strategy was launched by Minister Helen McEntee on October 2nd, 2020.



Public Sector Duty

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 imposes a statutory obligation on public bodies to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services
- Protect the human rights of staff and service users.

The 2014 Act requires a public body to assess human rights and equality issues relevant to the functions of the organisation, address the issues by setting out what plans and policies are in place or proposed to be put in place and report on developments and achievements in its annual report.

The implementation process commenced with a working group set up at the start of the year to assess human rights and equality issues. The working group continued its work by virtual workshops throughout the year. It is anticipated to have a work plan in place by year end to roll out across the organisation.

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2021 and Estimated Outturn for 2020

Division & Services	2021				2020			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
D Development Management								
D01 Forward Planning	1,159,746	1,159,746	500,301	500,301	1,190,395	1,190,495	500,311	500,311
D02 Development Management	4,132,187	4,132,187	1,011,159	1,011,159	4,006,595	4,096,752	1,148,737	1,217,737
D03 Enforcement	487,645	487,645	-	-	478,499	478,499	-	-
D04 Industrial and Commercial Facilities	286,268	286,268	32,652	32,652	286,112	287,939	32,740	32,740
D05 Tourism Development and Promotion	314,273	314,273	2,880	2,880	311,584	312,780	32,976	32,976
D06 Community and Enterprise Function	3,126,992	3,126,992	1,976,945	1,976,945	3,145,671	3,211,019	1,955,932	2,060,798
D07 Unfinished Housing Estates	165,537	165,537	100,000	100,000	164,523	164,523	200,000	125,000
D08 Building Control	161,047	161,047	-	-	156,334	156,338	-	-
D09 Economic Development and Promotion	2,006,827	2,006,827	1,445,804	1,445,804	1,948,863	21,590,129	1,093,614	20,827,432
D10 Property Management	66,516	66,516	-	-	67,328	67,328	-	-
D11 Heritage and Conservation Services	930,576	930,576	466,038	466,038	925,153	988,826	454,710	524,710
D12 Agency & Recoupable Services	58,489	58,489	7,997	7,997	57,899	60,674	8,265	8,265
Division D Total	12,896,103	12,896,103	5,543,776	5,543,776	12,738,956	32,605,302	5,427,285	25,329,969

Table F - Expenditure

Division D - Development Management

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
D0101 Statutory Plans and Policy	1,156,689	1,156,689	1,187,349	1,187,349
D0199 Service Support Costs	3,057	3,057	3,046	3,146
D01 Forward Planning	1,159,746	1,159,746	1,190,395	1,190,495
D0201 Planning Control	2,288,449	2,288,449	2,170,143	2,180,143
D0299 Service Support Costs	1,843,738	1,843,738	1,836,452	1,916,609
D02 Development Management	4,132,187	4,132,187	4,006,595	4,096,752
D0301 Enforcement Costs	487,645	487,645	478,499	478,499
D03 Enforcement	487,645	487,645	478,499	478,499
D0403 Management of & Contribs to Other Commercial Facs	49,860	49,860	49,900	49,900
D0404 General Development Promotion Work	191,500	191,500	191,500	191,500
D0499 Service Support Costs	44,908	44,908	44,712	46,539
D04 Industrial and Commercial Facilities	286,268	286,268	286,112	287,939
D0501 Tourism Promotion	287,551	287,551	285,073	285,073
D0599 Service Support Costs	26,722	26,722	26,511	27,707
D05 Tourism Development and Promotion	314,273	314,273	311,584	312,780
D0601 General Community & Enterprise Expenses	2,633,384	2,633,384	2,653,882	2,701,348
D0603 Social Inclusion	25,000	25,000	25,000	20,000
D0699 Service Support Costs	468,608	468,608	466,789	489,671
D06 Community and Enterprise Function	3,126,992	3,126,992	3,145,671	3,211,019
D0701 Unfinished Housing Estates	165,537	165,537	164,523	164,523
D07 Unfinished Housing Estates	165,537	165,537	164,523	164,523
D0899 Service Support Costs	161,047	161,047	156,334	156,338
D08 Building Control	161,047	161,047	156,334	156,338
D0903 Town Twinning	5,000	5,000	36,000	36,000
D0905 Economic Development & Promotion	519,751	519,751	726,410	726,410
D0906 Local Enterprise Office	1,439,463	1,439,463	1,142,661	20,783,479
D0999 Service Support Costs	42,613	42,613	43,792	44,240
D09 Economic Development and Promotion	2,006,827	2,006,827	1,948,863	21,590,129
D1001 Property Management Costs	66,516	66,516	67,328	67,328
D10 Property Management	66,516	66,516	67,328	67,328

Table F - Expenditure

Division D - Development Management

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
D1101 Heritage Services	506,481	506,481	502,558	563,177
D1102 Conservation Services	348,579	348,579	347,432	347,432
D1199 Service Support Costs	75,516	75,516	75,163	78,217
D11 Heritage and Conservation Services	930,576	930,576	925,153	988,826
D1299 Service Support Costs	58,489	58,489	57,899	60,674
D12 Agency & Recoupable Services	58,489	58,489	57,899	60,674
Division D Total	12,896,103	12,896,103	12,738,956	32,605,302

Table F - Income

Division D - Development Management				
Income by Source	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	1,239,224	1,239,224	1,343,257	1,454,298
Media, Tourism, Art, Culture, Sport & the Gaeltacht	-	-	-	-
Enterprise, Trade & Employment	1,268,730	1,268,730	1,003,038	20,711,856
Community, Rural Development & the Islands	-	-	-	-
Other	397,445	397,445	390,820	397,445
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	2,905,399	2,905,399	2,737,115	22,563,599
Goods & Services				
Planning Fees	839,000	839,000	972,000	1,041,000
Superannuation	172,977	172,977	178,770	178,770
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	851,900	851,900	726,400	808,600
Other income	774,500	774,500	813,000	738,000
Total Goods & Services	2,638,377	2,638,377	2,690,170	2,766,370
Division D Total	5,543,776	5,543,776	5,427,285	25,329,969

Delivery in 2020



Fire Service

Call volumes were down slightly in 2020, attributed to Covid-19 restrictions and reduced road-based incidents with less traffic on the road network

Civil Defence

520 The number of taskings carried out by volunteers as part of the Covid-19 response



Environment, Fire & Emergency Services

Service Division E

€16.8m

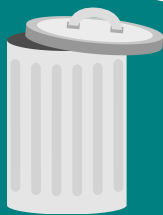
for 2021



Anti-Dumping

6

Number of additional projects which took place with substantial volumes of waste removed with sites remediated and enhanced



Derelict Sites

20

Total number of current derelict sites on the County Meath Derelict Sites Register



Slipways

5

Works were completed on 5 slipways on the River Boyne & the River Blackwater

Flooding

€2.5m

The Ashbourne Flood Alleviation Scheme is at construction stage and is expected to be completed in 2021



SERVICE DIVISION E

Environment, Fire & Emergency Services

Introduction

The protection of the environment and the enhancement of the county's natural and built environment are of significant importance for the residents of, and visitors to, County Meath. Clean air and water, a litter free countryside, pristine beaches and sustainable waste management systems are fundamental to a sustainable and high quality environment and improving the quality of life of our citizens.

Environmental Education and Awareness Activities

Each year the Council engages in a wide range of environmental education and awareness activities and supports including:

- Green Schools Initiatives including Green Schools Seminars on Litter and Waste, Water, Energy, Biodiversity, Global Citizenship.
- Grants for School Gardens through CEAF Funding, on average 10 school gardens are supported annually together with approximately 30 community based projects, seminars, workshops.
- Secondary Schools – The Really Rubbish Film Company, ECO UNESCO Young Environmentalists, ReLove Fashion.
- Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN) Funding acquired and project to commence in December 2020 for Reusable paint with the Rediscovery Centre.
- Community related projects – Anti-Litter Initiatives, Stop Food Waste Regional Campaign, Spring Clean Events.
- Litter Management Support from Meath County Council to community and other groups in terms of equipment and collection of material.
- Food Waste Digester Project at Navan Recycling Centre.
- Comprehensive Anti-Litter, Anti Dog Fouling and Anti Dumping Advertising Campaign – Cinema, Radio, Billboards, Social Media.
- Provision of signage across the county – Litter, dumping, car litter, dog fouling.
- Dedicated collection days for old toys, couches, and on-going collection of Paint.
- Bikes for Africa – Reuse project with Rotary Ireland supplying bikes for secondary school transport in the Gambia, through Navan Recycling Centre and Loughan House Prison.
- Plastic Bottle Free School – Beaufort College became the first school to take part in the Water Dispenser Scheme in Meath, providing students with reusable bottles and new water dispensers, supported by Meath County Council. There are a number of other schools due to join the scheme in 2021. There is a ban on single use plastic bottles in place in participating schools.



Anti-Dumping Campaign

Each year Meath County Council undertakes a number of projects targeting known illegal dumping blackspots and/or prevention projects. In 2020 the Bikes for Africa Scheme has received funding through ADI.

Additional projects took place at Kilcarn Railway Walk, Crossakiel, Girley Bog, Emlagh Bog, Maudlin Vale in Trim, Nobber, with substantial volumes of waste removed and each site remediated and enhanced to a high standard. Bulky Waste Collections are planned for 2021 under this scheme.

Landfill Remediation

In 2020 there were no municipal landfills being remediated by Meath County Council. The Council has applications to register two historical municipal landfills with the EPA and a decision is pending. In 2021, two additional landfills will be registered with the EPA. It is not anticipated that the waste in these landfills will have to be removed. Although remediation techniques may be involved to mitigate environmental risk to groundwater, surface water and air. A project is currently being undertaken by the Environment Section in conjunction with Corporate Services to remediate an inert waste storage location involving the removal of approximately 50,000 tonnes of inert soil and stone to facilitate Community infrastructure at Tailteann Drive, Navan. In the coming years there are a number of unauthorised municipal landfills which will have to be remediated but this will be subject to Department funding.

