

Sligo County Council Annual Report 2007





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Sligo County Council has a pivotal role to play in the promotion of Sligo as a key centre for economic growth. The partnership approach which has characterised our work in this area will continue to be a major factor as we seek to maximise the potential of our 'Gateway' status under the National Spatial Strategy.



INVESTMENT

As a member of Sligo County Council's Strategic Policy Committee on Economic Development and Planning, I firmly believe that the IDA can work with the Sligo Local Authorities and the Sligo Chamber of Commerce to attract investment and jobs to Sligo and the northwest.

TRANSPORT

Sligo is a major transportation node in the northwest, and the Inner Relief Road is the main artery for north-south traffic. The opening of the Inner relief Road conveyed a positive message that Sligo Local Authorities could plan and deliver major infrastructural projects, and in the current year I hope to see tangible progress on other major roads projects, including the N4 and N15, the Western Distributor Road and the Eastern Garavoge River Bridge.

I also see the upgrading of the N16 Border Corridor route between Sligo and Dundalk as an urgent priority. We have seen a series of milestones in terms of the peace process, and I think it is imperative that we progress to the next level and ensure that we invest in the border area. The current trend in tourism is towards short term breaks rather than long holidays, and this is a market we should actively target.

WATER SERVICES

In terms of water and waste water services, Sligo Local Authorities have invested significant resources into delivering major infrastructure throughout the county. A new Water Treatment Plant is being constructed at Kilsellagh, and our Rural Water programme is arguably the most progressive in the country, with €1.9m allocated to the programme in 2007.

The delivery of a quality water supply to our consumers is one of the most important function of a Local Authority. Sligo County Council has made a substantial investment in our water supply infrastructure throughout the county to ensure households are provided with a supply that meets the strict EU criteria.

The Sligo Local Authorities are finalising plans for a 'Water Conservation' campaign, which will involve engaging with schools, businesses, farmers and private individuals to ensure water is not wasted through inefficient use or leakage. For people being served by metered supplies, they can make significant savings in their bills by reducing their consumption.

COMMUNITY

During my term as Cathaoirleach I have had the privilege of meeting numerous community volunteers who are the unsung heroes in our society. Sligo County Council works closely with local groups to prepare and progress local initiatives, from Area Plans, Amenity Schemes and a range of community and environmental schemes.

I look forward to continuing this work on behalf of the people of County Sligo in 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seamus Kilgannon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Councillor Seamus Kilgannon
Cathaoirleach

Introduction by County Manager

2007 was a busy and productive year for Sligo County Council with a number of major projects progressed or delivered across our many service areas.



WATER SERVICES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

One of the most significant investments this Council has made in recent years is through the Water Services Programme, which has seen the provision of a quality water supply to households all over the county. In the last year almost €200 million has been invested in this programme, which has seen the completion of fifty two schemes serving over eighteen hundred households.

WATER CONSERVATION

Water conservation is one of the most challenging issues facing our society. We each use on average 150 litres of clean treated water every day, and a running tap can use up to 10 litres of water a minute. This is an area where each and every one of us can play a part, and our Water Services Department will be working closely with the business, farming and educational sector to devise and implement measures to monitor and preserve this scarce resource.

BRIDGE PROGRAMME

While our major capital programme has seen the delivery of water and waste water schemes, road projects and housing programmes, there is a raft of excellent work being delivered in other areas that do not attract the same notice. For instance, our bridge repair and maintenance programme has seen the careful restoration of some of Sligo's oldest bridges, and over the last five years improvements have been carried out to twenty five bridges, involving an expenditure of €1.7million.

In 2008 I hope to see work advanced on the Eastern Garavoge River Bridge. The new bridge and approach roads will provide a new high-quality, single-carriageway Urban Distributor Road link on the Eastern side of Sligo City. It will provide for the ongoing commercial, residential, recreational and social development of communities in the East of the City, on both the North and South sides of the Garavoge River

INFRASTRUCTURE

One of our main responsibilities as a Local Authority is to plan and deliver high quality transport and service infrastructure to meet future demands of the commercial and private sector. Businesses and people want to be where there is a wide range of infrastructure and facilities. In this context Sligo is very well positioned as a key centre for economic growth in the northwest, and the construction of major infrastructural projects sends a positive message to existing and potential enterprises that the Local Authorities will deliver for Sligo.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hubert Kearns".

Hubert Kearns
Sligo County Manager

Council Members

Sligo/Drumcliffe Area Elected Members



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Council Members / Map of Electoral Area

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County Sligo Electoral Map



Strategic Policy Committee Members

SPC 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING POLICY

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Cllr Patsy Barry, *Rinroe, Grange, Co. Sligo*

Cllr Aidan Colleary, *Cully, Curry, Charlestown PO, Co. Sligo*

Cllr Jude Devins, *34 Clara Court, Strandhill Road, Sligo*

Cllr Deirdre Healy Mc Gowan, *Breeogue, Knocknahur, Co. Sligo*

Cllr Seamus Kilgannon, *81 Rathedmond, Sligo*

Cllr Sean Mac Manus, *5 Mountain View, Maugheraboy, Sligo*

Mr Michael Keenan, *Keenan Construction Ltd., Carraroe, Co. Sligo*

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Cllr Mary Barrett, *Ardabrone, Dromard, Co. Sligo*

Cllr Paul Conmy, *Meenaun, Culleens, Co. Sligo*

Cllr Michael Fleming, *Carrowreagh Cooper, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo*

Cllr Albert Higgins, *Carrowroe, Co. Sligo*

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Mr Geroid O'Connor, *Cams, Ballymote, Co. Sligo*

Ms Sally Ward, *Cregg, Rosses Point, Co. Sligo*

Mr Martin Enright, *Raheen, Kilmacowen, Co. Sligo*

Mr Brendan Queenan, *Castletown, Easkey, Co. Sligo*

SPC3: TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURAL POLICY

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Cllr Jerry Lundy, *Rhue, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo*

Cllr Gerry Murray, *Calterane, Gurteen, Co. Sligo*

Cllr Pat Mc Grath, *Ardnaglass, Ballymote, Co. Sligo*

Mr Padraig Davey, *The Cottage, Ballure, Clogherevagh, Co. Sligo*

Mr Gerry Queenan, *Cabra, Rathlee, Co. Sligo*

Ms Rita Ann Burke, *Skreen, Co. Sligo*

SPC4: HOUSING POLICY, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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HOUSING, CORPORATE & EMERGENCY SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Housing & Building



The Housing Section of Sligo County Council provides a number of very important services, covering every aspect of social housing:

- ▶ Assisting people who are in need of housing and who cannot afford it from their own resources.
- ▶ Provision and management of traveller accommodation.
- ▶ Liaison with approved Voluntary Housing Organisations and other agencies in the provision of accommodation.
- ▶ Encouragement of home ownership through the Shared Ownership Scheme, Tenant Purchase Scheme, Affordable Housing Scheme and various Loan options.

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

The *Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan 2004-2008*, as agreed with the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government in December 2004, sets targets for the Council to deliver a specified number of units per year across a range of housing options such as Social, Affordable, Voluntary and Part V Housing. This figure stands at 493 over the life time of the plan which averages at an estimate of 98 units per annum. This figure sets a challenge to the Council in terms of securing and procuring adequate land and negotiating with both developers and the Voluntary housing agencies.

The Housing Capital Allocation from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for 2007 was €1,300,000, which was made up as follows:

- ▶ Local Authority Housing Programme €1,000,000
- ▶ Remedial Works Schemes €300,000

The following schemes were completed in 2007:

Completed in 2007	
Courthouse Drive, Grange	4
Coolaney	4
Carrigeens, Ballinfull	2
Culfadda, Ballymote	6
Camross, Ballymote	14
Mountain Road, Tubbercurry	10
Lisurlar, Riverstown	4
Ballintogher	10
Total:	56

The Council has always had a policy of purchasing houses on the open market where the houses represent value for money and where a demand exists. However, in the current economic climate, it is not possible to source many houses on the open market which fall within the Department of the Environment and Local Government's approved unit cost budget. However, 13 houses were purchased on the open market in 2007. In addition, work commenced on 7 rural houses during the year.

Housing & Building

PART V

In recent years where house ownership has become more difficult for households to achieve, Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, has proved an invaluable source of affordable housing providing Sligo County Council with assistance in delivering the Housing Capital Programme.

The Housing Strategy states that 20% of eligible sites, which are the subject of new residential developments, is to be set aside for the development of social and affordable housing. There is a menu of options for compliance with this requirement but the policy of the Council is clear in that the preferred option of the Housing Authority is to take units or land which is available for a mix of Social and Affordable housing.

During 2007, a substantial number of properties became available for Affordable and Social Housing in the following developments:

- ▶ 10 no. 3-Bedroom Houses in Highwood Park, Collooney
- ▶ 2 no. 3-Bedroom Houses in Sandycove, Standhill
- ▶ 4 no. 3 Bedroom Houses in Croi Na Greine and Gort Na Cladach, Enniscrone

All of the above were sold in the traditional fashion i.e. Sligo County Council initially acquired the completed properties from the developer and subsequently sold these properties on to suitably qualified applicants.

The following were dealt with through the new mechanism of "Direct Sales" whereby the approved applicant purchases the property directly from the developer:

- ▶ 10 no. 3-Bedroom Houses in Hawthorns, Carrowroe
- ▶ 8 no. 3-Bedroom Houses in Farranacardy

In Addition, the areas zoned for Part V now include:

- ▶ Ballymote
- ▶ Coolaney
- ▶ Dromore West

Sligo County Council has also reached agreements with a number of contractors who are currently constructing estates in these areas.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The Sligo Local Authorities have recently put in place a Procurement and Project Management Team. The aim of the team is to assist in the procurement of services and projects on behalf of Sligo Local Authorities and to oversee the project management of specific capital works in both Sligo County and City.

The team is currently involved in Housing PPP projects in Carney and Ballinode. The Carney Housing scheme is being piloted in the County as a PPP (Public Private Partnership) project and will see the development of 5.3 acres of County Council owned land into a mix of social, affordable and private housing together with some possible small scale commercial development and community facilities. Bidders have been short-listed and public consultation has taken place. It is anticipated that construction of the development will commence in June 2008.



HOUSING MAINTENANCE

Since the beginning of the Planned Maintenance Programme in 2002, much progress has been made in the general upkeep of Council housing stock. Works typically include replacement of worn out doors, windows, fascias and soffits. The emergency repair funds are used to carry out repairs to housing stock other than those repairs listed in planned maintenance and deemed eligible in accordance with the Tenant Hand Book. The Council spent a sum of €460,000 under planned maintenance and emergency repairs in 2007.

The Council allocated a sum of €30,000 in 2007 towards Environmental Improvements works, and Grangemore was successful in their tender for environmental improvements in various local authority estates which involved grass cutting and maintenance work carried out during the summer months.

The Council spent a sum of €100,000 on Environmental Enhancement works in 2007 to local authority estates under a programme running from 2007 to 2009. Works were carried out at Hillcrest Park, Strandhill, Hillview Drive, Ballymote, Castle Heights, Easkey, and Moyox, Cloonacool. Typical works undertaken as part of the scheme include landscaping, painting, provision of garden furniture, rehabilitation and cleaning up of green areas.

RENTS

Rents payable on Local Authority dwellings are assessed under a Differential Rents Scheme. A Differential Rents Scheme means that the rent is based on the income of the household with deductions in respect of any dependent children in the house. During the year, rents were reviewed to bring them into line with increases in disposal income and to meet the ever increasing demand for housing maintenance and estate management.