National Waste Enforcement Priorities

In 2020, a Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy 'Ireland's National Waste Policy 2020-2025' was launched which introduces new targets to tackle waste and move towards a circular economy. The plan includes halving our food waste by 2030, the introduction of a deposit and return scheme for plastic bottles and cans, a ban on certain single use plastics from July 2021, and a levy on disposable cups. Other measures include applying green criteria and circular economy principles in all public procurement, a waste recovery levy to encourage recycling, and ensuring all packaging is reusable or recyclable by 2030.



An overarching objective in the action plan is to support clear and robust institutional arrangements for the waste sector, including through a strengthened role for local authorities.

In accordance with national waste enforcement priorities identified by a National Waste Enforcement Steering Group, the following were the enforcement priorities for the Regional Lead Authorities and the constituent Local Authorities for 2020. These are likely to remain the same for 2021.

- Tackling Significant Illegal Waste Activity
- Construction & Demolition Activity
- End of Life Vehicles (ELV) Directive
- identification of unauthorised ELV Sites –
- Waste Collection – Household & Commercial
- Multi-Agency Sites of Interest
- Man in the Van – Tackling illegal dumping and unauthorised movements of waste

Coordination of works by the local authorities in respect of these priorities was undertaken by the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs) which will be Intelligence Led Enforcement

Derelict Sites

There are currently 20 properties on the County Meath Derelict Sites Register (DSR), fifteen of which have been added over the past 12 months. An up-to-date list of these properties is available on the Council's website. In 2020, two properties were removed from the DSR after improvement works were carried out by the owners. Over that period, 11 properties were compulsory acquired and one voluntarily acquired. There are a further 95 properties which have potential to be included in the register. The Derelict Sites (DS) Section has been actively engaging with property owners, solicitors, financial institutions and complainants to try and resolve dereliction issues prior to acquisition. In the majority of cases there are issues with ownership / title, negative equity or debt. All of the properties acquired to date will be developed or improved by the Housing Section of Meath County Council for social housing. The DS section has particular focus in areas where there is funding for urban regeneration.

Climate Action

In 2019, the Council adopted a Climate Action Strategy (2019-24) incorporating both mitigation and adaptation measures and fulfilling statutory obligations provided for in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.



The Strategy will facilitate the preparation of a Sustainable Energies and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) which will form part of the application for Membership of the EU Covenant of Mayors Scheme.

The Low Carbon and Climate Action (Amendment) Bill currently going through the Oireachtas will necessitate local authorities producing a Climate Action Plan within 18 months of being enshrined in legislation. This will include both adaptation and mitigation and asks that in making same local authorities consider neighbouring local authorities which in Meath's case is 7 local authorities. Although our Strategy considers both adaptation and mitigation a review, at minimum, will be necessary to consider the 7 adjoining authorities.

In line with the leadership requirements of the Climate Action Charters signed by every local authority the work of the Meath Climate Academy will continue to show leadership and engage with citizens, communities and businesses to empower climate action at a local level. 2020 ambitions were severely hampered by Covid restriction and plans for 2021 will be dictated by them. However, the Climate Action Team will examine how this can be delivered in a virtual forum.

Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems

Revised and new grants for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (DWWTS) were introduced by Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in 2020.

- Revised: Grants for DWWTS (National Inspection Plan)
- New Grants for DWWTS (Prioritised Areas for Action under the RBMP)
- New Grants for DWWTS (High Status Objective Catchment Areas under the RBMP)

Flooding

The Catchment Flood Risk Management Programme (CFRAM) which is led by the Office of Public Works (OPW) sought to identify the communities that were, at the time, and most likely into the future, to be affected by flooding. In 2012 the OPW specifically identified 300 areas or communities believed to be at significant risk of future flooding. The Flood Risk Management Plan which was approved by the Government in April 2018 now includes for 118 additional flood relief schemes (in addition to those already at construction) to be constructed before 2027.

One of the approved schemes is for Mornington and aims to augment existing flood alleviation works there. Subject to project level assessment and planning, this may include physical works such as a series of hard defences (flood embankments and walls) at an estimated cost of €0.53m. Works on the Assessment and Planning will commence in late 2020 and continue through 2021.

Another approved scheme is in Drogheda, predominantly in Co Louth, and Louth County Council will be taking the lead on this €16.83m project, with some proposed hard defences proposed for the Marsh Road in Co Meath.

The Ashbourne Flood Alleviation Scheme is at construction stage and is expected to be completed in Q2 2021 at a cost of circa €2.5million.

Preliminary design and Procurement for a Minor works scheme (approx. €100k) is underway for a project in Tullaghanstown, Navan and should be completed in 2021.

The Feasibility of additional Minor Flood Relief Schemes will continue in 2021.

River Basin Management Plan 2018 -2021

The River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 was launched on April 17, 2018 and outlines the measures to improve water quality in Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters over the following four years. The Plan is to fulfil requirements under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) to protect and improve water quality in approximately 726 of Ireland's 4,829 water bodies over the next four years. The 726 water bodies including nine in County Meath form part of a total of 190 Areas for Action which have been prioritised nationally for particular attention during 2018-2021 and where a multidisciplinary and cross-agency approach will be involved.

The process for selection of the priority areas for action for the next River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027 is underway and after consultations with LAWPRO and the EPA, we expect the draft Plan to go to public consultation in early 2021.

Provision of Slipways – River Boyne and Blackwater

The Council, after consultation with other statutory agencies with responsibilities for the Rivers Boyne and Blackwater, appointed specialist Environmental Consultants to carry out an appraisal of the locations of the temporary arrangements in place and to propose the most appropriate locations for permanent boat slipways on the Boyne and the Blackwater both of which are designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

A planning application and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) in respect of the provision of the slipways was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for approval in August 2018. After Approval was granted, 4 Slipways on the River Boyne between Navan and Stackallan and 1 Slipway on the River Blackwater in Navan were completed in 2020. We are currently looking at the possibility of providing more Slipways on these rivers.



FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Introduction

Meath Fire and Rescue Service cover a broad range of functions ranging from operational response to fire prevention, including:

- Fire fighting and rescue services
- Community fire safety
- Technical fire prevention
- Major emergency planning and pre incident planning

Meath Fire and Rescue Service is ready to respond to a range of incidents and emergencies as requested by the Eastern Regional Control Centre through the 999/112 system. To ensure a continued efficient and effective response, staff are continuously trained and supported to maintain competency in the wide range of skills required. Specialised equipment and fleet are essential to service provision and on-going procurement and maintenance form an important element of the annual budget provision. The requirements for maintaining emergency response incur significant costs in areas including staff training, station and fleet maintenance and communications.

Call volumes were down slightly in 2020 and some of this is attributed to the Covid-19 restrictions and reduced road-based incidents with less traffic on the road network. Also there were no significant severe weather events which can lead to much increased call volumes.

A contribution is paid annually to the Eastern Regional Control Centre for emergency call handling and mobilisation of fire service resources. The migration of the fire service from its legacy analogue radio systems to the National Digital Radio System known as Tetra has taken place as part of a national CTrí Project and with this new system comes increased contribution in costs.

Achievements in 2020

Health and Safety

Meath Fire and Rescue Service continues to strive to hard maintain an effective Health and Safety Management System – certification to ISO 45001 was successfully renewed in July 2020. Meath Fire and Rescue Service was the first fire authority in the country to achieve the 45001 International Standard accreditation for its occupational health and safety management system. The Health and Safety Management has been the cornerstone of maintaining a fully operational service throughout the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Equipment & Training

The Fire and Rescue Service employs a broad range of specialist equipment in the delivery of its operational rescue service and there was significant investment again during 2020 in equipment and equipment maintenance.

The 2020 Training Plan was reviewed due to the impacts of Covid-19 with a cessation of training in the initial lockdown phase. However, it has been possible to step up training and to deliver all critical elements to ensure that staff are equipped to protect themselves and meet the high standards of service delivery. The commitment of staff to maintaining services has been excellent and training is under continuous review to meet service needs.

Initiatives and Challenges for 2021

Fleet & Station Maintenance

Meath Fire and Rescue Service maintain fire appliances in seven stations throughout the county and there is a variety of different types of vehicles in operation. Investment in our fleet is a priority so that we have a modern, safe and efficient fleet. Meath County Fire & Rescue Service received a new Scania Firefighting Appliance for Navan Fire Station in April 2020.



This vehicle was provided under the Government's 'Fire Service Capital Programme 2016 – 2020'. In addition to this a Scania F28 Bronto Skylift, Combined Aerial Rescue Platform (CARP), was also purchased for Navan Fire Station in March 2020 – this was to replace the Simon Snorkel Hydraulic Platform which had been in service in Navan since the 1990s.

Departmental approval was received to proceed to Planning and Construction Stages for the refurbishment and extension of Nobber Fire Station and it is hoped to commence works in Quarter 1 of 2021. Approval was also secured to appoint consultants for the refurbishment of Oldcastle Fire Station. Funding for these projects has been allocated under the Government's 'Fire Service Capital Programme 2016 – 2020'. There will continue to be investment in all stations to improve welfare, training and operational facilities.

Fire Prevention and Community Fire Safety

Fire Prevention Officers deal with a wide range of Fire Safety Certificate applications for new and existing developments and carry out a range of inspections to deal with fire safety of the existing building stock and proposed developments across County Meath. Whilst some inspection activity has been impacted by Covid-19, all serious or immediate fire safety concerns are being actioned by fire officers. It has been a busy year for new developments and the level of applications under the Building Control Acts, Dangerous Substances Licensing and Publicans/Dance Licensing has been on a par with previous years.