HOUSING LOANS

People who wish to purchase or build a house but cannot get a loan from a building society, bank, etc. may be eligible for a loan from a local authority. The maximum house purchase/construction loan is 95% of the cost to a maximum of €185,000.

Housing & Building

SHARED OWNERSHIP SCHEME

This scheme offers home ownership to those who cannot afford full ownership in one step in the traditional way. The applicant will initially acquire a share of between 40% and 75% of the house and rents the remaining percentage from Local Authority with the intention of purchasing the remaining equity from the Council within a 25 year period.

In 2007, Sligo County Council assisted 7 applicants with the purchasing of a house under the Shared Ownership Scheme.

TENANT PURCHASE

Tenants of a local authority house for a period of at least one year may apply to purchase their rented house outright or by means of Shared Ownership under the Tenant Purchase Scheme. The purchase price will be the market value of the house in its existing state of repair and condition, less various discounts. The applicant wishing to purchase their home should seek a mortgage from a financial institution.

In 2007, 5 tenants purchased their houses from Sligo County Council under the Tenant Purchase Scheme.

IMPROVEMENT WORKS IN LIEU OF RE-HOUSING

This Scheme allows Sligo County Council to improve or extend privately owned houses, occupied or intended to be occupied, by an approved applicant for housing as an alternative to the provision of Local Authority Housing. Sligo County Council pays the full cost of the works and the applicant then makes repayment on the amount. These repayments are calculated in a similar manner to the Differential Rent Scheme and apply for a period of 15 years.

During 2007, 8 houses were completed at an average cost per house of €49,682 and 16 new applications were approved under the scheme.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

During 2007, 6 no. houses were completed in Ballintogher under the 1999 Affordable Housing Scheme. These were priced at €140,000 and the sale of same was completed in late Spring. This is the first scheme, whereby applicants were able to purchase with a loan sourced from a number of lending institutions that are now providing mortgages specifically for Affordable Housing Schemes, namely:

- ▶ Bank of Ireland
- ▶ ESB Building Society
- ▶ First Active
- ▶ Ulster Bank
- ▶ IIB Home Loans

These developments have greatly benefited applicants through a wider and more competitive range of interest rates and loan terms.

- ▶ 34 no. additional houses were made available to Affordable Housing Applicants under Part V and details of these are set out under the previous heading "Part V".

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

An Estate Management Officer was appointed by Sligo County Council in August 2007. The role involves providing continued support to council tenants via pre-tenancy training, facilitating the setting up of Resident Associations and assisting them with the preparation and implementation of Estate Action Plans. The EMO also acts as a liaison with council officials regarding housing issues, e.g. maintenance, transfers, etc. and provides a valuable service to both tenants and council by being a constant presence on estates to deal with any estate management issues that may arise on the ground.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Sligo County Council introduced an Estate Enhancement Scheme for local authority housing estates in the county in 2007 and was successful in securing partial funding of €155,000, over the lifetime of the Scheme, from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government under the Sustainable Communities Fund. Designed as an annual programme, the Scheme will provide investment for 15 estates over a period of three years 2007-2009.

The objectives of the Scheme are as follows:

- ▶ To promote an enhanced quality of life within the associated local authority housing estates.
- ▶ To improve the environment of the estate.
- ▶ To improve the aesthetics of local authority housing estates.
- ▶ To maximise the potential of green areas within the estates.
- ▶ The works proposed include the development of amenity areas and open spaces using innovative design supported by landscaping, development of seating areas and painting of houses within the estate.

Outcomes:

- ▶ The investment in the estates will have a positive impact on the visual appearance and physical environment of the estates and create an aesthetically pleasant and desirable residential environment.
- ▶ The capital investment in the estates will act as a catalyst to those in the community to continue to maintain and improve their estates.
- ▶ In many communities local infrastructure works have provided the impetus, and have been the forerunners to, a wider range of local development activities and projects. In this regard, community infrastructural works are the catalyst both to an improved local physical fabric and wider local socio-economic development.

Housing & Building

NEW GRANTS SCHEMES

Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme for People with a Disability

The Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme for People with a Disability is available to assist in the carrying out of works which are reasonably necessary for the purpose of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability who has an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment. The type of works allowable under the scheme include the provision of

- ▶ Access ramps,
- ▶ Downstairs toilet facilities
- ▶ Stair lifts
- ▶ Accessible showers
- ▶ Adaptations to facilitate wheelchair access
- ▶ Extensions
- ▶ Any other works which are reasonably necessary for the purpose of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with a disability

The level of grant aid available is determined on the basis of gross household income and can be between 30% - 95% of the approved cost of the works.

MOBILITY AIDS HOUSING GRANT SCHEME

The Mobility Aids Housing Grant is available to cover a basic suite of works to address mobility problems, primarily, but not exclusively, associated with ageing. The works aided under the scheme include:

- ▶ Grab Rails
- ▶ Access Ramps
- ▶ Level Access Showers
- ▶ Stairs-lifts
- ▶ Other minor works deemed necessary to facilitate the mobility needs of a member of a household

The effective maximum grant is €6,000 or 100% the cost of the works, whichever is the lesser. The grant is available to households whose gross annual household income does not exceed €30,000.

SCHEME OF HOUSING AID FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Scheme of Housing Aid for Older People is available to assist older people living in poor housing conditions to have necessary structural repairs or improvements. The type of works grant aided under the scheme includes:

- ▶ Structural repairs or improvements
- ▶ Re-wiring
- ▶ Repairs to/replacement of windows and doors
- ▶ Provision of heating, water and sanitary services
- ▶ Dry lining

The level of grant aid available is determined on the basis of gross household income and can be between 30% - 100% of the approval cost of the works.

The Housing (Adaptation Grants for People with a Disability and Older People), Regulations 2007 consolidate and revoke the previous Regulations dealing with these schemes - Housing (Disabled Persons and Essential Repairs Grant) Regulations, 2001. The aforementioned Schemes have been introduced to replace the original Disabled Persons Grant and the Essential Repairs Grant, and also the Special Housing Aid for the Elderly Scheme that was heretofore administered by the Health Service Executive.

These schemes came into operation on 1 November 2007.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING

Voluntary Housing is provided by non-profit independent organisations that provide rented houses for people who cannot afford to buy their own houses or specific groups such as the elderly, homeless, people with special needs or disabilities. A recipient of a Voluntary house must be registered on Sligo County Council's housing list, however, while the tenant enjoys all the rights of a County Council tenant they are unable to avail of a tenant purchase on this house.

In 2007, Sligo County Council was successful in being granted approval from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government on behalf of Sophia Housing Association for a development of 57 units of accommodation under the Capital Assistance Scheme and the Capital Loan & Subsidy Scheme at the Marist Convent Tubbercurry. 24 of these units will be provided specifically for persons with intellectual disability.

Approval was also granted, in 2007, by the Department to this Authority on behalf of Sophia Housing Association for the purchase an adaptation of two units of accommodation at Cairns Hill, Sligo, into eight semi-independent accommodation units for people with intellectual disabilities.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

Sligo County Council carried out an assessment of Traveller Accommodation Needs that was completed in September 2007. This Assessment looked at the needs of families resident in Sligo County who are seeking accommodation in various forms, e.g. group housing, standard local authority housing, traveller halting sites etc. This assessment, and updates done through 2008, will form the basis of a new Traveller Accommodation Programme to be prepared in 2009.

In 2007 an Inter-agency initiative was set up to co-ordinate the better provision of services to Travellers. Relationships between statutory and voluntary agencies working with and on behalf of Travellers in Co Sligo have developed further as a result of participation on the Inter-Agency Traveller Group. A Strategic Plan was prepared by the Group that sets out agreed actions under various themes.

- ▶ Accommodation
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Training and Employment
- ▶ Childcare and Youth

Housing & Building



Croi Na Greine
Enniscrone

ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEEDS

A statutory Assessment of Housing Needs is carried out every three years and is due to be completed in March 2008. Sligo County Council commenced the Assessment process in 2007.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government issued a circular letter (N13/200) to all local authorities in May 2007 advising of revised procedures for assessing social housing need, which were developed in consultation with the City and County Managers Association and approved by the Housing Forum in December 2006. The purpose of the revised process for assessing housing needs is to reflect changing demand for housing support both from a customer perspective and using the wider suite of housing supports now available.

The assessment of need involves two distinct phases, i.e.

1. An initial evaluation to determine the most appropriate support option for the customer's needs (Phase 1).
2. A more comprehensive assessment for those who have been determined to have a long term housing need (Phase 2).

Phase 1 involves an initial evaluation of applicants to determine the most suitable type of housing support required and to determine whether their need is likely to be long or short term in nature. A preliminary interview will be held with the applicant and all relevant information gathered. The applicant will then be referred to the most appropriate housing support option for assistance, i.e.

1. Emergency support.
2. Social Housing Accommodation Options.
3. Purchase Options, i.e. Housing Loan/Shared Ownership/Affordable Housing.
4. Modification Options, i.e. Improvement Works in Lieu/DPGs/ERGs.
5. Advice only (including advice on Rent Supplement, etc.).

After the initial evaluation, only those designated as likely to have a need for social housing accommodation will be referred for a full assessment of their housing needs (phase 2). A full assessment will include the following checks:

- ▶ An inspection of existing accommodation.
- ▶ Validation of an applicant's PPS number to identify where applications have been made to other housing authorities, or indeed for other schemes.
- ▶ Verification of income details, i.e. P60, letter from social welfare, etc.
- ▶ Where an applicant has a disability, verification by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

The Department has requested that housing authorities assess all new applicants for housing support using the revised framework and also begin to review the needs of applicants already on housing waiting lists in the context of the revised assessment process. Where needs or circumstances are identified as such that an alternative support option is more appropriate than social housing, those applicants will be re-directed or accommodated accordingly.

Communications Office

The Communications Office provides information services to the elected members, staff, media and the general public, as well as providing administrative support to the Cathaoirleach.

CONTACT MAGAZINE

Sligo Local Authorities publish a quarterly magazine for the general public, 'Contact', which provides news and information from Sligo Borough Council and Sligo County Council. The magazine is available from a network of outlets throughout the county. An on-line version of the magazine is available on www.sligococo.ie, and an 'audio file' of the magazine is also produced.

e-CONTACT

To supplement the quarterly magazine, the Communications Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter. e-Contact is circulated to individuals and groups who register their interest on-line. A 'hard copy' of the e-newsletter is also available to those without access to a computer.

SLIGO PODCAST A FIRST FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In December 2007 Sligo Local Authorities launched a podcast, which allows people access a broadcast of news and information on-line. The launch was attended by the Mayor Councillor Jonathan McGoldrick, Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Martin Baker, and Chairman of the Sligo branch of People with Disabilities, Ireland (PWDI), Brian Crummy, and Head of Assistive Technology, HSE, Bob Murphy.



The first broadcast in the series featured a road safety message, seasonal environmental tips, emergency contact numbers for the Christmas holidays, advice on fire safety in the home, together with a preview of the major projects planned by the Sligo Local Authorities for 2008.

Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Martin Baker sees the facility as an opportunity to deliver news to a wider audience. 'An increasing number of people access news and entertainment on-line, and the launch of our podcast enables us to deliver important public service information to a listening audience.'