The delivery of Community Fire Safety initiatives was significantly impacted by Covid-19 limitations, including the suspension of the Home Fire Safety Check programme and the Schools Fire Safety/4th class initiative. There has been increased efforts to link to the community and communicate fire safety messages virtually and new safety videos have been circulated on social media platforms. Unfortunately to date in 2020 in Meath, four people have lost their lives due to fires in the home and this is a significant increase on recent years. The area of fire safety in the home requires attention in terms of Community Fire Safety messaging with people spending more time than ever at home. Meath Fire and Rescue Service intend to develop this area further with new initiatives.

CIVIL DEFENCE

There are currently one hundred and eighty active volunteer members in Civil Defence throughout County Meath. 2020 has been a challenging year for Civil Defence with unit based training activities suspended in mid-March due to Covid-19 restrictions. Essential training continued in order to maintain certification in areas such as First Aid, Manual Handling and Health & Safety programmes.

While the normal community duty events were considerably curtailed to about 30, our Covid response saw volunteers involved in some 520 taskings contributing over 2,500 volunteer hours transporting people to hospital and clinic appointments, delivering essential food parcels in support of the Meath Partnership food initiative, delivering essential medical equipment and medications to people's homes and some transports to test centres. This has been the longest and most sustained deployment of Civil Defence in its 70 year history.

The construction of the new training and operational facility for the organisation on the Mullaghboy Industrial Estate was completed and officially opened by Minister for Justice Helen McEntee TD on

25th September. The new premises known as “Moat View House” is state of the art and provides excellent facilities for the organisation and the volunteers. It is the first A3 energy rated building in the local authority.



The Civil Defence Branch of the Department of Defence agreed to grant aid the creation of an Assistant Civil Defence Officer post which was advertised and filled in August. The organisation benefited from the provision of a new 4 x 4 crew-cab vehicle and an upgraded operational support vehicle allocated by the Civil Defence Branch.

There is in excess of 50 people on a waiting list to join the organisation and it is hoped to begin that process early in 2021 when Covid restrictions permit and to resume normal training and operational activities.

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2021 and Estimated Outturn for 2020

Division & Services	2021				2020			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
E Environmental Services								
E01 Landfill Operation and Aftercare	409,273	409,273	4,993	4,993	438,963	339,048	5,160	5,160
E02 Recovery & Recycling Facilities Operations	646,372	646,372	143,035	143,035	607,076	605,842	168,137	146,137
E04 Provision of Waste to Collection Services	203,786	203,786	2,411	2,411	198,677	264,707	2,492	2,492
E05 Litter Management	566,055	566,055	62,544	62,544	564,056	494,090	62,730	82,730
E06 Street Cleaning	1,712,145	1,712,145	25,755	25,755	1,708,991	1,715,042	26,617	26,617
E07 Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement	6,183,976	6,183,976	4,463,177	4,463,177	6,314,093	6,275,448	4,465,453	4,508,853
E09 Maintenance of Burial Grounds	292,529	292,529	46,005	46,005	293,005	292,317	49,114	45,114
E10 Safety of Structures and Places	887,616	887,616	267,895	267,895	860,130	874,196	246,159	258,784
E11 Operation of Fire Service	4,464,648	4,464,648	392,577	392,577	4,367,423	4,483,319	393,115	379,994
E12 Fire Prevention	375,248	375,248	266,460	266,460	364,989	364,334	266,670	266,670
E13 Water Quality, Air and Noise Pollution	646,134	646,134	77,946	77,946	633,272	629,056	38,815	78,815
E14 Agency & Recoupable Services	255	255	-	-	257	262	-	-
E15 Climate Change and Flooding	437,066	437,066	4,956	4,956	419,458	420,735	5,038	5,038
Division E Total	16,825,103	16,825,103	5,757,754	5,757,754	16,770,390	16,758,396	5,729,500	5,806,404

Table F - Expenditure

Division E - Environmental Services

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
E0101 Landfill Operations	125,000	125,000	155,000	155,000
E0103 Landfill Aftercare Costs.	257,000	257,000	257,000	156,000
E0199 Service Support Costs	27,273	27,273	26,963	28,048
E01 Landfill Operation and Aftercare	409,273	409,273	438,963	339,048
E0201 Recycling Facilities Operations	575,061	575,061	535,952	533,952
E0202 Bring Centres Operations	52,767	52,767	52,754	52,754
E0299 Service Support Costs	18,544	18,544	18,370	19,136
E02 Recovery & Recycling Facilities Operations	646,372	646,372	607,076	605,842
E0402 Organic Waste Collection Services	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
E0407 Other Costs Waste Collection	170,000	170,000	165,000	230,453
E0499 Service Support Costs	23,786	23,786	23,677	24,254
E04 Provision of Waste to Collection Services	203,786	203,786	198,677	264,707
E0501 Litter Warden Service	141,052	141,052	139,292	121,292
E0502 Litter Control Initiatives	343,000	343,000	343,000	289,000
E0503 Environmental Awareness Services	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
E0599 Service Support Costs	52,003	52,003	51,764	53,798
E05 Litter Management	566,055	566,055	564,056	494,090
E0601 Operation of Street Cleaning Service	1,541,729	1,541,729	1,540,069	1,540,069
E0699 Service Support Costs	170,416	170,416	168,922	174,973
E06 Street Cleaning	1,712,145	1,712,145	1,708,991	1,715,042
E0701 Monitoring of Waste Regs (incl Private Landfills)	4,263,890	4,263,890	4,262,890	4,232,141
E0702 Enforcement of Waste Regulations	294,840	294,840	303,705	287,705
E0799 Service Support Costs	1,625,246	1,625,246	1,747,498	1,755,602
E07 Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement	6,183,976	6,183,976	6,314,093	6,275,448
E0901 Maintenance of Burial Grounds	218,506	218,506	218,931	215,931
E0999 Service Support Costs	74,023	74,023	74,074	76,386
E09 Maintenance of Burial Grounds	292,529	292,529	293,005	292,317
E1001 Operation Costs Civil Defence	346,332	346,332	337,311	349,911
E1002 Dangerous Buildings	-	-	-	-
E1004 Derelict Sites	278,704	278,704	270,834	270,834
E1005 Water Safety Operation	144,426	144,426	144,099	142,119
E1099 Service Support Costs	118,154	118,154	107,886	111,332
E10 Safety of Structures and Places	887,616	887,616	860,130	874,196

Table F - Expenditure

Division E - Environmental Services

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
E1101 Operation of Fire Brigade Service	4,274,722	4,274,722	4,182,481	4,291,481
E1199 Service Support Costs	189,926	189,926	184,942	191,838
E11 Operation of Fire Service	4,464,648	4,464,648	4,367,423	4,483,319
E1201 Fire Safety Control Cert Costs	-	-	-	-
E1202 Fire Prevention and Education	311,327	311,327	301,305	297,801
E1299 Service Support Costs	63,921	63,921	63,684	66,533
E12 Fire Prevention	375,248	375,248	364,989	364,334
E1301 Water Quality Management	40,000	40,000	28,000	18,000
E1399 Service Support Costs	606,134	606,134	605,272	611,056
E13 Water Quality, Air and Noise Pollution	646,134	646,134	633,272	629,056
E1499 Service Support Costs	255	255	257	262
E14 Agency & Recoupable Services	255	255	257	262
E1501 Climate Change and Flooding	413,428	413,428	395,913	395,913
E1599 Service Support Costs	23,638	23,638	23,545	24,822
E15 Climate Change and Flooding	437,066	437,066	419,458	420,735
Division E Total	16,825,103	16,825,103	16,770,390	16,758,396

Table F - Income

Division E - Environmental Services				
Income by Source	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	-	-	-	-
Social Protection	-	-	-	-
Defence	164,000	164,000	138,000	153,000
Climate Action & Communications Networks	319,000	319,000	324,000	342,000
Other	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,500
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	486,000	486,000	465,000	497,500
Goods & Services				
Domestic Refuse Charges	-	-	-	-
Commercial Refuse Charges	-	-	-	-
Landfill Charges	-	-	-	-
Fire Charges	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
Superannuation	167,094	167,094	172,690	172,690
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	-	-	-	24,715
Other income	4,854,660	4,854,660	4,841,810	4,861,499
Total Goods & Services	5,271,754	5,271,754	5,264,500	5,308,904
Division E Total	5,757,754	5,757,754	5,729,500	5,806,404

Delivery in 2020



Nobber Library

€360,000

Re-opened after being reconfigured and extended. Total cost €360,000

Laptops for Loan

€809,000



Total amount of funding secured from Facebook to deliver almost 700 laptops to second-level students

Cruinniú na nÓg

1541



Dedicated YouTube channel received 1541 views with a total view time of 75.3 hours over two days in June

Summer Reading Challenge

737

Number of children who participated in the annual event



Recreation & Amenity

Service Division F

€8.9m

for 2021

Arts Office



Online Programme

New online programme featured award winning local artists and attracted viewing figures of 65,000

Magic Tables



11

Completed the roll-out of Magic Tables to eleven of the twelve libraries in the county. Duleek Library will see installation in 2021



Music Generation

New working group established to continue the roll-out of the Music Generation Meath programme in the Covid-19 context

Creative Ireland

Delivered the 2020 annual plan for Creative Ireland in partnership with national, local and community stakeholders



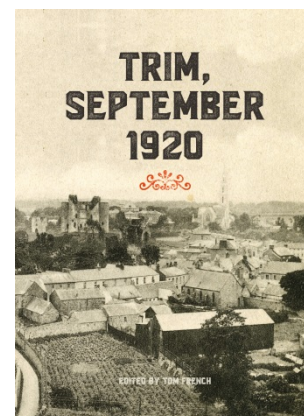
SERVICE DIVISION F

Recreation & Amenity

LIBRARY SERVICES

Achievements, 2020:

- Nobber library re-opened after being reconfigured and extended by Facilities Management allowing access to new services, meeting room and welfare facilities. The total cost of the project was €360,000 with the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) contributing 50% of the funding. The DRCD contribution was in respect of the 'My Open Library' works and the introduction of the 'Magic Table'.
- Completed the installation of 'My Open Library' technology at Kells, Nobber and Slane. Funding was secured from DRCD for the installation of the new service at all three branches.
- Oldcastle library was upgraded with funding secured from the Small Scale Capital Works scheme in DRCD and a contribution from Oldcastle Credit Union. The fabric of the building was upgraded with the heating system replaced, new insulation and repairs to windows also completed. The branch was re-decorated with new services introduced and upgraded public meeting facilities included the addition of kitchen facilities.
- Secured funding from the DRCD Small Scale Capital Grants scheme to upgrade the heating and ventilation system in Ashbourne library.
- Established an alternative facility for Trim library to cover the duration of works on the new Library and Cultural Centre.
- Contributed to the design of the new Bettystown library and community facility.
- Delivered the 2020 annual plan for **Creative Ireland** in partnership with national, local and community stakeholders.
- Devised and delivered **Cruinniú na nÓg** on June 13th in partnership with national, local and community stakeholders. The programme was delivered fully online through a dedicated Meath Cruinniú na nÓg YouTube channel in partnership with the arts office. The programme was a major success with total views of 1541 with a watch time of 75.3 hours.
- Decade of Centenaries – published '*Trim, September 1920*' to mark the centenary of the tumultuous events that occurred in the town of Trim a century ago.
- Supported Hinterland to deliver the Hindsight history festival. The festival was delivered fully online in March 2020.
- Completed the roll-out of Magic Tables/Tovertafels to eleven of the twelve libraries in the county with installation in Duleek library scheduled as part of wider works in early 2021.
- Secured funding to deliver a range of new sensory facilities. A Sensory Pod has been procured for Ashbourne library and sensory walls will be introduced at a number of branch libraries. All libraries will receive Sensory pop-up facilities and a range of sensory toys.
- The Traveller Genealogy project funded under the Dormant Accounts Fund in 2019 was shortlisted for a Chambers Ireland Award.



- Funding has been secured under the Dormant Accounts Fund 2020 to provide online access to literacy supports for a thousand users. Library users will enjoy access to the software TTRS – Touch, Type, Read, Spell.
- Delivered a range of online events under the **Healthy Ireland @your library** initiative.
- Supported the delivery of the Ashbourne 2020 programme including the publication of the commemorative volume *'Ashbourne; Landscape, Lives and Lore'*
- The annual **Children's Book Festival** in October has also gone fully online for the first time. Thirty five videos of author readings were programmed enabling thousands of children access to events through their local schools.
- 737 children participated in the annual Summer Reading Challenge despite the restricted access to branches with lending services only operating on a 'Contact and Collect' basis.
- Annual 'Summer Programme'- 48 videos from 11 external facilitators achieved 692 views.
- Received the Right to Read Award from the LGMA.
- Secured funding from Facebook Community Action grant scheme to deliver STEAM events for adults and families.
- Introduced lending scheme for 'Home Energy Saving Kits' in partnership with the climate action team.

Covid -19 – Response

- Promoted online offering , eBooks, eMagazines and eLearning
- Created new online content via online storytimes etc.
- Programming successfully switched online – Cruinniú na nÓg, Summer Stars, Children's Book Festival
- Staff re-purposed the 3D digital printer to make face shields as part of a national initiative.
- Housebound service piloted in Kells and Trim.
- Online services promoted with 20% of our September loans accounted for by e-issues.
- Secured funding of €809,000 from Facebook to deliver an innovative 'Laptop for Loan' scheme to second-level students. Almost 700 laptops are on loan to date and the take-up from schools is very high. A community strand for the scheme is currently being developed.



- Navan was the first branch in the country to re-open for browsing. This was achieved with the support of Facilities Management, Human Resources and Health & Safety.
- 100% of our branches now re-opened on full hours compared to 71% nationally and all branches are offering internet and photocopying services. Branches continue to remain on full hours during the current Level 3 with services delivered via the 'Contact and Collect' model.
- Awarded funding from Creative Ireland under the Positive Ageing initiative to publish 'Cocooner: A Lockdown Diary' by Trim native Paddy Smith.
- Awarded funding by Healthy Ireland to introduce a new library APP which will enable users to interact with the service and reduce the amount of contact with library equipment.

Initiatives and Challenges, 2021

- Develop service in accordance with priorities set out in national library strategy *Libraries Ireland 2018 – 2022* and the *Living with Covid* plan at national level.
- Establish a strong presence for Trim library at the temporary premises in Mill Street. Develop outreach services from the branch post covid.
- Commence plans to design, re-configure and extend Navan branch library to integrate the former HQ space.
- Progress the design of the new County Archive building.
- Progress the design of the Trim Library and Cultural Centre.
- Seek to introduce E-Delivery Van
- Establish the Music Instrument lending scheme across the branch network in partnership with the Music Development officer.
- Implement the 5 year strategy for the county under the **Creative Ireland** initiative in partnership with national, local and community stakeholders.
- Develop and deliver appropriate programme of events to commemorate events as part of the **Decade of Centenaries** in partnership with national, local and community stakeholders.
- Support delivery of Colm Cille 1500 celebratory programme of events
- Progress detailed design of the flagship Bettystown branch development as part of an overall plan to deliver a library and community facility for East Meath.
- Provide minor upgrade to Duleek library

ARTS OFFICE

The Meath County Council Arts mission statement as per the County Arts Development Plan 2019 – 2024 is:

To work closely with artists, individuals and communities to increase access to, awareness of and participation in the arts across all disciplines and sectors of society. To act as a facilitator for arts organisations and play a major role in the development of good practice for the county. To provide opportunities across disciplines intended to support the Local Authority policy of supporting quality artistic endeavour, provision of employment opportunities for artists and long-term sustainability and durability for the arts in the county.

In implementing key aims and objectives as per the County Arts Development Plan, the Arts Office continues to adapt and respond to the circumstances presented by Covid 19. It has adopted a proactive approach in reimagining the 2020/21 Arts programme and is engaging with creative partners, artists, groups, organisations and the greater creative community. It has also engaged with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Arts Council and Creative Ireland in Covid Response development.

Achievements in 2020

- **Mary Lavin Season events:** Delivery of 'In The Middle of the Fields' Mary Lavin new music and literature commission and performance programme January 2020. Included artists Deirdre Kinahan, Sinead Moriarty, Steve Wickham, Lisa Lambe, Michael Brunnock and Saramai Leech.
- **Re-imagining of Arts Office programme in response to Covid 19:** New Arts Office online programme devised:



- **Theatre Tuesday** Award-winning playwright and MCC Associate Artist Deirdre Kinahan commissioned to record a series of readings from a selection of her works.
- **Ceol Comfort** A new music series featuring the music of artists who have or are currently supported by the Arts Office. Featuring works by Perlee with a song from their recently released debut EP *Slow Creatures* and video made by Kells filmmakers Mark Smyth and Jass Foley. *The Landing* by Michael Brunnock, musician, video filmed by Mark Smyth in and around north Meath. Other commissions and musicians include Caitlín Nic Gabhann Concertina, Bernadette Nic Gabhann Fiddle and Brenda Castles Concertina (winner of the 20/21 MCC Arts Office/Centre Cultural Irlandais Paris International Residency Award) Antóin MacGabhann and the Michael Fortune/Aileen Lambert *Songs for Our Children* Song Project.
- **Toradh Thursday** Toradh Gallery Ashbourne and Toradh2 Kells visual arts exhibitions moved online. Eight exhibitions facilitated to date.

The above initiatives are intended to provide alternative means of supporting those artists and creatives who have seen their work, performances and engagements cancelled or postponed for the foreseeable future, whilst providing greater access to the wider community to quality creative and cultural experiences. All the artists under the initiatives above were paid a fee for their work or for

rights to broadcast. Viewing figures for this initiative are strong (65,000 views) with very positive public response.

- **Meath Artists Meet Up:** MAMU initiative introduced by the Arts Office for independent artists in Meath to meet other artists, theatre makers, dancers, writers, producers, freelancers etc in an informal setting. The first meeting took place in February with further meetings scheduled every six weeks. 30 professional artists attended the first meeting with a further 20 indicating their wish to participate. As further in-person meetings had to be cancelled, an online mentoring programme was agreed with MAMU facilitator Aisling O'Brien and rolled out over the summer/autumn with strong participant engagement. A new MAMU newsletter was also introduced keeping participants up to date on developments.
- **Sightless Cinema - White Cane Audio Theatre:** Supported White Cane Audio Theatre in the delivery of a pilot series of 6 weekly 'Sightless Cinema' radio drama devising online workshops with blind and visually impaired people in co-operation with the National Council for the Blind of Ireland Navan office.
- **FÉACH training:** The FÉACH *Training Notes Programme – Music in a Healthcare Setting*, delivered by Kids Classics through our healthcare partners Navan Hospital, Beaufort Nursing Home, Navan and St Joseph's Nursing Home Trim, reimagined to present an online version. An online mentorship and CPD programme agreed with Kids Classics to enable the apprentice's complete training.
- **Act Out Youth Theatre:** Detailed action plan devised by AOYT to allow alternative delivery of their programmes. Plan drawn up in consultation with Youth Theatre Ireland (the national body for youth theatre). Navan Branch – junior and senior is thriving. A new branch was launched in Dunshaughlin in February (as per County Arts Plan Strategic Priority 3, Action 7) and both junior and senior are at capacity.
- **#InThisTogether:** Worked with Corporate Services and other department colleagues on the national #InThisTogether initiative.
- **Meath Arts Office/ Words Ireland Mentorship Award:** Introduced a new Words Ireland Meath Mentorship Award supporting new, emerging or recently published writers in Meath.
- **MCC Francis Ledwidge Poetry Award 2020:** Launched on April 30th – National Poetry Day, competition process managed by Arts Office.
- **Festival Support:** Worked with our Creative partners Hinterland Festival & Type Trail in supporting alternatives and delivery of cultural experiences. Supported Hinterland online; supported Type Trail creation and installation of work and development of new Type Trail website.
- **Music Generation Meath:** On-going liaison with Music Generation Meath regarding the roll out of MGM programme in the Covid 19 context. New working group established. The Music Development Officer has successfully completed the recruitment of 32 Music Tutors for the delivery of the revised programme. 22 of these tutors are Meath based.
- **Cruinniú na nÓg 2020:** Delivered in partnership with the Library Services, successfully moved online with over 40+ events taking place for children and young people 2 – 18yrs. The



programme encompassed a wide range of activities and disciplines – Arts, Heritage & STEM - and contained a balance of passive and interactive events. Some events took place on the day only, others had a workshop/engagement element running over a six-week Cruinniú lead in time. The newly established dedicated Cruinniú na nÓg Meath YouTube channel received 1541 views with a total view time of 75.3 hours between June 12th – 14th.

- **Kells Creative Placemaking:** Works as funded under the RRDF programme are on-going.
- **Arts Grants, Awards and Bursaries Schemes:** Applications under the Annual Arts Grants; Community Arts Awards; Professional Artists Development Fund; Tyrone Guthrie Centre Regional Bursary Award, Festival Grant Scheme and Schools Musical Instrument Purchase Scheme assessed and processed. 56 Awards made supporting the work and practice of 40+ professional artists in the county. 16 Awards made under SMIPS enabling schools creatively adapt existing music programmes and establish new structures to facilitate practical music engagement safely within the school environment.
- **Creative Ireland:** Continued implementation of the Creative Ireland Meath Five Year Strategy in collaboration with the Cultural Services Team.



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017-2022

Initiatives and Challenges for 2021

Covid 19 has presented serious challenges to the Arts industry and it is widely recognized as being one of the sectors worst affected by it. The MCC Arts Office understands the difficulties artists, creatives and our arts communities face in the current circumstances and we continue to provide valuable support throughout the county during this time. We have long recognized the pivotal role that the arts play in society and believe in the importance of the arts to individuals and communities.

As a fundamental element of a vibrant and sustainable community, Meath County Council has, through the County Arts Development Plan 2019 -2024, committed to nurturing a creative working life for professional artists and creators at all stages of their career. At a time when most artists and creatives have seen their work, performances and engagements cancelled or postponed for the foreseeable future, this support is crucial. We have reached out to our creative and artistic communities and, in response, have developed a series of initiatives to support, highlight and celebrate creativity in Meath, including:

- Deliver actions as per the four strategic priorities of County Arts Development Plan 2019 – 2024.
- Work with LMETB in roll-out of Music Generation Meath.
- Expand the MAMU artists support initiative 2021.
- Expand Arts Office online programme – *Theatre Tuesday, Ceol Comfort and Toradh online*.
- Expand small commissions programme.
- Expand Associate Artists programme.
- Youth Arts – with our partners devise and implement Covid compliant youth arts programmes in the areas of Visual Arts, Theatre and Film.
- Expand range of MCC Arts Grants, Awards & Bursaries Schemes.
- Continue to develop the Kells Creative Placemaking Project.
- Adapt key arts office events – Mary Lavin Season, Bealtine Festival and Púcas & Potions Children’s Halloween Festival to Covid 19 circumstances.

- Manage and implement Private Developer Public Art Project programme.
- Manage Meath County Council's Public Art commission programme associated with new capital developments e.g. housing
- Work with key stakeholders & partners in adapting to Covid 19 circumstances and the delivery of strategic events and festivals across the county. These include Hinterland Festival, Guth Gafa International Documentary film Festival, Kells Type Trail, & SOFFT Nights.
- Continue restoration, conservation and re-framing of MCC Art Collection, curate and re-hang in Council buildings throughout the county.
- Implement key elements of the Creative Ireland Meath 5 Year Strategy in partnership with Cultural Services Team.
- Devise and deliver FEACH artists CPD programme.
- Continued development of Training Notes programme – adapt to Covid 19.
- With a view to the future, continue development of international programme and working relationships e.g. CCI Paris and IAC New York.

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2021 and Estimated Outturn for 2020

Division & Services	2021				2020			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
F Recreation and Amenity								
F01 Leisure Facilities Operations	911,916	911,916	148,110	148,110	909,963	864,672	242,152	92,152
F02 Operation of Library and Archival Service	4,457,537	4,457,537	89,102	89,102	4,380,024	4,460,355	101,843	88,843
F03 Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations	1,910,219	1,910,219	5,021	5,021	1,907,738	1,908,211	5,089	5,089
F04 Community Sport and Recreational Development	591,386	591,386	9,841	9,841	661,022	569,751	10,171	10,171
F05 Operation of Arts Programme	1,043,656	1,043,656	61,363	61,363	1,078,735	1,084,926	53,676	56,076
F06 Agency & Recoupable Services	2,711	2,711	451,877	451,877	2,649	2,813	895	895
Division F Total	8,917,425	8,917,425	765,314	765,314	8,940,131	8,890,728	413,826	253,226

Table F - Expenditure

Division F - Recreation and Amenity

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
F0101 Leisure Facilities Operations	523,731	523,731	523,507	472,485
F0103 Contribution to External Bodies Leisure Facilities	148,000	148,000	148,000	148,000
F0199 Service Support Costs	240,185	240,185	238,456	244,187
F01 Leisure Facilities Operations	911,916	911,916	909,963	864,672
F0201 Library Service Operations	2,944,491	2,944,491	2,870,277	2,905,277
F0204 Purchase of Books, CD's etc.	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
F0299 Service Support Costs	1,213,046	1,213,046	1,209,747	1,255,078
F02 Operation of Library and Archival Service	4,457,537	4,457,537	4,380,024	4,460,355
F0301 Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	1,810,825	1,810,825	1,809,738	1,809,738
F0303 Beaches	88,652	88,652	87,379	87,379
F0399 Service Support Costs	10,742	10,742	10,621	11,094
F03 Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations	1,910,219	1,910,219	1,907,738	1,908,211
F0401 Community Grants	115,500	115,500	115,500	115,500
F0403 Community Facilities	170,000	170,000	240,000	143,475
F0404 Recreational Development	164,000	164,000	164,000	164,000
F0499 Service Support Costs	141,886	141,886	141,522	146,776
F04 Community Sport and Recreational Development	591,386	591,386	661,022	569,751
F0501 Administration of the Arts Programme	263,833	263,833	252,023	254,423
F0502 Contributions to other Bodies Arts Programme	677,205	677,205	724,309	724,309
F0599 Service Support Costs	102,618	102,618	102,403	106,194
F05 Operation of Arts Programme	1,043,656	1,043,656	1,078,735	1,084,926
F0601 Agency & Recoupable Service	-	-	-	-
F0699 Service Support Costs	2,711	2,711	2,649	2,813
F06 Agency & Recoupable Services	2,711	2,711	2,649	2,813
Division F Total	8,917,425	8,917,425	8,940,131	8,890,728

Table F - Income

Division F - Recreation and Amenity				
Income by Source	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	-	-
Media, Tourism, Art, Culture, Sport & the Gaeltacht	-	-	-	-
Social Protection	-	-	-	-
Library Council	-	-	-	-
Arts Council	55,000	55,000	41,100	49,500
Transport	-	-	-	-
Community, Rural Development & the Islands	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	55,000	55,000	41,100	49,500
Goods & Services				
Recreation/Amenity/Culture	117,000	117,000	180,000	60,000
Superannuation	132,003	132,003	136,426	136,426
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Other income	459,311	459,311	54,300	5,300
Total Goods & Services	710,314	710,314	372,726	203,726
Division F Total	765,314	765,314	413,826	253,226

Delivery in 2020



Veterinary Inspection

The Council continues to provide veterinary inspection services for the enforcement of food legislation and protection of consumer health



Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare

Service Division G

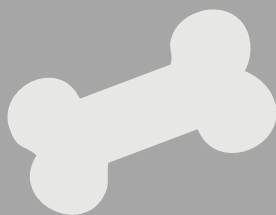
€896k

for 2021



National Dog License System

Involves the issuing of automatic reminder letters in relation to dog licenses



Dog Shelter

Operation and Management of the Dog Shelter facility in Dunshaughlin has been extended until February 2022



SERVICE DIVISION G

Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare

Meath County Council continues to provide veterinary inspection services for the enforcement of food legislation and protection of consumer health and interest.

The Council continues to operate under a Service Level Agreement with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI).



The Council also provides services under the Control of Dogs and Control of Horses Act.

- The new National Dog Licence System has resulted in increased payment of licences fees.
- The contract for the operation and management of the Dog Shelter facility at the Riggins, Dunshaughlin has been extended until February 2022.