Brian Crummy, Chairman of Sligo branch of People with Disabilities Ireland (PWDI) says the podcast 'is a very welcome initiative which will be a valuable resource for people with disabilities who wish to access information in this medium. Sligo Local Authorities already produce an audio-file CD of their quarterly magazine and other important publications, and the podcast is an excellent addition to their range of information services in the area of assistive technology.'

The production of the podcast and the training of the Sligo Local Authorities project team was delivered by All Points West, managed by Jho Harris and Sinead McClure. According to Sinead 'Having worked in the broadcast sector for many years and been involved in teaching radio skills to a number of groups in Sligo and beyond, All Points West Media Services consider the vehicle of broadcast though the internet in the form of podcasting to be a very useful tool.

"When Sligo Local Authorities approached us to come on board with the Podcast initiative we were quickly impressed with their innovation and determination to highlight the myriad of services that come under the umbrella of the City and County Council. To our knowledge this is a first for a local authority and these podcasts will become a necessary addition to the local authorities remit for reaching the public, while utilising a 21st Century technology in an informal but informative manner."

All Points West's Jho Harris envisages great potential for the podcast. 'At the heart of these broadcasts is a very committed and talented team of people who will make the Podcast both enjoyable and informative and it will become a valuable outlet for public service information from the Sligo Local authorities.'

WEBSITE

The Communications Office works with the Information Technology section to maintain and update the Sligo local authorities' websites. The sites provide on-line access to application forms and guidelines, contact details for all the services, weekly roads report, monthly news digest, and all the current advertisements and recruitment notices. The sites have been upgraded to ensure they are accessible to people with visual impairment and people with co-ordination difficulties, and a newly introduced contact management system means the site can facilitate presentation of the information in other languages.

Communications Office

OPEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Under its 'Open Local Government' initiative, local school children invited to County Hall to attend a monthly meeting of the Council. The children also attend a presentation on the role and services of the Council, and are given an information pack of brochures, newsletters and reports. In 2007 the programme was expanded to include a special programme for people with disabilities produced in conjunction with the 'Northwest Parents and Friends Association.'

CATHAOIRLEACH'S AWARDS

The Cathaoirleach's Awards Scheme was introduced in 2000 to reward the many volunteers in County Sligo who have given special service to their community. The award winners in 2007 were:

ARTS: Rosaleen Holland

ENVIRONMENT: Kieran McGill

HERITAGE: Partick McCarrick

COMMUNITY: Christopher Davis

SPORTS: Eithne Clancy

NATIONAL SCHOOLS: St. Mary's Immaculate Girls N.S

CIVIC EVENTS

The Communications Office co-ordinated arrangements for a number of receptions at County Hall during 2007, including:

- ▶ Sligo Athletes, Special Olympics Athletes (to honour those who attended the Special Olympics world summer games)
- ▶ Anne Killoran, founder of Gallagher House
- ▶ Lord Bill Brett, former chair of the International Labour Organisation and Trade Union leader
- ▶ U-16 Ladies GAA Team, Connaught Champions and All-Ireland finalists.

STAY IN TOUCH

To register for news and information updates from the Sligo Local Authorities, visit www.sligococo.ie, e-mail communications@sligococo.ie or phone 071 9111016.



Corporate Services



The Corporate Service Directorate is responsible for delivering a wide range of services to the general public, elected members and staff. The directorate is responsible for co-ordinating the various meetings of the council, preparing the register of electors, administering the Higher Education Grants Scheme, and providing information and communication services.

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS

Sligo County Council assisted 502 students under the current Higher Education Grants Scheme. There were 152 new applicants and 350 continuing students. The scheme is administered by the Council on behalf of the Department of Education and Science.

In the academic year 2007/2008, Sligo County Council allocated almost €28,000 in Social Maintenance Grant assistance. A total of €2.24 million was allocated by Sligo County Council to students in maintenance and fees.

While the Minister for Education and Science has indicated that the administration of the scheme will be the responsibility of the VEC's in future years, formal confirmation to this effect has not been issued and provision for the administration of the scheme in the next academic year has been included in this year's estimates.

ELECTIONS

A high quality Register of Electors is essential for the successful operation of the electoral system and of the democratic process itself. Sligo County Council prepares the Register of Electors annually and as always a major effort was made to achieve the highest possible degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness in compiling the Register. The Draft Register of Electors was printed on the 1st November, 2007. There were 49,638 electors registered on the 2008/2009 Draft Register.

Number of Electors by Area

Ballymote	10,452
Dromore West	5,679
Sligo/Drumcliffe	12,340
Sligo/ Strandhill	13,498
Tubbercurry	7,669

HUMAN RESOURCES

Sligo County Council's Human Resource Department is responsible for the delivery of all aspects of the Human Resource function for Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council. Its main functions include Recruitment, Staff Training and Development, Staff Welfare, Industrial Relations, Performance Management and Development, Superannuation and Equality & Diversity.

The general aim of the Councils Recruitment policy is to attract and retain competent staff, with the qualifications and experience necessary to provide an efficient and effective service to the community. During 2007, the Human Resource Department conducted competitions for **67 posts** for which interviews were held spanning **74 days**. This involved processing a total of **1264 applications**, and interviewing **767 applicants**.

The Human Resources department promotes equality between staff by ensuring that employees are treated in an equitable manner. Sligo Local Authorities recognise the right of all employees to be treated with dignity and are committed to ensuring that all employees are provided with a safe working environment.

Training Courses provided in 2007

2007 was a very busy year for the Training & Development Department. The following training programmes were arranged under the 2007 Training & Development Programme. The courses were identified through various channels i.e the PDP process, the Health & Safety Advisor and the Organisational needs of Sligo Local Authorities:

- ▶ Presentation Skills
- ▶ Training Programme on Procurement Rules
- ▶ Supervising Safely in Construction
- ▶ Manual Handling

Corporate Services

- ▶ First Aid
- ▶ Chairing Meetings
- ▶ Confined Space Entry
- ▶ Return to Learning
- ▶ Time Management
- ▶ Equality & Diversity Training
- ▶ Grievance & Disciplinary Training
- ▶ Quick Start Management
- ▶ Disability Awareness Training & Disability Equality Training
- ▶ Personal Effectiveness Programme for Staff Officers, Professional, Technical and Analogous Grades
- ▶ Occupational Safety & Health
- ▶ SafePass
- ▶ Freedom of Information
- ▶ Dealing with Difficult and Challenging Customers
- ▶ Managing Yourself and Your Workload
- ▶ Agresso/Refresher Training
- ▶ Irish Language Courses
- ▶ Budget Management
- ▶ Advanced Word
- ▶ Advanced Excel
- ▶ E.C.D.L.
- ▶ Technical Report Writing
- ▶ Gas Installers Safety Programme
- ▶ Media Skills Training
- ▶ Accessibility Training for Engineers & Architects

In addition to the above The Training & Development Office supported 6 applications under the Staff Education Scheme:

- ▶ 15 staff were approved to attend the Certificate in Local Government Studies.
- ▶ 13 staff were approved to attend the Diploma in Local Government Studies
- ▶ 5 staff were approved to attend the Certificate in Management Studies

The Training & Development Office, took a particular interest in organising training programmes for outdoor staff.

Courses were identified through the P.D.P. process as well as Health & Safety requirements:

- ▶ ECDL Training
- ▶ Supervisory Skills Development
- ▶ Retirement Planning
- ▶ Ride on Roller
- ▶ Abrasive Wheels
- ▶ Location of Underground Services
- ▶ Safe Pass
- ▶ Return to Learning
- ▶ Confined Space Entry
- ▶ Signing Lighting & Guarding
- ▶ Manual Handling
- ▶ Supervising safely

The Training & Development Office also advertised many courses as well as supporting attendance by various staff members at numerous relevant Training Courses and Seminars at various locations throughout the country.

Accessibility Activities 2007

ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS

Access audits have been completed for:

- ▶ All public buildings round the county
- ▶ All towns and villages within the speed limits
- ▶ Beaches and harbours within the control of Sligo County Council
- ▶ Most amenity areas
- ▶ Most burial grounds

EXCELLENCE THROUGH ACCESSIBILITY AWARDS

Sligo County Council entered it's one-stop-shop Public Service Building Teach Laigne for the National Disability Authority sponsored Excellence through Accessibility awards and were successful in Category 3

Works Undertaken at teach Laigne included:

- ▶ Accessible cark parking space
- ▶ Alterations to handrails and ramp
- ▶ Automatic front doors
- ▶ Accessible PC, keypad and monitor
- ▶ Hearing loops in Library, Motor Tax, Area Office, Revenue
- ▶ Alarm in accessible toilet
- ▶ Evacuation procedures
- ▶ Improved signage
- ▶ Highlighting of hazards

It is proposed to enter our main County Hall building for the NDA award in 2008

FUNDING

€80,000 was received for capital and current works connected with accessibility. A multi-annual implementation plan was prepared concentrating on access to public building owned by Sligo County Council. An itemised list of improvement and current expenditure totalling €50,000 per annum is proposed for the next three years.

COMMUNICATION

Sligo County Council are striving to ensure that all publications by Sligo County Council are written as clearly and as jargon free as possible. Where practical and where funding permits we will provide information that is accessible in large print, easy-to read format, Braille, audio or other formats, if requested.

The Communications Office has commenced broadcasting podcasts on our web sites, giving news and information to people with visually impairment and other interested parties. The web-site also conforms to the accessibility requirements World Wide Web Consortium - WC3

CONSULTATION

Regular meetings with the Disability Consultative Committee took place in 2007. We also had regular meetings with the Implementation Team.

TRAINING

Some disability awareness training was carried out in 2007. We also trained staff members in the safe use of evacuation chairs in Teach Laigne and County Hall

Sligo County Library



2007 was another busy year for Sligo Library Service where the calendar of events for the year reflected a host of different events, activities, presentations and exhibitions. Providing a quality service and a desire to promote and foster reading for all is at the core of the Library service.

EXTENDED OPENING HOURS

Sligo County Library Service continued to increase its level of service and commitment to the public by increasing its opening hours in 2007. Opening at 9.30am, remaining open through lunch hour and providing late openings until 8pm, on Tuesday nights in Tubbercurry Community Library and Thursday nights in Central Library, Sligo town, ensures that the public have varied options to suit their needs and lifestyles. In addition Ballymote branch Library increased its opening hours from 11 hours to 22 hours per week from December 2007.

DISABILITY ACCESS

Access for people with disabilities was a priority for Sligo Library Service during 2007. As such disabled parking, disabled toilets, ramps, Induction loops and directional signage were all realized in selected branches. These infrastructural changes already complemented other facilities in situ, such as reading magnifiers at all desks and software such as JAWS and ZOOMTEXT available in all branches on selected public computers. A second training day for staff on the theme of 'Making Access Happen' was held in January 2007.

MULTICULTURAL POLICIES

Sligo Libraries are committed to multiculturalism and recognize the importance of the various non Irish national communities in our society as a whole. In recognition of this we have implemented various strategies.

COLLECTION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TITLES

A policy of collection development aimed specifically at foreign language material, adult and juvenile, fiction and non-fiction, has been ongoing throughout 2007. Material can be found in Central Library, Stephen Street and Tubbercurry Community Library, Humbert Street, Tubbercurry.

BORROWBOOKS

The BorrowBooks initiative allows a library member to search across the Irish public libraries' online catalogues to locate and request an item which is not held in the person's own library service. This initiative, which was introduced in 2005 continues to go from strength to strength and in 2007 Sligo Library Service supplied 263 items to other libraries and received 308 items from other libraries.