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2021 and Estimated Outturn for 2020

Division & Services	2021				2020			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
G Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare								
G01 Land Drainage Costs	35,454	35,454	35,115	35,115	35,447	35,470	35,119	35,119
G04 Veterinary Service	751,702	751,702	445,280	445,280	755,564	751,154	432,091	431,591
G05 Educational Support Services	106,489	106,489	5,500	5,500	106,964	108,927	5,500	5,500
G06 Agency & Recoupable Services	2,553	2,553	-	-	2,566	2,618	-	-
Division G Total	896,198	896,198	485,895	485,895	900,541	898,169	472,710	472,210

Table F - Expenditure

Division G - Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
G0102 Contributions to Joint Drainage Bodies	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
G0199 Service Support Costs	454	454	447	470
G01 Land Drainage Costs	35,454	35,454	35,447	35,470
G0401 Provision of Veterinary Service	415	415	415	415
G0402 Inspection of Abattoirs etc	356,639	356,639	374,414	370,414
G0403 Food Safety	2,544	2,544	2,544	2,544
G0404 Operation of Dog Warden Service	266,161	266,161	253,134	247,546
G0499 Service Support Costs	125,943	125,943	125,057	130,235
G04 Veterinary Service	751,702	751,702	755,564	751,154
G0507 School Meals	11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000
G0599 Service Support Costs	95,489	95,489	95,964	97,927
G05 Educational Support Services	106,489	106,489	106,964	108,927
G0699 Service Support Costs	2,553	2,553	2,566	2,618
G06 Agency & Recoupable Services	2,553	2,553	2,566	2,618
Division G Total	896,198	896,198	900,541	898,169

Table F - Income

Division G - Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare

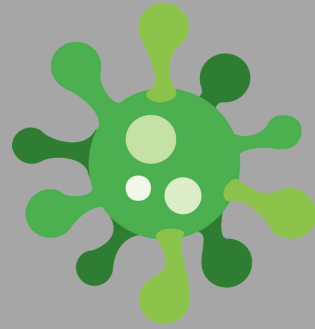
Income by Source	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	10,000	10,000	10,000	8,000
Media, Tourism, Art, Culture, Sport & the Gaeltacht	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	-	-
Transport	-	-	-	-
Food Safety Authority of Ireland	183,600	183,600	183,600	183,600
Agriculture & Marine	-	-	-	-
Other	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	199,100	199,100	199,100	197,100
Goods & Services				
Superannuation	9,395	9,395	9,710	9,710
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	-	-	-	-
Other income	277,400	277,400	263,900	263,400
Total Goods & Services	286,795	286,795	273,610	273,110
Division G Total	485,895	485,895	472,710	470,210

Delivery in 2020



New Meeting Arrangements

New Council meeting arrangements implemented in response to the public health restrictions



Communications

Launch of the new 'Meath Matters' quarterly publication



Miscellaneous Services

Service Division H

€17.1m

for 2021



Language Scheme

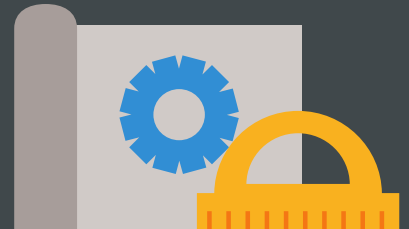
Prepared the Council's second Language Scheme and administered the Official Languages Act as it applies to the local authority

Community Call

1200



Total number of calls received to date on the Community Call line which was set up in response to Covid-19



Corporate Facilities

Key construction projects completed in 2020 include the Civil Defence HQ Building and upgrade works to the Solstice Arts Centre.

Other projects advanced in 2020 include the Trim Library and Cultural Centre and Rooske Linear Walkway



SERVICE DIVISION H

Miscellaneous Services

Introduction

The Corporate Services Department works within a framework of democratic principles, providing services to the Elected Members, the management of meetings and the preparation of the Register of Electors. It also facilitates the delivery of services to the public, through our customer services team, the management of corporate facilities, safety and health procedures and supports effective corporate governance practices. It also manages corporate communications, events, twinning and relations with a number of organizations and relevant bodies.

Achievements in 2020

Elected Council

- Processed all administration regarding meetings of the Council and the six Municipal Districts, including new arrangements in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and in line with the public health guidance.

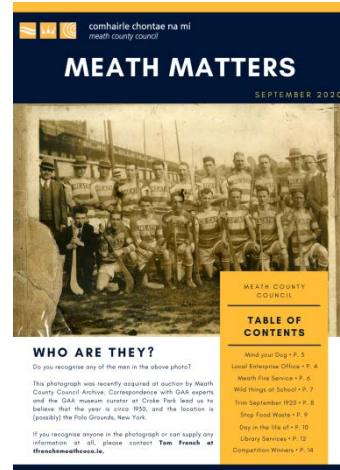


- Revised the Council's Standing Orders, which now also provide for remote meetings.
- Managed the co-option of four new members of the Council, following the Oireachtas elections.
- Managed the on-going capture of information, quality control, publication and distribution of the Register of Electors and the Marked Register for the Local Elections.
- Facilitated Elected Members in relation to their democratic role at full Council and through the Municipal District structures.
- Administered the Municipal District Allocation Scheme.
- Implemented the provisions of the Ethical Framework for the Local Government Service as it applies to Elected Members and staff.

Customer Service, Communications and Events

- Continued to develop the customer service delivery model and prepared for an upgrade of the CRM system, with the tender process on-going.

- Administered the legislative provisions concerning Freedom of Information and Access to Information on the Environment and the office of the Ombudsman.
- Prepared the Council's second Language Scheme and administered the Official Languages Act as it applies to the local authority.
- Launched a number of communications campaigns to support corporate objectives and in line with the Council's communications strategy, including the launch of the new 'Meath Matters' quarterly publication.
- Organised a number of corporate events and delivered online events in line with the public health restrictions, this included the delivery of the Women in Politics project which has been shortlisted for an Excellence in Local Government award.
- Delivered a number of new communications activities to support the Council engaging with customers and stakeholders more directly during the lockdown and Covid-19 emergency situation.



Corporate Publications

- Coordinated the formulation and adoption of the Council's new Corporate Plan 2019-2024
- Produced and published the 2019 Annual Report for Meath County Council, the Annual Service Delivery Plan and other corporate publications.

Corporate Governance and Administration

- Coordinated the implementation of the corporate Risk Management Policy, the meetings of the Risk Committee, the completion of the Risk Registers.
- Facilitate the work of the Audit Committee, support its four meetings per year and provided external training for the members of the Committee.

- Administer various corporate functions and responsibilities, including the provision of the County Coroner service.

Data Protection and Records Management

- Oversee the Council's compliance with its GDPR obligations through the Data Protection Unit and continued to update corporate policies and procedures on data protection and security.
- Provided GDPR and FOI awareness training for designated officers.
- Prepared the tender for new record management and document storage facilities.

Occupational Safety and Health

It is policy to comply with our statutory obligations (Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and all other applicable legislation) and to continually improve performance of occupational safety and health (OSH) management to protect all our employees and other interested parties who may be affected by our activities.

The main achievements in 2020 were:

- Meath County Council's Fire Service has maintained ISO 45001 Certification and external OSH audits have been undertaken.
- Corporate Safety Management System maintained in line with legislative and guidance.
- Development and implementation of COVID-19 operational procedures and risk assessments across all sections of the Organisation.

Corporate Facilities

Key construction projects completed in 2020 include the Civil Defence HQ Building and upgrade works to the Solstice Arts Centre.



Other corporate facilities advanced in 2020 were the Trim Library and Cultural Centre and Rooske Road Linear Walkway (with the appointment of Contractors).

Initiatives and Challenges for 2021

In the context of the current economic environment and in accordance with the financial resources allocated by the elected Council, the following activities will be undertaken:

- Implement any new policies arising from the publication of the Moorhead Report on the Role and Remuneration of Local Authority Elected Members;
- Implement the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, embedding it across all Departments and ensuring seamless customer service to all stakeholders;
- Further improving the Council's Communication activities, by developing more engaging content across a range of platforms;
- Maintain high levels of awareness in the organisation of the importance of data protection and up-date the organisation's Records Management policy;
- Continue to review and improve, where necessary, the corporate governance framework, its policies and procedures, in line with best practice;
- Continue to support the development and review of operational risk assessments, OSH inspections and audits across the Organisation to assist in the continual embedding and improvement of the Corporate Safety Management System;
- Key construction projects to commence in 2020 are Enfield Community Building, Trim Library and Cultural Centre, St. Kenneth's Church Ballivor, Bettystown Library and Rooske Road Linear Walkway.

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2021 and Estimated Outturn for 2020

Division & Services	2021				2020			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
H Miscellaneous Services								
H03 Administration of Rates	11,025,998	11,025,998	82,440	82,440	9,328,542	9,233,777	82,619	82,619
H04 Franchise Costs	333,509	333,509	1,717	1,717	334,519	339,756	1,774	1,774
H05 Operation of Morgue and Coroner Expenses	286,993	286,993	978	978	194,932	267,154	1,011	1,011
H06 Weighbridges	2,631	2,631	-	-	3,877	3,901	-	-
H07 Operation of Markets and Casual Trading	-	-	1,000	1,000	-	-	3,000	3,000
H09 Local Representation & Civic Leadership	3,028,678	3,028,678	325,667	325,667	2,940,355	2,982,947	26,527	26,527
H10 Motor Taxation	1,655,752	1,655,752	98,753	98,753	1,664,672	1,704,529	100,218	100,218
H11 Agency & Recoupable Services	807,582	807,582	4,625,099	4,625,099	801,556	829,844	4,079,467	4,279,467
Division H Total	17,141,143	17,141,143	5,135,654	5,135,654	15,268,453	15,361,908	4,294,616	4,494,616
Overall Total	154,685,723	154,685,723	96,424,017	96,424,017	139,092,905	162,566,100	81,044,981	104,518,175

Table F - Expenditure

Division H - Miscellaneous Services

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
H0301 Administration of Rates Office	839,223	839,223	834,868	834,868
H0302 Debt Management Service Rates	557,053	557,053	558,652	558,652
H0303 Refunds and Irrecoverable Rates	9,518,020	9,518,020	7,822,900	7,723,041
H0399 Service Support Costs	111,702	111,702	112,122	117,216
H03 Administration of Rates	11,025,998	11,025,998	9,328,542	9,233,777
H0401 Register of Elector Costs	122,289	122,289	121,766	121,766
H0402 Local Election Costs	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
H0499 Service Support Costs	111,220	111,220	112,753	117,990
H04 Franchise Costs	333,509	333,509	334,519	339,756
H0501 Coroner Fees and Expenses	282,156	282,156	190,156	262,156
H0599 Service Support Costs	4,837	4,837	4,776	4,998
H05 Operation of Morgue and Coroner Expenses	286,993	286,993	194,932	267,154
H0601 Weighbridge Operations	1,500	1,500	2,741	2,741
H0699 Service Support Costs	1,131	1,131	1,136	1,160
H06 Weighbridges	2,631	2,631	3,877	3,901
H0702 Casual Trading Areas	-	-	-	-
H07 Operation of Markets and Casual Trading	-	-	-	-
H0901 Representational Payments	1,048,240	1,048,240	737,840	737,840
H0902 Chair/Vice Chair Allowances	78,000	78,000	78,000	78,000
H0903 Annual Allowances LA Members	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
H0904 Expenses LA Members	78,531	78,531	81,717	81,717
H0905 Other Expenses	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
H0906 Conferences Abroad	12,000	12,000	20,000	20,000
H0907 Retirement Gratuities	141,650	141,650	147,568	147,568
H0908 Contribution to Members Associations	19,500	19,500	19,000	19,000
H0909 General Municipal Allocation	400,000	400,000	600,000	600,000
H0999 Service Support Costs	926,757	926,757	932,230	974,822
H09 Local Representation & Civic Leadership	3,028,678	3,028,678	2,940,355	2,982,947
H1001 Motor Taxation Operation	700,719	700,719	705,669	700,669
H1099 Service Support Costs	955,033	955,033	959,003	1,003,860
H10 Motor Taxation	1,655,752	1,655,752	1,664,672	1,704,529
H1101 Agency & Recoupable Service	47,475	47,475	42,475	42,475
H1102 NPPR	127,422	127,422	126,070	126,070
H1199 Service Support Costs	632,685	632,685	633,011	661,299
H11 Agency & Recoupable Services	807,582	807,582	801,556	829,844

Table F - Expenditure**Division H - Miscellaneous Services**

Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Division H Total	17,141,143	17,141,143	15,268,453	15,361,908

Overall Total**154,685,723****154,685,723****139,092,905****162,566,100**

Table F - Income

Division H - Miscellaneous Services				
Income by Source	2021		2020	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	3,463,825	3,463,825	2,670,059	2,672,059
Agriculture & Marine	-	-	-	-
Social Protection	-	-	-	-
Justice	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	3,463,825	3,463,825	2,670,059	2,672,059
Goods & Services				
Superannuation	126,229	126,229	130,457	130,457
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	-	-	-	-
NPPR	300,000	300,000	200,000	450,000
Other income	1,245,600	1,245,600	1,294,100	1,244,100
Total Goods & Services	1,671,829	1,671,829	1,624,557	1,824,557
Division H Total	5,135,654	5,135,654	4,294,616	4,496,616
Overall Total	96,424,017	96,424,017	81,044,981	104,518,175

Delivery in 2020

Recruitment **302**

15 recruitment competitions,, with a total of 302 applications processed & 93 candidates interviewed to date in 2020



Business Restart Grant

€17.9m

Restart Grant Plus

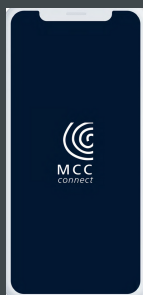


To date Meath has processed and paid €17.9m under the Restart Grant schemes

MCC Connect

685

Total number of staff currently using the MCC Connect App



Commerical rates

3,628

Through the rate waiver schemes the Council has supported 3,268 businesses and waived rates to the value of €17.6m

Finance, HR and IT Service Division J



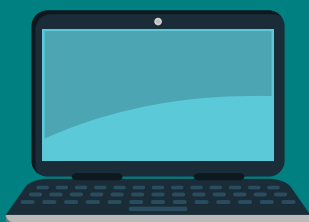
Remote Working

The IT Operations Team deployed and maintained 3 different ways of connecting remotely to MCC's Network

3

Laptops

2020 sees more laptops deployed than previous years due to Covid-19 with the plan to adopt a 'laptop by default' policy in the future



Loans

235



To date 235 tenants contacted the rents section regarding a change in their circumstances due to Covid-19

Payments

€199m

Accounts payable processed and paid €199m in the 12 months ending November 6



SERVICE DIVISION J

FINANCE

Introduction

The first quarter of 2020 saw the Finance section prepare and complete the 2019 Annual Financial Statement, issue the 2020 rates demands and continue day to day work in its accounts payable, procurement, rents, loans and NPPR sections.

In March the impact of COVID-19 altered the focus of the finance teams as we responded to the various government schemes and incentives aimed at supporting the business community, individuals and the wider community during the global pandemic. These supports include the six and three month commercial rates waivers, the various Business Restart Grant schemes, mortgage repayment breaks and rent adjustments.

As well as processing and implementing the above measures the Finance Department continued to focus its efforts on effective expenditure controls with the overall objective of ensuring that the Council operates within its allocated Budget.

Achievements in 2020

Accounts Payable

- Accounts payable processed and paid €199m in the 12 months ended 6th November 2020.
- In 2019 a new Purchase to Pay Policy was adopted and implemented in 2020 in order to further improve the supplier payment process
- Regular monitoring and reporting along with continuous business process improvements have resulted in increased efficiencies and prompt payment with 99% of invoices paid within 15 days

Procurement

- The Procurement Department continues to support, promote and guide the Corporate body in all aspects relating to Procurement.
- Procurement actively manage many central contracts and provide administration support for systems such as SupplyGov and e-Tenders
- Procurement is an integral part of the purchase to pay cycle, providing a management overview function for all procurement related acquisitions.
- Lighthouse card system was introduced by Procurement to manage the LVP Cards for the organisation which allows for a live integration with Agresso MS4.

Commercial Rates

- The global pandemic and the associated public health measures have presented immediate and severe financial challenges for the business community as it deals with the economic impact and restrictions on business activities.
- The six-month **commercial rates waiver** announced by Government in July and the additional 3 month waiver provided for in the October budget were very much welcomed by both business and the Council. Through the rates waiver schemes Meath County Council has supported 3,628 businesses and waived rates to the value of €17.6m.

Business Restart Grant

- Businesses in Meath have also been supported through the various **Business Restart Grant Schemes**. To date Meath has processed and paid €17.9m under the Restart Grant schemes.



Rents

- Bi-annual statements are issued to all tenants. This enables tenants to monitor and confirm their payments. To date approximately 235 tenants contacted the rents section regarding a change in their circumstances due to COVID-19. Tenants continue to submit rent review forms and assessments are ongoing for tenants with changing circumstances.

Loans

- The global pandemic has greatly impacted the loans section with the number of new loans issued significantly down on last year. The Loans team has been very proactive engaging with customers and dealing with enquiries and adjustments to loan account repayments as mortgage holders avail of the 3 month, 6 month and 9 month repayment breaks.

Non Principal Private Residence (NPPR)

- The service of providing NPPR compliance and exemption certificates is a sizeable task as these are being sought for all residential property sales, regardless of whether the property is liable or not. Agreements and payment plans are continually being put in place and monitored. It should be noted that the amount of liable properties is diminishing and the income from the NPPR will decrease in time. Despite Covid-19 the housing market remained quite buoyant during 2020 with Meath County Council receiving 1,550 requests for compliance and exemption certificates.

Initiatives and Challenges for 2021

The significant issues of increased COVID costs and loss of income from rates and goods & services will continue to have an impact on our revenue account during 2021. Budgetary control will continue to be the key objective for the Finance Section as Meath County Council strives to maintain a sustainable rate base while also providing the current level of essential services into 2021 and beyond.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Achievements in 2020

The HR Department commenced the year with a detailed work programme to include the implementation of a number of initiatives outlined in the HR People Strategy for Meath County Council including: the continued development of workforce planning, identifying emerging requirements and continued focus on recruitment, selection and retention of staff with a particular focus on marketing Meath County Council as an employer of choice; a renewed focus on staff learning and development and the promotion of a culture of Continuous Professional Development; a continued focus on staff wellbeing and engagement, and; a continued support to line managers.

However, the impact of COVID-19 put planned activities on-hold as it required immediate and sustained response by the HR Department to support the organisation in implementing measures to ensure continued delivery of essential services following Government restrictions from March 2020. The HR Department adapted quickly in response to these immediate requirements placed on the organisation and our staff in particular. This included responding to the significant HR issues arising from the removal of each phase of restrictions and the on-going change to the operating environment which currently exists as restrictions were reintroduced.

The focus for HR during the response to Covid-19 included the following examples:

- Development and management of communication methods including (a) updating the text-alert system, (b) further roll-out of the MCC Connect App, (c) correspondence to staff in relation to returning to the workplace, and (d) managing the phone line to support staff during the period of restrictions.
- Providing advice and guidance to staff in relation to the public health advice on Covid-19 and the impact on the workplace and on individual staff.
- Supporting staff in the high-risk category and liaising with line managers.
- Collaborating with the IT Department to support the roll-out of remote access for staff.
- Reviewing Time & Attendance rosters for all staff due to the impact of the restrictions.
- Ensuring business continuity in relation to the Payroll function.
- Continued the process for recruitment to ensure all contracts were completed, competitions for essential staff were completed and all retirements and resignations were processed.
- Continued industrial relations engagement.
- A reviewed focus on staff support and wellbeing.

As part of the Covid 19 response and the need for on-going workforce planning, the HR Department continued to review staffing levels and requirements during 2020. HR has continued its work with senior management and the various service areas of the organisation in order to identify current and emerging requirements so as to be in a position to plan and respond to same in terms of staffing.