COLLECTION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

Sligo Libraries provide access to electronic resources which enable non Irish nationals access to a wide range of news media. In all five branch Libraries readers can enjoy over 500 full content digital replicas of newspapers and magazines from 70 countries in 37 languages. To access simply type in the web address <http://library.pressdisplay.com> on any of the Public access computers in the various branches.

Sligo County Library

IRISH TIMES DIGITAL ARCHIVE

The Irish Times Digital Archive Service was launched on 8th October 2007 by Mr John Gormley, TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The digital archive contains every page of The Irish Times published since the newspaper's foundation almost 150 years ago. The archive is available free of charge to Internet users within every public library and school via the www.askaboutireland.ie website. The digitization project was co-funded by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and The Irish Times Trust.



WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE

Sligo's first Writer-In-Residence was appointed in September 2007. Niall Williams, twice IMPAC-nominated author, conducted a series of writing workshops and literary appreciation courses with writers, readers and library staff. Mr. Williams will continue his residency until March 2008.

SLIGO LIBRARY BOOKCLUBS

To further encourage reader development among our customers, Sligo Libraries have a number of book clubs set up in various branches. These clubs promote the pleasures of reading and develop the members appreciation of literature at all levels.

Sligo Central Library:

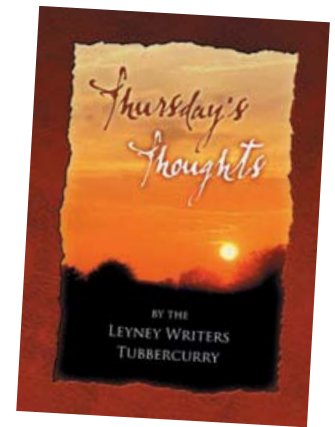
- ▶ *Sligo Central Book Club* meets at 6.45pm on the first Thursday of every month.
- ▶ *Catacombs Book Club* (Carbury) and *Sara Book Club* (Friary) also supplied various titles to suit their member's literary needs

Tubbercurry Community Library:

- ▶ *After Five Book club* meets at 5pm on the first Tuesday of every month
- ▶ *Bookworms' Book Club* meets at 12 noon on the last Thursday of every month
- ▶ *Active Retirement Book Club* meets at 3pm on the last Thursday of every month

LEYNEYS WRITERS GROUP

"Thursday's Thoughts" the second publication by the local Leyney Writers was launched by Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. Jerry Lundy of Sligo Co. Council on Thursday 14th June 2007 at Tubbercurry Community Library. "Thursday's Thoughts" is an anthology of stories, poems and memoirs and is the end product of a series of workshops held in Tubbercurry Community Library over the past two years.



Extracts from the book were read by various authors on the night and numerous copies were sold. The launch was very well received by the large crowd in attendance and Mr. Donal Tinney, County Librarian, congratulated the writers on their production and spoke of the Library's support for writers and the arts. Refreshments were served courtesy of Tubbercurry Community Library staff.

LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The Local Studies Department increased its extensive collection by taking possession of the Harbour Board archive in 2007. The first steps in the Down Survey mapping Project were taken when all the maps were digitised in May of this year. It is expected that all maps will be viewable on the Sligo Library web-site by late summer 2008. This project will complement the already completed 1837 Ordnance Survey map collection which is available on the website www.sligo.library.ie. Computerisation of all Local History material was ongoing with various records viewable in the aforementioned catalogue.

PLUS 2007

A major marketing survey took place in all public libraries around the country during the third week in September 2007. The aim of the Public Library User Survey was to assess how well Sligo Library Service meets the needs of its members. Almost 1,000 PLUS questionnaires, which were available in 5 languages in order to obtain the views of as wide a range of users as possible were issued to adult members during the week throughout the county.

Sligo Central Library issued 544 questionnaires alone over the week, during the Plus 2007 survey, making it the 8th busiest library in the country in terms of adult visitor count.

Sligo County Library

STATISTICS AND EXPENDITURE

The following tables show Sligo libraries expenditure for the fiscal year 2007 (table 1) and how Sligo Libraries compared with the national average using the five related service indicators (table 2).

By studying this data we find that Sligo Libraries are in 27th position nationally and 4th in comparison to the other counties in Connacht in relation to annual expenditure (Table 1).

In addition we find that in four of the five service indicators, Sligo Libraries outperform the national average in the sectors outlined below (Table 2). As such by Sligo Local Authorities continuing its support for the Library Service we hope to maintain this high standard of excellence.

In all five branches on average over four and a half thousand items are borrowed each week during the year and over 600 people per week access Internet Services.

Table 1

Public Library Authority Estimates of Expenditure 2007									
National Position	County	Operation & Maintenance	Stock General	Stock Primary	Total Stock Fund	Contribution to Library Council	Loan Charges	Other	Total
8th	Galway	€3,475,938	€520,000	€80,000	€600,000	€46,000	€0	€0	€4,121,938
11th	Mayo	€2,780,844	€480,000	€69,450	€549,450	€37,706	€0	€0	€3,368,000
22nd	Roscommon	€1,265,000	€309,000	€29,000	€338,000	€19,000	€0	€198,000	€1,820,000
27th	Sligo	€1,192,827	€195,000	€30,000	€225,000	€20,673	€85,000	€35,000	€1,559,000
30th	Leitrim	€1,165,996	€95,000	€14,000	€109,000	€7,800	€65,000	€21,000	€1,368,796

Table 2

Sligo population 58,200	Service indicators	Sligo total	National average
L1	Public opening hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Average hours per week for full time libraries ■ Average hours per week for part time libraries 	36.8 15	38.0 16.7
L2	No of registered members as percentage of local population	22%	21%
L3	Number of items issued per head of population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Books ■ Other items 	3.59 0.43	3.4 0.2
L4	Percentage of Libraries that offer internet access to the public	100%	100%
L5	Number of internet sessions provided per 1,000 population	572.56	463.8

Branch Issue Figures and Internet Use

Service Point	Issue Figures Jan-Dec 2007	No. of Internet Users Jan-Dec 2007
Sligo Central Library	133,972	7,271
Tubbercurry Community Library	38,891	9,267
Enniscrone Branch Library	10,072	1,619
Ballymote Branch Library	9,187	736
Westward Centre	5,200	10,759
Total	197,322	29,652

Sligo County Library

Library Events and Activities During 2007

JANUARY 2007

Adult Learners Festival: January 22nd -26th

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:** The very first Adult Learners' Festival took place from 22-26 January 2007. 2007 was the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All and the aim of the Festival was to promote and celebrate adult learning and the achievements of adult learners and to raise the profile of adult education in general. These events are designed to encourage and support groups in the local community to mark the week in a fun and enjoyable way. Two storytellers, Liz Weir and Billy Teare were available to meet with groups. Among the groups who attended events were students and tutors from Sligo VEC, Sligo National Learning Network, Rehab Care Sligo and Youthreach Sligo.

FEBRUARY 2007

St. Brigid's Feast Day – February 1st

- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:** St. Brigid's Day was celebrated in style with a number of groups making St. Brigid's Crosses

MARCH 2007

World Book Day: Thursday 1st March

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:** Adult literacy student visit
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:** Artist John Leonard illustrated various readings
- ▶ **National Tree Week:** March 5th to 11th
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:** Selection of sapling broadleaf trees distributed to Library customer
- ▶ **Seachtain na Gaeilge:** March 5th to 16th
- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Monday the 5th; Coffee Morning "as Gaeilge".
 - ▶ Monday the 12th; Sligo Central Library sponsored the Gael Scoil to attend Comortais Amhranaíochta in the Hawks Well Theatre, Temple Street, Sligo
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ Tuesday the 6th; Traditional music session with the "Border Collies"
 - ▶ Wednesday the 7th; Coffee Morning in Irish with Sean Owens
 - ▶ Thursday the 8th; Presentation of prizes for Irish writing competition.

Anti Racism week: March 20th to 25th

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:** Wednesday the 21st; Artists from globe house displayed various works from all age groups.

APRIL 2007

- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:** ENFO exhibition displayed for month of April: "Whales and Dolphins in Irish waters" Tuesday the 3rd; Easter arts & crafts children's workshop with Ailish O'Donnell



MAY 2007

Bealtaine Festival: May 1st to 31st

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Thursday the 17th; Susie Minto, Storyteller held workshops throughout the day entitled "stories that make me, me".
 - ▶ Saturday the 19th; "Introduction to Internet and email" Workshop 11am to 1pm
 - ▶ Saturday the 26th; "Introduction to Internet and email" Workshop 11am to 1pm
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ Bealtaine Festival: Art Classes held every Tuesday evening throughout May
 - ▶ RTE Weather Photo Exhibition: Finalist entries displayed from 3rd May to 31st May

JUNE 2007

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Tuesday the 12th; Class Visit & Library Tour, Junior Infants, Mercy Primary School
 - ▶ Thursday the 14th, Storytelling to Junior Infants, St Patrick's Primary School, Calry & Junior Infants, Carbury Primary School
 - ▶ Friday the 15th, Storytelling to Junior Infants, Scoil Ursula Primary School & Junior Infants, St Edwards's Primary School
 - ▶ Wednesday the 27th, Class Visit & Library Tour, Fifth Class, Mercy Primary School
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ ENFO exhibition displayed for month of June: "Flytraps - Carnivorous Plants"
 - ▶ Monday the 14th; Leyney Writers Book Launch "Thursday Thoughts" in co operation with Sligo County Libraries
 - ▶ Saturday the 28th; Art Class and Workshop for children with Ailish O'Donnell

Sligo County Library



JULY 2007

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Friday the 6th; Eddie Lenihan, Seanchaí -Storyteller "Tales of Myth, Magic and Mystery for Children and Adults" Jointly funded by Blue Raincoat Theatre Company in Association with Sligo County Libraries, Cairde Summer Festival 2007.
 - ▶ Friday the 20th; Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Pre-Launch fancy dress event.
 - ▶ Children's Summer Camp 2007
 - ▶ Tuesday the 24th; Music Workshop with world renowned fiddle player & multi instrumentalist Steve Wickham.
 - ▶ Wednesday the 25th; Storyboard Animation Workshop with Ailish O'Donnell.
 - ▶ Thursday the 26th; Craft Workshop with Rosaleen Holland.
 - ▶ Friday the 27th; Fancy Dress Teddy Bear's Picnic with Tanya Walsh. Sponsored by Cosgrove's Fine Food Store, Market Street, Sligo.
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ Tuesday the 17th; "The Irish in Britain" lecture and slide show presented by Ultan Cowley to coincide with South Sligo Summer School for traditional music
 - ▶ Thursday the 26th; Western Regional section meeting of Library Association

AUGUST 2007

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Thursday the 2nd; Eddie Lenihan, Seanchaí - Storyteller " Tales of Myth, magic and Mystery for Children"
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ Wednesday the 7th; Prize giving function for Tubbercurry Literary Festival
 - ▶ Thursday the 23rd; Puppets & stories workshop with Chris Thompson
 - ▶ Friday the 24th; Reading tree Prize giving

Heritage week: August 25th to September 2nd

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Tuesday the 28th; Patricia Gardiner hosted a talk which discussed "Enjoy Walking in the local community"
 - ▶ Thursday the 30th; Joe McGowan presented a slideshow entitled "Gale stone and fire, customs, cures and beliefs on Innismurray"

- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ Tuesday the 28th; Joe McGowan presented a slideshow on Innismurray Island
 - ▶ Tuesday the 25th to Sep 2nd; heritage display displaying Artifacts from Sligo County Museum
 - ▶ Thursday the 30th; your man Puppet show "The salmon of Freedom"

SEPTEMBER 2007

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Thursday the 20th; open University Information evening

OCTOBER 2007

Positive Ageing Week: October 1st to 7th

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Thursday the 4th; "Taxation, Issues in Later Life" - Talk by Paul Coughlan
 - ▶ Saturday the 6th; Beginners E-mail & Internet Tuition
 - ▶ Children's Book Festival 2007: October 3rd to 26th
- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Tuesday the 9th - Author Visit - Andy Stanton
 - ▶ Wednesday the 10th - Storyboard Workshops - Wayne O'Connor
 - ▶ Friday the 12th - Bunnyhop Shows - Chris Thompson
 - ▶ Wednesday the 17th - Animation Workshops - Ailish O'Donnell
 - ▶ Thursday the 18th - Author Visit - Brian Gogarty
 - ▶ Friday the 19th - Animation Workshops - Ailish O'Donnell
 - ▶ Wednesday the 24th - Magic & Stories - Chris Thompson
 - ▶ Tuesday the 30th - Masks & mask making
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ Wednesday the 3rd; Author visit - Niamh McGrath
 - ▶ Tuesday the 9th; Author visit - Andy Stanton
 - ▶ Friday the 12th; Rap Workshop
 - ▶ Wednesday the 17th; Author visit - Brian Gogarty
 - ▶ Monday the 22nd; Author visit - Mary Arrigan

NOVEMBER 2007

Science week: November 11th to 18th

- ▶ **Sligo Central Library:**
 - ▶ Tuesday the 27th; "Science is magic" by Michael Moylan
- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ Monday the 26th; "Science is magic" by Michael Moylan
 - ▶ Tuesday the 27th; Christmas cake decorating with Sharon Sweeney

DECEMBER 2007

- ▶ **Tubbercurry Community Library:**
 - ▶ ENFO exhibition displayed for month of December: "life in a shell"
 - ▶ Tuesday the 4th; storytelling for children organized by Sligo county childcare committee
 - ▶ Tuesday the 4th; switching on Christmas lights & presentation of bookmark prizes
 - ▶ Thursday the 20th; Christmas decorations workshop

Civil Defence

Civil defence plays vital role in our community

The Civil Defence Board's 'Statement of Strategy 2007-2010' sets out the key objectives and operational environment for the organisation. Director General Bill Smith envisages 'an exciting and challenging agenda' for the board in the years ahead, and this is reflected at local level in the wide range of activities undertaken by County Sligo Civil Defence.

In 2007 Civil Defence was present at almost seventy events with May to September being the busiest time. Civil Defence attended Gymkhanas, Triathlons, Golf tournaments, major sporting fixtures, Charity swims, Musical festivals, Horse Shows, and Car Rallies.

MAJOR EMERGENCIES

Sligo Civil Defence are not only a service for covering community events but are constantly preparing themselves to be ready to respond to an emergency call if and when received. The organisation has been given a specific role within the Major Emergency framework document and this responsibility is reflected in their intense training programme.

Sligo Civil Defence have a core group of around 70 volunteers willing and committed to volunteer at relatively short notice and a further 20 or so available if there was a major emergency. The volunteers enjoy the training provided and then are anxious to put their training into practice. Sligo Civil Defence strives to ensure that training is informative and varied to continue to motivate volunteers to not only remain with the organisation but to feel confident and useful when their assistance is called upon.

COMMUNITY

The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Seamus Kilgannon commended the Civil Defence Teams for their valuable work in the community. 'The Civil Defence organisation is widely respected, and has attracted many plaudits for the efficient and professional way they carry out their duties.'

Sligo Civil Defence are not only a service for covering community events but are constantly preparing themselves to be ready to respond to emergency situations. Civil Defence have been given a specific role within the Major Emergency framework document and are attending training in order to be in a position of readiness if and when such a situation would arise.

VOLUNTEERS

At a presentation to long serving members of Sligo Civil Defence, the Cathaoirleach emphasised the valued role of the volunteer in our community: 'Volunteerism has been the backdrop to the social and economic history of Ireland. Particularly in times of economic uncertainty, where ambition was tempered by scarcity of finance, our society relied heavily on the goodwill of the volunteer. While the economic landscape has been transformed, the tradition and culture of volunteerism has been maintained, and indeed has been the pivotal ingredient in many

While it is not in these volunteers nature to proclaim their role or achievements, it is important to convey the universal regard in which they are held by every sector of our community.'

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Anyone considering carrying out valuable service to their local community should explore the possibility of becoming a Civil Defence volunteer. A multi-skilled training programme is currently underway in venues throughout the county, and volunteers will be instructed in First Aid, Rescue, Communications, welfare and a range of other useful skills

Decontamination Unit

Sligo Fire Authority

The Fire Authority provides a number of services ranging from the emergency response to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions, air accidents, chemical incidents and more recently biological incidents, to ensuring the fire safety of the built environment through certification, inspection and enforcement. The Authority also provides information and training on fire safety management and fire fighting.

In order to provide this service in an efficient manner throughout the county there are Fire Stations in Sligo, Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Enniscrone. The Service attended over 945 incidents in the last year. This is the largest number of calls for assistance on record and emphasised the importance of the service provided.

There were several large complex fires this year, again emphasising the need for an efficient and effective fire service response to emergencies and the need for preventative measures, including enforcement when advice alone is not sufficient. There has been an increase in car fires and fires caused by arsonists. These pose a serious threat to life and property and the cost can also result in the loss of jobs within the community.

People must also remain vigilant in the home, as this is where our most life threatening fires occur each year.

TRAINING

There is a very strict training regime in the Fire Service as is necessitated by the sometimes difficult and dangerous environment in which fire-fighters work.

Fire-fighters undergo over one hundred hours training every year. This includes the latest advances in techniques used to tackle the fires known as “flashover” and “backdraft” and the latest methods of extraction of casualties from vehicles involved in incidents. This is particularly important in view of the advances in active safety technology employed in the modern car. Airbags and seatbelt tensioning do save lives the instant an accident occurs, but can pose a serious threat to rescue personnel when working around undeployed airbags and seatbelt tensioners.

The Service now holds “block” road traffic collisions (R.T.C) training over a number of days, in which the necessary skills are learnt and practiced.

Sligo is a “hot fire” Training Centre and offers this facility for the training of fire-fighters throughout the country. This facility is used to demonstrate and train fire-fighters in the latest techniques and equipment necessary for their protection and the saving of life. The Fire Service has nationally qualified medical first responders with Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in all Stations and in the Sligo Headquarters. Refresher training for this is every 90 days.

The Breathing Apparatus training centre has been used as a national training centre following modernization and the installation of a “gas fire system”. This is used to train staff in proper search and rescue techniques and in the use of breathing apparatus in fire situations. This centre has received capital funding this year for its continuing development in this area of expertise in recognition of its importance nationally.

Local industries have also facilitated the Service in carrying out pre-fire training in which various types of incidents are staged and training undertaken so that should a similar incident occur the Service will have the necessary skills and resources needed to deal with it in an efficient and professional manner.

As part of the National Framework on Major Emergency Management, the Fire Service continues to implement measures to identify and mitigate natural and technological hazards; to plan for, to respond to, and to lead recovery from major emergencies which threaten persons, infrastructure, the environment and property.

The Fire Service will see the introduction of the new National Incident Command System. The new system will have the potential to provide a more efficient and effective command structure on emergency situations and in the Service’s interaction with colleagues in the other emergency services.

COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

Talks were given to the elderly and other groups on fire safety. Groups of primary school students visited the stations and watched fire safety videos and demonstrations. Groups from secondary schools, Sligo Institute of Technology and the local community also participated in courses held in the Fire Station.

With the new addition of the Community Fire Safety Demonstration Unit, the Fire Service now has the ability to visit schools and communities to practically demonstrate the dangers of chip pan fires and what to do in the event of such a fire.

These courses reinforce the need for vigilance when it comes to fire safety and brings this message to homes, schools and workplaces.

Sligo Fire Authority

CERTIFICATION, INSPECTION & ENFORCEMENT

The Fire Authority processed 168 Fire Safety Certificate applications required under Building Control Legislation and dealt with in excess of 200 Planning Applications under the Planning Acts. These applications covered a wide range of premises from apartment blocks, hotels, and shops to large commercial developments. Inspections were carried out under the various licensing laws covering nearly every type of premises from petroleum stores to dance licences. The Fire Authority made comment on all transfer of licences before the courts and carried out numerous “during performance” inspections of dance halls, public houses and workplaces to ensure fire safety standards were being upheld.

FIRE STATIONS AND APPLIANCES

In the last number of years, the ageing fire engines in Enniscrone, Tubbercurry, Ballymote and Sligo have been replaced with new modern appliances. The emergency tender in Sligo is in its 16th year of operational use with some of the equipment thereon over 20 years old. An application for funding has been approved by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the replacement of this appliance.

Plans were submitted to the Department for funding and upgrading of Sligo Fire Station in line with current requirements and funding has been approved for some of the works to proceed this year, as has the provision of a new fire station in Ballymote.

RALLY IRELAND WRC 2007

The inaugural round of the World Rallying Championship came to Ireland in November. Rally Ireland took place over 4 days with Rally Headquarters being based in Sligo Town. This event brought its own challenges to the Fire Service, aiding to make this event secure and safe for all while continuing to provide the residents of Sligo County with the high quality services during the event. The success of Rally Ireland sees its return as Round 1 in January 2009.



INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Road Transportation & Safety

A total of approximately €24m has been expended on the maintenance and upgrade of public roads network in Co. Sligo in 2007.

Work also progressed satisfactorily on the planning and design of the key strategic national primary routes serving Sligo, the Gateway city of the North-West.

Work will continue at an accelerated pace on delivering these key infrastructural projects.

NATIONAL ROAD DESIGN

Route selection has been carried out and a preferred route has been identified for all National Primary routes in the county, including the N4 (Dublin Road), the N15 (Donegal Road), the N16 (Manorhamilton Road) and the N17 (Galway Road).

N17 Tobercurry Bypass

The draft Preliminary Design Report, Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Compulsory Purchase Order documentation in relation to the N17 Tobercurry by-pass was forwarded to the NRA in April, 2007 for review. This road has been designed as a "Type 2 Dual Carriageway", with two lanes in each direction and a wire rope barrier in between.

N17 Curry to Collooney

Work continued in relation to preliminary design and environmental studies on two other sections of the N17, namely Collooney to Achonry and Rathscanlon to Curry. Ground Investigation on these sections of the N17 commenced.

N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin

The Preliminary Design and environmental studies for N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin continued in 2007. The road type will be 'Type 2 Dual Carriageway' and extend to Collooney. In late 2007 the NRA requested that further studies should be carried out in relation to the roundabouts at Collooney in order to assess if they will have adequate capacity in the longer term.

N4/N15 Sligo to County Boundary

A route for the N4/N15 Sligo to County Boundary was adopted by Sligo County and Borough Councils in 2006. Ryan Hanley WSP Ltd., Consulting Engineers were appointed in November, 2007 to advance the design through Preliminary Design, EIS and CPO stages.

Sligo Western Bypass

In 2007 work continued on preparation of a Feasibility Study for a Sligo Western Bypass and specialist studies were carried out in relation to hydro-dynamic modelling and ground investigation of Sligo harbour.

BRIDGING THE CENTURIES...

SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES BRIDGE PROGRAMME



County Sligo's bridges represent an important part of our built heritage, with 49 bridges listed as Protected Structures in the County Development Plan. The majority of Sligo's bridges are over 140 years old and some are much older debatably dating as far back as the thirteenth century.

Over the last few years, Sligo County Council has carried out an extensive programme of maintenance and repair on many of the county's bridges. In the five year period 2003-2007 Sligo County Council has expended over €1.7million on its bridge programme, which has seen improvements carried out to twenty five bridges (see panel). Each project has offered its own unique challenges, from collapsing walls, subsiding foundations, to cracks, bulges and distortion in arches. In some instances repair work has involved the closure of the road, and in such cases the work is carried out as quickly as possible to ensure minimum inconvenience to motorists and local residents.

The majority of the bridge programme is the work of Sligo County Council staff under the direction of Senior Executive Engineer Gary Salter, and in-house expertise is used to analyse, design and restore or repair the bridge stock. About 80% of Sligo's bridges are masonry arches. Many of the bridges require strengthening to meet current and anticipated vehicular loads.

According to Mr. Salter 'under different guises, local authorities have been building bridges since around 1835, with the first County Surveyor's appointment. While the National Roads Authority fund national road bridges, it falls to the County Council to carry out the repair and maintenance work, with the exception of larger projects. The Council has full control and responsibility for maintaining the bridge stock on non-national roads, subject to Department of the Environment funding and approval.'

Road Transportation & Safety

One of the most important bridge projects being proposed by Sligo Borough Council is the Eastern Garvoge Bridge. The proposed Eastern Garvoge River Bridge and Approach Roads will provide an eastern urban road which will further reduce traffic congestion in the city centre. It will provide a new high-quality, single-carriageway Urban Distributor Road link on the Eastern side of Sligo City, reducing substantially journey and emergency response times. Also, it will provide for the ongoing commercial, residential, recreational and social development of communities in the east of the City, on both the north and south sides of the Garvoge River, and will establish a vital link across the river between Sligo General Hospital and the city's educational hub at the Institute of Technology in Ballinode.

The proposed bridge will span over the Garvoge River at the narrowest crossing point of the river before it widens out to the east at Lough Gill. The proposed crossing represents the most easterly link between north and south of Sligo city and the hinterland beyond. The proposed bridge is a high, single,

elegant, parabolic tied arch structure and will be unique to Ireland and identifiable with the Gateway City of Sligo in the future, if passage through the EIA procedure and funding are realised.

BRIDGE PROGRAMME 2007

- ▶ Ragwood Bridge – substantial bridge widening with two new masonry arches.
- ▶ Pullaheeny Bridge – new single span bridge replacing dilapidated two span structure.
- ▶ Carrownagilty Bridge – superstructure replacement.
- ▶ Derry Bridge – major restoration and strengthening.
- ▶ Markievicz Bridge – feasibility and proposal for pedestrian bridge by consultants, Roughan and O'Donovan
- ▶ Ounagh Bridge – Superstructure replacement.
- ▶ Cloonacool Bridge – tree removal
- ▶ Ballinakill Bridge – vegetation clearance and waterproofing

CASE STUDY... LISCONNY BRIDGE

Lisconny Bridge is an attractive 5 span symmetrical stone arch structure with curved approaches spanning the Unshin River. The bridge had numerous defects; there were major cracks in four of the five arches, missing stones, scour at the piers and there was substantial mortar loss.

As this is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a salmonid river, consultation was a major factor in preparing a restoration programme. Among the statutory agencies contacted by Sligo County Council were the North Western Fisheries Board, Duchas and the Department of the Environment. Local landowners were also consulted on the project.

As Lisconny Bridge is a protected structure, the intention was to retain all characteristics and surfaces and use traditional materials where possible.

Gary Salter's team surveyed the structure and he analysed and developed a programme of work involving foundation

stabilisation, bed protection, arch and pier strengthening, and improving the integrity of the structure, as well as restoring the elegant structure using traditional materials by direct labour.

An interesting facet of the project was the fact that the bridge was the home of Daubenton bats, a protected species, and the recommendations of a bat specialist were incorporated into the work programme. The work on Lisconny Bridge has been widely acclaimed, and involved Specialist Contractor, Lemac Ltd and Sligo County Council staff JJ Higgins and the late Joe Torsney, Project Engineer Gary Salter, Senior Executive Engineer.



Road Transportation & Safety

ICBAN DELIVERS FOR SLIGO

Over period 2003-2005 approximately €1m Euro has been delivered by the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) to fund various infrastructural improvements in County Sligo.

According to Senior Engineer, Tommy Carroll 'this has enabled Sligo County Council to undertake much needed improvements to harbours on West Sligo Coastline including Enniscrone, Easkey and Pollnadviva. Amenity Improvements have also been undertaken to the resorts of Mullaghmore and Enniscrone which included upgrading of streets, footpaths and public lighting, making villages more pedestrian friendly while also enhancing the attractiveness of resorts as tourist destinations'.

Improvements were also undertaken to Raghly Harbour in North Sligo including a feasibility study which resulted in a major grant being secured from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in 2006 allowing a major upgrade of harbour to commence. Improvements were also undertaken to regional routes in east of County Sligo.

Small realignment and resurfacing contracts were undertaken to Regional Route R290 at Ballygawley, R284 at Doonally, R287 at Correagh and R286 at Corwillick.

Also enhancement works were undertaken to lay-bys on N16 at Glencar and R286 at Corwillick.

The undertaking of these works have improved access to areas of County Sligo which have suffered greatly from population loss over the period of troubles in the North of Ireland. This was as a result of reduced access due to the closure of the Northern Railway network and the closure of cross-border roads which served this area.

The works also enable tourism to be promoted in the region with the resorts and harbours receiving significant investment in physical infrastructure attracting greater number of tourists to areas.

National Primary

Route	Description	Length
N4	Boro Boundary to Roscommon Co. Boundary	33.3km
N15	Boro Boundary to Bunduff Br.	26.4km
N16	Boro Boundary to Leitrim Co. Boundary	8.4km
N17	Collooney to Bellahy	34.6km
Total:		102.7km

Regional Routes

Route Description	Length
R277.....Killaspugbrone – Sligo Airport	1.7km
R278.....Sligo – Cornalaghta	6.7km
R279.....Cliffoney – Mullaghmore	4.4km
R284.....Carrowroe to Rosc. Co. Boundary	26.6km
R286.....Boro. Boundary – Leitrim Co. Boundary	8.1km
R287.....Carrowroe – Leitrim Co. Boundary	11.9km
R290.....Rathripton – Ballintogher	11.0km
R291.....Boro. Boundary – Rosses Point	6.5km
R292.....Boro. Boundary – Strandhill – Ballydrehid	16.3km
R293.....Ballinaboll – Gurteen – Rosc. Co. Boundary	25.8km
R294.....Cloonloo – Tubbercurry – Lough Talt	42.5km
R295.....Ballymote – Keash – Rosc. Co. Boundary	14.6km
R296.....Ballymote – Bunnannaddan – R294	10.2km
R297.....Dromore West – Enniscrone – Co. Boundary	29.8km
R298.....N59 – Lacknatlieva – R297	4.9km
R361.....Roscommon Co. Bndy – Killaraght – Rosc. Co.	1.6km
Total:	222.6km

National Secondary

Route	Description	Length
N59	Ballysadare to Mayo Co. Boundary	47.4km

Local Roads

CLASS	LENGTH KM	% OF TOTAL
1	581.6	25.6
2	1,008.0	44.3
3	681.5	30.1

ROUTE	LENGTH KM	% OF TOTAL
Nat. P.	102.7	3.9
Nat. Sec.	47.4	1.8
Regional	222.6	8.4
Local	2,271.1	85.9
Total	2,643.8km	100%

National Routes – General

A total of €7,488,697 was allocated towards the maintenance and improvement of 150km of national route network in Co. Sligo in 2007 by the National Roads Authority.

€38,000 was expended on surface dressing sections of national routes at Muckelty on N17 and Dromore West on N59.

A total of €1.6m was expended on the strengthening of deformed sections of national routes at Leekfield N59, Rathscanlon N17 and Cashelgarron N15.

Road Transportation & Safety

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

N16

A review of the studies and design of the preferred route was undertaken in 2007 by Road Design Section, Sligo County Council. It is expected that the further planning and design of this key north-south route will continue in 2008 subject to funding from NRA.

A total of €2m was allocated by NRA towards the funding of costs associated with the planning and design of national routes in Co. Sligo in 2007.

A total of €143,000 was allocated towards road safety remedial measures at 5 no. locations on national routes in Co. Sligo in 2007.

Road Upkeep

Non-National Roads

A total of €14,246,503 was allocated by Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG) towards the maintenance and improvement of Non-National road network in Co. Sligo in 2007.

A further €1.013 was allocated towards the upgrade of 53 no. non public roads under the Local Improvement Scheme.

The Clar Programme co-funded a scheme with the DOEHLG which enabled expenditure of €24,000 on the upgrade of 18no. public roads in Clar areas in Co. Sligo in 2007.

Road Restoration Programme 2006 – 2008

Considerable progress was made in implementing the above multi-annual programme.

A total of €9,308,000 was invested in non-national roads infrastructure in 2007. Such has been the progress that the DOEHLG invited submissions for a new multi-annual plan for period 2008 – 2010.

This programme has been submitted following approval at local area meetings.

It is hoped subject to funding from DOEHLG to commence this programme in 2008.

Local Roads Maintenance

In 2007 the “own resource allocation” of Sligo County Council provided in estimates towards the upkeep of local road network was €30,000 of which €158,750 was dedicated towards councillors proposals.

It is proposed to increase the Council’s contribution to €1,000,000 in 2008 (representing an increase of 7.5%) which is in excess of the 5% annual increase recommended by the DOEHLG.

A sum of €1,790,880 was invested in maintenance of local road network in 2007 under the Road Restoration Programme.

Regional Road Maintenance

A sum of €45,800 was expended on maintenance of regional road network in 2007 under the Discretionary Improvement Grant.

A sum of €83,000 was expended on Regional Road network under the Road Restoration Programme.

Road Improvement

A total of €3,016,000 was allocated towards the following projects in 2007.

Specific Improvement Grant Scheme

Route	Nature of Work	Cost
R292	Realign Strandhill Rd/Knappaghmore	300,000
R284	Realignment Drumiskabbole	450,000
R294	Mullaghroe Realignment	366,000
R297	Realignment Muckduff	400,000
L501	Carrownagilty Bridge	54,000
L64101	Pollacheeney Bridge	265,000
L7205	Derry Bridge	81,000
R277	New Airport Road, Strandhill	50,000
R286	Bellanode/Hazelwood	500,000
R286	Markievicz Bridge	75,000
R292	Sea Road	300,000
	Rathbraughan Bridge Upgrade	75,000
R293	Ragwood Bridge	100,000

Approval was obtained to expend a further €1.7m from DOEHLG in August, 2007 on substantially completing schemes on R284 Drumiskabbole, R294 Mullaghroe and R292 Knappaghmore before end of 2007.

These ongoing improvements will improve access to our rural communities, improve the safety of roadusers and promote social inclusion in remote rural areas.

The improvement of regional road infrastructure will also help to promote economic activity in the region.