The implementation of the on-going workforce planning process throughout 2020 gave consideration to the following:

- Continued increase in activity both locally and throughout the local government sector in terms of recruitment, selection and staff retention due to the continued changing nature, diversification, and national requirements of the sector.
- Continued increase in opportunities throughout the public sector in general and consequent employment and skills mobility.
- Planning for the filling of vacancies and a renewed focus on attracting and recruiting people with the appropriate knowledge and skills – this includes marketing what the Council, and the sector in general, can offer to prospective job applicants/candidates more effectively and having consideration to changing employee expectations and how media is consumed.
- Continued work towards being an employer of choice and the shift towards new recruitment methods arising from the impact of Covid-19.
- Renewed focus on learning and development opportunities for staff with a focus on structured induction for new staff, fostering a fair and healthy working environment, and consideration of other developmental opportunities.

The HR Department has continued to work very closely with staff and unions on a range of issues aside from the impact of Covid-19 on the workplace.

To date in 2020, the Recruitment and Selection Unit has facilitated 15 recruitment competitions, with a total of 302 applications processed and 93 candidates interviewed. The Learning & Development Unit has continued to review requirements throughout the organisation despite the restrictions. This includes mandatory training as well as new initiatives in terms of the staff wellbeing and health.

Training Figure for January 1 to September 30, 2020	
Number of Course Types Held	74
Number of Training Course/Workshops held	149
Number of Individual Staff Scheduled for Training	433

The MCC Connect App was launched and rolled out to outdoor staff in early 2020 pre-Covid. It was then fast-tracked to indoor staff with the current total number of staff using the app currently 685. The App is an excellent platform for HR and corporate communications. It has been an invaluable tool during 2020 with the regular updates from the Chief Executive during the various stages of restrictions particularly well received.



Initiatives and Challenges for 2020

The priorities for the Human Resources Department in 2021 will be:

- Continued workforce planning including identifying emerging requirements and continued focus on recruitment, selection and retention of staff with a particular focus on marketing Meath County Council as an employer of choice.
- Implementation of local 'People Strategy' objectives and actions.
- Continued focus on staff learning and development to promote a culture of Continuous Professional Development and an increased focus on staff wellbeing initiatives.
- Supporting line managers and staff in relation to remote working.
- Continuous support to senior/line managers and ongoing employment engagement.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Achievements in 2020

During 2020, the Information Systems department had to redirect a lot of its efforts to enabling and supporting the entire organisation in dealing with the consequences of Covid-19, as well as initiatives and policies regarding same, while maintaining operational stability and information security.

During 2020, to ensure business continuity in the context of Covid-19 from February/March, a major focus was on enabling employees to work remotely while respecting security standards. More laptops were deployed than in any previous years and it is expected that in the future, MCC will adopt a "laptop by default" policy. The IT Operations team deployed and maintained 3 different ways of connecting remotely to MCC's network, consolidated to two ways since June 2020. The security and event management system, installed in 2019, continued to monitor 24/7 the network for suspicious events and to report vulnerabilities. Upgrading of server, databases and operating systems continued. Efforts regarding migrating from the LGMA active directory forest continued but since they involved the same resources, progress was delayed and it is now expected that the migration will be completed in Q1 2021.

Key initiatives were undertaken to implement appropriate data analytics platforms, with a number of projects initiated to support timely decision making across the Council:

- Continued mapping and online submission support was provided to the Planning Department on the County Development Plan Review process;
- Our existing Housing Grants System was re-developed, iHouse was upgraded and the DEASP API has been implemented;
- Substantial progress was made in GI data preparation for implementation of new corporate Geographic Information Systems Platform procured in 2019;
- Adaptations were implemented to the Sugar CRM to support the National Covid Community Response Framework, with an internal ArcGIS Online Web Map application integrated and required phone system reconfigurations completed;
- Designed and published Restart Grant and Restart Grant Plus application forms, and have implemented and upgraded the backend systems for processing applications, integrating with Agresso financial management system;

- Zoom was chosen and implemented as our web meeting solution, for its ease of-use, functionality, scalability and value for money and has been used extensively during 2020;
- A Cookie Consent Management Solution has been implemented on www.meath.ie , and other secondary MCC websites, to ensure compliance with guidelines issued by the Data Protection Commission;
- A corporate SurveyMonkey solution has been implemented and an alert service <https://alerts.meath.ie> has been made available on our website.

The IT Department also participated in the implementation of the digital strategy as well as starting an enterprise central database (initial tables are users, geographical sites, departments, projects and actions). IT also participated to a number of best practices and project boards (e.g. Building Control Management Systems) at sectoral level, as well as enabling the procurement and provision of laptops for Facebook's sponsorship of laptop loans for schools through MCC's library services.

Initiatives and Challenges for 2021

A greater emphasis on strategic management, including stakeholder management, skills/knowledge management, procurement management and risk management, will continue in 2021.

- Modernisation of platforms will also continue: completion of LGMA's forest exit, PC replacements with laptops, server and desktop OS upgrades, SQL DB upgrades, security, etc;
- Additional processes will be reviewed and streamlined, focusing on the opportunities for online and mobile delivery (e.g. online forms, FAQs and SOPs) to improve customer satisfaction and/or reduce costs;
- The implementation and roll-out of the new Geographic Information Systems Platform is to be completed;
- A proactive attitude to lead and share best sectoral practices and to guide and adopt national sectoral applications will be continued, in association with other local authorities.

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TABLE C - CALCULATION OF BASE YEAR ADJUSTMENT

	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)
Rating Authority	Annual Rate on Valuation 2021 €	Effective ARV (Net of BYA) 2021 €	Base Year Adjustment 2021 €	Net Effective Valuation €	Value of Base Year Adjustment €
<u>Meath County Council</u>	<u>0.194</u>				
Meath County Council	0.194		-	228,270,897	-
TOTAL				228,270,897	-

Table D

ANALYSIS OF BUDGET INCOME 2021 FROM GOODS AND SERVICES

Source of Income	2021 €	2020 €
Rents from Houses	11,950,537	10,645,520
Housing Loans Interest & Charges	1,300,277	986,482
Parking Fines & Charges	1,303,000	1,675,000
Irish Water	8,561,458	8,350,326
Planning Fees	839,000	972,000
Domestic Refuse Charges	-	-
Commercial Refuse Charges	-	-
Landfill Charges	-	-
Fire Charges	250,000	250,000
Recreation/Amenity/Culture	117,000	180,000
Agency Services & Repayable Works	-	-
Local Authority Contributions	2,841,900	2,000,400
Superannuation	1,582,004	1,634,998
NPPR	300,000	200,000
Other income	12,024,425	13,085,392
Total Goods & Services	<u>41,069,601</u>	<u>39,980,118</u>

Table E

ANALYSIS OF BUDGET INCOME 2021 FROM GRANTS & SUBSIDIES

	2021 €	2020 €
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage		
Housing and Building	26,639,168	15,784,843
Road Transport & Safety	-	-
Water Services	225,000	185,000
Development Management	1,239,224	1,343,257
Environmental Services	-	-
Recreation and Amenity	-	-
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	10,000	10,000
Miscellaneous Services	3,463,825	2,670,059
Sub-total	31,577,217	19,993,159
Other Departments and Bodies		
TII Transport Infrastructure Ireland	21,380,924	18,982,646
Media, Tourism, Art, Culture, Sport & the Gaeltacht	-	-
National Transport Authority	-	-
Social Protection	-	-
Defence	164,000	138,000
Education	-	-
Library Council	-	-
Arts Council	55,000	41,100
Transport	-	-
Justice	-	-
Agriculture & Marine	-	-
Enterprise, Trade & Employment	1,268,730	1,003,038
Community, Rural Development & the Islands	-	-
Climate Action & Communications Networks	319,000	324,000
Food Safety Authority of Ireland	183,600	183,600
Other	405,945	399,320
Sub-total	23,777,199	21,071,704
Total Grants & Subsidies	<u>55,354,416</u>	<u>41,064,863</u>

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF CENTRAL MANAGEMENT CHARGES FOR YEAR 2021

Description	2021 €	2020 €
Corporate Affairs Overhead	2,798,914	2,887,907
Corporate Buildings Overhead	3,558,943	3,639,913
Finance Function Overhead	1,118,109	1,118,328
Human Resource Function Overhead	2,213,439	2,214,464
IT Services	3,110,123	3,006,094
Print/Post Room Service Overhead Allocation	373,000	393,000
Pension & Lump Sum Overhead	5,393,879	5,265,441
Total Expenditure Allocated to Services	18,566,407	18,525,147

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF LOCAL PROPERTY TAX ALLOCATION FOR YEAR 2021

Description	2021	2021
	€	€
Discretionary		
Discretionary Local Property Tax (Table A)	<u>14,022,808</u>	14,022,808
Self Funding - Revenue Budget		
Housing & Building	-	
Roads, Transport & Safety	<u>-</u>	
Total Local Property Tax - Revenue Budget		<u>14,022,808</u>
Self Funding - Capital Budget		
Housing & Building	-	
Roads, Transport & Safety	<u>-</u>	
Total Local Property Tax - Capital Budget		<u>-</u>
Total Local Property Tax Allocation (Post Variation)		14,022,808

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

I hereby certify that at the budget meeting of Meath County Council held this 30th day of November 2020 the Council by Resolution adopted for the financial year ending on the 31st day of December 2021 the budget set out in the Tables A-F and by Resolution determined in accordance with the said budget the Rates set out in Tables A and C to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for that year for the purposes set out in those Tables.

Signed:  _____
Cathaoirleach

Countersigned:  _____
Head of Finance

Date this 30 day of Nov, 2020