Discretionary Improvement Grant

A total of €77,000 was expended on maintenance of Regional Road Network and improvements to local network in Co. Sligo in 2007 under the above grant. These improvements included:

- ▶ Construction of 2km of public footpath in towns and villages of Co. Sligo. A total of €500,000 was expended on this project. €250,000 from Discretionary Improvement Grant was matched by €250,000 from development levies.
- ▶ Improvement to public lighting network.
- ▶ Improvement to road signage.
- ▶ Improvement to bridge infrastructure.

Road Transportation & Safety

Footpaths were improved in the villages/towns of Tobercurry, Gurteen, Collooney, Grange, Strandhill, Ballymote, Dromore West, Enniscrone, Ballysadare, Cliffoney and Coolaney.

Funding was also provided towards the promotion of Road Safety and the running costs of Material Testing Laboratory at Belladrehid.

Improvement to local road junctions was also undertaken while traffic calming measures were implemented in some towns and villages.

Regional Road Improvement/Restoration Programme

A total of €1,756,122 was expended on surface dressing and the road restoration of regional road network in Co. Sligo under the multi-annual road restoration programme.

Local Road Improvement/Restoration Programme

A total of €7,551,878 was expended on surface dressing and the road restoration of local road network under the multi-annual road restoration in Co. Sligo in 2007.

Local Improvement Schemes

Over €1.1m has been expended on the upgrade of 53no. non-public roads under the above scheme in 2007. A backlog of approximately 100no. schemes remain to be undertaken in Co. Sligo. At the moment a sub-committee of Sligo County Council is examining the existing policy of administering scheme.

Road Traffic

The Roads Dept in conjunction with NRA/DOEHLG and co-operating with an Garda Síochána will continue to target collision locations and to apply engineering measures where appropriate to resolve high collision locations on road network in Co. Sligo.

Bi-monthly meetings are held with An Garda Síochána and Roads Dept. to exchange information under a collision prevention programme.

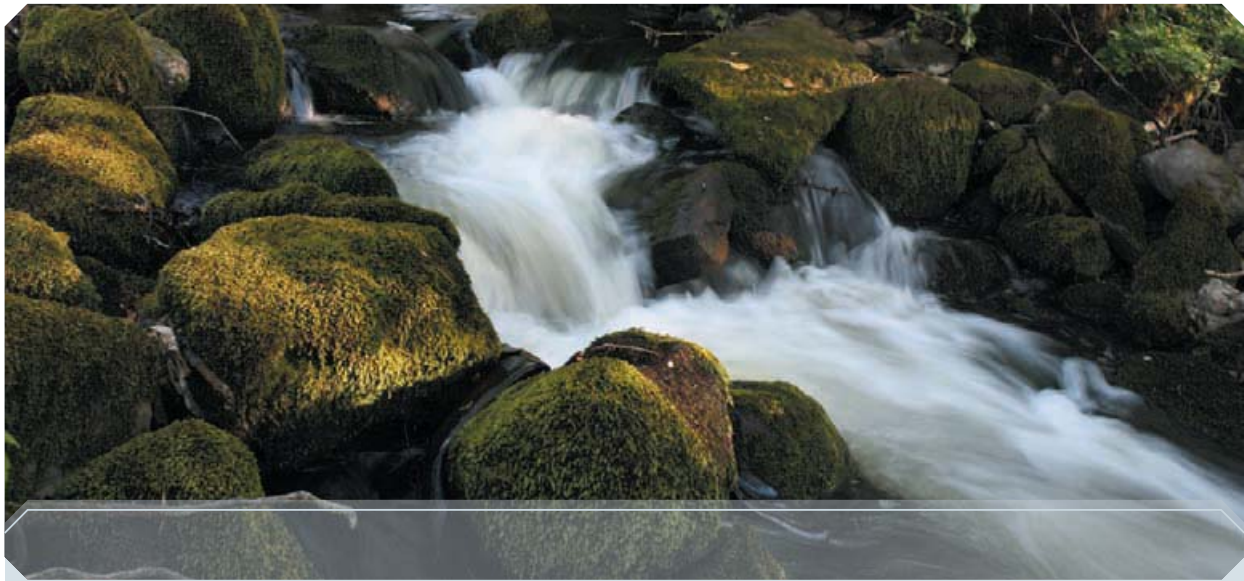
In 2007 €244,000 was allocated towards schemes targeting specific locations where the incidence of collisions was high historically. 14 no. such locations were identified and treated. Engineering measures such as renewed signing and lining, improved junction definition, pedestrian crossings have been introduced at these locations.

The Road Safety plan for Co. Sligo will be reviewed regularly. The Road Safety Officer has raised the issue of road safety to a new level of public consciousness by promoting initiatives on the awareness and print media particularly on occasions of major public events. The issues of visibility of pedestrians at night and the correct wearing of seatbelts has also been highlighted.

A new policy initiated by the NRA and An Garda Síochána will require all collision locations to be jointly inspected by the regional Garda Inspector and Area Engineer within 24 – 48 hours after a fatal or serious injury collision.

Any engineering factors that may have contributed to the collision can then be addressed immediately. Sligo County Council Roads Department will be implementing this new policy initiative immediately.

Rural Water Programme



An allocation of €1,898,000 was received from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in respect of 2007 made up as follows:

▶ Small Public Water and Sewerage Schemes	€750,000
▶ New/Completed Group Schemes	€698,000
▶ Takeover of Group Water Schemes	€450,000

The allocation under the Small Schemes Programme is being used to fund:

- ▶ the upgrading of Collooney Wastewater Treatment Plant;
- ▶ the refurbishment of Ballinascarrow Water Treatment Plant;
- ▶ North Sligo Sludge System;
- ▶ Lough Easkey Sludge System and Lamella Plates;
- ▶ The provision of a new watermain at Keelogoboy (Calry);
- ▶ Extension of sewerage network in Aclare (referred to above under public sewerage schemes).

Work is in progress on these projects.

Tenders were sought during the year for the Glack Group Scheme and work commenced at the end of October. The estimated cost of the scheme is €1.53m and when constructed it will supply water to approximately 92 houses and for use in agriculture.

The Doo Group Scheme for which tenders were also sought during the year is due to commence in December 2007. This scheme will serve approximately 47 houses and 16 farms and is estimated to cost approximately €355,000.

Substantial upgrading work was carried out on the Keash Group Scheme during the past few years. However as the scheme has been in place for over 30 years and there are still problems with leakage tenders were sought for the provision of further pipelines in the current year. The estimated cost of the proposed work is approximately €377,000. An application has been submitted for CLAR funding to fund part of the work which is expected to commence in December, 2007.

Planning is in progress for the provision of new group schemes at Mullaun (Cloonacool), Ballintogher/Gortlowan/Crossboy and Coolaney Road, Collooney and it is expected that work will commence on these schemes in 2008.

Work has been completed on the upgrading of the Monasteraden group scheme and this scheme is expected to be taken in charge in December, 2007. Work is also nearing completion on the Carnduff, Barnadrahy, Drinaghan, Carns (Aclare) and the Carrowlobaun Group Schemes and these schemes are also expected to be taken over in December, 2007/January, 2008.

WATER SERVICES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The Water Services Project Office has responsibility for Project Management and Administration of all Water Services infrastructural development projects funded via the Capital Programme, Service Land Initiatives, the Rural Water Programme and also Development Levy Schemes (funded entirely by Sligo County Council). It is the policy of Sligo County Council to bundle suitable schemes in order to deliver best value for money based on the principle of economies of scale. During 2007 a total of 52 schemes were advanced under these programmes with an overall budget estimate of €197M.

Rural Water Programme

Sligo Main Drainage (DBO Project) – This project involves the Design Build & Operation of a new Wastewater Treatment Plant (50,000pe), Pumping Station and Sludge Hub Centre at Finisklin, Sligo to service the existing and future needs of Sligo City and its environs. The design/build phase of the scheme commenced in October



2006 and works are currently well advanced on site. The plant is due to be commissioned in October 2008. The estimated project cost is €29M. Advance works for this project were carried out in 2002 on the site and approach roads at a cost of €8M.

Enniscrone Wastewater Treatment Plant (DBO Project) – This scheme involves the Design Build & Operation of a new Wastewater Treatment Plant and Sludge Satellite Station in Enniscrone (5000pe) and the operation of six additional WWTP's (Ballysadare 4500pe, Aclare 750pe, Cloonacool 500pe, Dromore West 2500pe, Coolaney 2500pe and Easkey 450pe). The contract was signed with EPS Ltd. on 23rd March 2007. Construction of Enniscrone WWTP is currently well advanced and will to be commissioned in 2008. The estimated project cost is €4.9M.

Teesan / Lisnalurg Sewerage Scheme – This scheme involves the construction of 2.7km of foul sewers, 1.1km of storm sewers, 3.8km of watermains, one foul sewage pumping station and 0.8km twin rising main pipelines to service the entire zoned catchment area in Teesan Lisnalurg. The planning and procurement for the scheme was completed during 2007 and construction is due to commence in April 2008.

The estimated cost of the scheme is €3.7M.

Kilsellagh Water Treatment Plant (DBO Project) – This scheme involves the Design Build & Operation of a new Water Treatment Plant at Kilsellagh, approx. 6.5km North East of Sligo town. The plant will have a maximum throughput capacity of 400m³/hr. The operation contract will include the existing impounding reservoir. The Report on Tenders has been submitted to the DEHLG. It is anticipated that the contract will commence during the second quarter of 2008. The contract period is 15 months. The estimated project cost is €0.62M.

Tubbercurry Grange and Strandhill Wastewater Treatment Plants (DBO Project) – These three schemes involving the provision of new wastewater treatment infrastructure for the towns of Tubbercurry (5000 Population Equivalent), Grange (2500PE) and Strandhill (4500PE) are to be advanced as a single DBO project. The upgrade of Ballinacree WwTP has also been added to this project to deliver further value for money. The closing date for the tender period is 14th March 2008. It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded during 2008. The average cost estimate in the Design Review Report is €9.24M. It is also noted that advance works were carried out at the Tubbercurry WwTP during 2007 in accordance with an EPA Direction.

Carraroe Sewerage Scheme – Stage A

This element of the Carraroe Sewerage Scheme is being funded entirely by Sligo County Council from Development Levies. This scheme involves the installation of a foul sewage collection system complete with pumping stations and rising mains as required to service lands zoned as WILT in the Carraroe/Ballydrehid area. The purchase of existing infrastructure built by private developers will be an integral part of the project. Planning and procurement of the scheme is ongoing and it is anticipated that construction work will commence in 2008. The preliminary cost estimate for the scheme is €6M.

Carraroe Sewerage Scheme - Stage B – A Preliminary Report was prepared in 2002 for the provision of foul and storm water drainage on a 395 hectare study area from Carraroe to Ballydrehid. The DEHLG recommended revision of the PR to incorporate SUDS techniques in stormwater collection and disposal. Work on the revised PR has commenced and will be completed during 2008. Cost estimate for this element of the project is €2.6M.

Sligo Sewerage Scheme (Network Improvement) – This project relates to proposed improvement works to the existing combined sewer network in Sligo City. The preliminary report highlighted 28 sections of the network which require improvement works based on network modeling and local knowledge. It is proposed to commence works at three locations in 2008, Pearse Road, O'Connell Street and along the railway track at Thornhill. It is also proposed to carry out CCTV surveys on other parts of the network to establish a prioritized schedule of works which will be advanced to construction stage on a phased basis. The total project cost is estimated at €5.7M.

Lough Talt Regional Water Supply Scheme (DBO Project) – The initial phase of this scheme involves the preparation of a Preliminary Report to assess demands, sources and treatment options for the Lough Talt WSS. Work has been ongoing throughout 2007 on data collection, raw water sampling, demand modelling, asset review, source assessment and network model analysis. The Preliminary Report cost estimate for the entire scheme is €4.65M. Consultations are ongoing with the relevant prescribed bodies in relation to the EIS and water abstraction requirements for the scheme and this process will be advanced during 2008.

Water Conservation and Network Management Project – The County Sligo Water Conservation and Network Management Project is sub-divided into three stages;

- Stage 1:** Implementation of Water Management Systems: Asset data collection, mapping (GIS), bulk and district metering, pressure control, telemetry and hydraulic modelling.
- Stage 2:** Active Leakage Control: Location and repair of leaks.
- Stage 3:** Rehabilitation: The leakage control strategy implemented at Stages 1 and 2 above, will allow for the identification of areas with persistent high leakage, poor response to repair activities and level of service problems.

Rural Water Programme

Stage 1 is practically complete and Stage 2 has already achieved a reduction in water production of 5546m³/day in the Sligo County & Borough areas. A detailed report on Stage 3 mains rehabilitation for the county area has been prepared and submitted to the DEHLG for approval. A similar report for the borough area will be submitted during 2008. Advance funding of €2M for Stage 3 is currently being sought from the ERDF.

A Strategic Operational and Management Plan is currently being prepared which will address the following:

- ▶ Continuation of active leakage control and maintenance of district meter areas, control zones and meters
- ▶ Updating and maintaining hydraulic models
- ▶ Rehabilitation and possible rationalisation of old pipework, based on hydraulic and structural considerations
- ▶ Detailed analysis of the security of supply.

The fundamental objective of the strategic plan will be the continued provision of a safe, adequate and secure water supply for the people of Sligo.

Cost Estimates for Stage 1 and Stage 2 is €3.42M, and for Stage 3 in the county area is €9.4M.

Rosses Point / Cregg / Ballincar Sewerage Scheme – This scheme relates to the provision of three pumping stations and associated pipeline infrastructure for the transfer of raw sewage effluent from the Ballincar, Cregg and Rosses Point catchments to Sligo Main Drainage WWTP for treatment.

Site investigation works have been completed and draft Contract Documents are being prepared. Two pump station sites have been identified and Part 8 planning will be progressed. The estimated cost of the scheme in the PR is €3.9M.

Sligo Main Drainage Stage VI – Cumeen Sewerage Scheme – This scheme involves the installation of a sewerage collection system to service existing development in the Cumeen area. The cost estimate for the provision of new infrastructure is €2.3M. The purchase of existing infrastructure built by private developers will be an integral part of the project. Work is ongoing on the completion of the Design Review Report and pending formal DEHLG approval the scheme will be advanced to the procurement phase in the current year.

Ballygawley, Mullaghmore, Cliffoney and Ballinacarrow Sewerage Schemes – These four village schemes involving the provision of new wastewater infrastructure were progressed as a single project for the preparation of preliminary reports. Ballygawley and Mullaghmore have been approved under the Capital programme while Cliffoney and Ballinacarrow are approved as Service Land Initiative Schemes. The preliminary reports cost estimates for completion of the entire schemes are; Ballinacarrow €3.3M; Cliffoney €5M; Ballygawley €3.6M; Mullaghmore €9.5M.

DEVELOPMENT LEVY SCHEMES

Development Levy Schemes are funded from development levies charged in accordance with Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. This mechanism allows Sligo County Council to provide new infrastructure thereby facilitating development that would not be feasible otherwise. New wastewater treatment plants funded entirely from Development Levies have been completed in Coolaney, Dromore West and Carney during 2007.

Gurteen Wastewater Treatment Works

The new 2,500pe wastewater treatment plant in Gurteen is currently being commissioned and it is anticipated that the plant will be completed in April, 2008. The estimated cost for this scheme is €1,622,993.

Coolaney Water Supply

This scheme involves the installation of approximately 1km of 150mm diameter rising main and the construction of a new reservoir to provide 522m³ water storage capacity in the Coolaney area. The rising main is complete and works on the reservoir are substantially complete. It is anticipated that this new water supply infrastructure will be fully operational in April 2008. The cost estimate for the scheme is €252,000.

Ballintogher Wastewater Treatment Works

This project involves the construction by a private developer of a new 1500PE wastewater treatment works in the village of Ballintogher. A Special Contributions Scheme of €9,000 / unit has been put in place in Ballintogher. It is anticipated that Part 8 Planning and procurement for the scheme will proceed in 2008 subject to formal agreement between Sligo County Council and the developer. The cost estimate for the scheme is €1,420,345.

Castlebaldwin Wastewater Treatment Works

This project involves the construction by a private developer of a new 1000PE wastewater treatment works in the village of Castlebaldwin. A Special Contributions Scheme of €9,000 has been put in place in Castlebaldwin. It is anticipated that Part 8 Planning and procurement for the scheme will proceed in 2008 subject to formal agreement between Sligo County Council and the developer. The cost estimate for the scheme is €1,393,680.

Rockfield Wastewater Treatment Works

This project involves the upgrade by a private developer of the wastewater treatment plant in the village of Rockfield. The upgraded plant will have a design capacity of 250PE. Sligo County Council has undertaken the completion of this scheme as a consequence of default by the developer to complete the works. The estimated cost of the scheme is €175,000.

Rural Water Programme

Raghy Harbour Improvement Scheme

During 2005 a new slipway was constructed in Raghy Harbour as the first phase of a major improvement scheme. The project was conceived with the community group and promoted in partnership with the Community and Enterprise Directorate during 2003 and 2004 who secured Phase II funding for the slipway and other ancillary works. The Infrastructure Directorate took on the management of the contract to build the slipway which was completed in September 2006.

The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources funding for the much larger Phase II project involving a new quay, new jetties, dredging and ancillary works was secured by the Infrastructural Directorate, with an allocation of €0.845m in 2006. Love Contracts was awarded the contract which has a number of difficult aspects that are being overcome. Delays in commencement of Phase II has resulted in a shortfall in funding which has not kept pace with increased costs in construction, however, the bulk of the essential works were completed by Christmas 2007. The new protected harbour area was opened last autumn. Additional funding has been sought from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to fully complete the project. The Project Engineer for the scheme is Gary Salter and Dessie Sloyan is the Resident Engineer, Consultants - SDS Ltd, Contractor - Gerald Love Contracts.

Bunannaden Wastewater Treatment Works

This scheme involves the construction by a private developer of a new 350PE wastewater treatment works in the village of Bunannaden. The new plant will have potential for upgrade to 700PE in the future. It is anticipated that construction of the scheme will proceed in 2008 subject to completion of formal agreement between Sligo County Council and the developer. The contract costs for the scheme is €24,500.

Riverstown Sewerage

This project involves the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant in Riverstown to provide automated fine screening and flow measurement. Works are now complete. The estimated cost is €2,000.

Ballymote Sewerage

This project involves the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant to provide automated fine screening and flow measurement. Works are substantially complete. The estimated project cost is €2,000.

Ballinafad Sewerage Scheme

This scheme involves the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant with a design capacity of 350PE in the village of Ballinafad. The scheme is currently with the Tubbercurry/Grange/Strandhill Scheme for procurement purposes. A temporary plant upgrade is currently being put in place pending construction of the new plant. The cost estimate for the scheme is €00,000.

Collooney Sewerage

This project involves the upgrading of the existing inlet works at the treatment works to provide enhanced screening and inflow measurement. Works are ongoing at present. The estimated project cost is €100,000.

Lough Easkey WTP

Improvement works were carried out at the water treatment plant including replacement of filter media and lamella plates in the clarifiers. The estimated cost of the works is €180,000. A review of the plant process is ongoing to determine further improvement works required.

North Sligo WTP

Filter media and the lamella plates were also replaced in the north Sligo water treatment plant. Temporary additional storage capacity for wastewater settlement is currently being installed and Part 8 planning for the installation of a sludge holding tank is due before the Council in April 2008. The preliminary cost estimate for the works is €200,000.

Calry Pipeline

This scheme involves the installation of approximately 2km of trunk main to service the Calry No.2 PWS scheme from the new water treatment plant at Kilsellagh. The new pipeline is currently being commissioned and will be operational following completion of the Glackbaun GWSS. The cost estimate is €200,000.

Ballinascarrow WTP

This scheme involves the refurbishment of the existing water treatment plant at Ballinascarrow as well as the provision of new fencing and railings. The cost estimate is €100,000.

2008 Schemes

Some new schemes proposed for 2008 which are subject to DEHLG funding approval are: Easkey Sewer Network Improvements (€50,000); Enniscrone Sewer Network Improvements (€200,000); Tubbercurry Sewer Network Improvements (€300,000); CSO Screens (€150,000).

GROUP WATER SCHEMES

Glackbaun GWS - Located approximately 4km north east of Sligo, townlands include Drumkilsellagh, Kilsellagh, Lisduff, Doonally and Bellawillinbeg. The scheme consists of the provision of approximately 17500m of watermain, the construction of a booster pumping station and the construction of a 286m³ reservoir. There shall be 120no service connections to the scheme and the contract cost of the scheme is €1.53M. Work commenced on this scheme in October 2007 and to date 35% of the pipeline has been laid and the project is programmed to be completed in June 2008.

Rural Water Programme

Doo GWS – This project constructs of the construction of a water supply scheme in the townlands of Cloonagashal, Doobeg, Ardrea, Knockminna and Doomore located 5Km east of Ballymote. It consists of the laying of approximately 7200m of water main, the provision of an inline booster and reserve pump inclusive of housing kiosk and 47 domestic 16 agricultural connections to this scheme. Work commenced on this scheme in February 2008 and to date 35% of the pipelines have been laid. The contract cost of this scheme is €55,000.

Ballintogher Stage III GWS – The area to be serviced is located north east of Ballintogher and south west of Dromahair, along the R287. It includes the townlands of Castleore, Dromore, Crossboy and Gortlowan. There will be a total of 26 domestic and 13 agricultural connections to the scheme. It is proposed to lay approximately 3435m of water main at a total estimated cost of €60,000.00. It is proposed to connect this scheme to the existing public supply at the R287/R290 Junction.

Mullaun GWS – Mullaun is located 1.5km south west of Cloonacool village on the Masshill to Cloonacool road. The project consists of 1030m of water main and the provision of an inline booster and reserve pump inclusive of housing kiosk at an estimated cost of €100,000.00. There will be a total of 1 domestic and 5 agricultural connections to the scheme. The scheme will be supplied from the reservoir at Cloocacool, which is served by the Lough Talt Regional Water Supply. Planning is in progress and it is expected that work will commence on this scheme in 2008.

Keash GWS (Contract No. 2) – This scheme is located 7km south east of Ballymote. The scheme consists of the laying of approximately 10,000m of watermain and 60 service connections. The estimated cost for the provision of the scheme is €77,000.00. The scheme will be supplied from the existing source at Lough Labe. It is anticipated that the scheme will be advanced in 2008 subject to approval of CLAR funding.

Coolaney Road GWS - This scheme is located 1.7km to the west of Collooney Village. The scheme will consist of laying approximately 6400m of water main with a total of 63 service connections. The scheme will be connected to the public water supply from Collooney. It is anticipated that part of the scheme will be constructed under the Small Schemes Programme. The total estimated cost for the scheme is €700,000.

Monasteraden GWS - Takeover

Work is now nearing completion on the takeover of the Monasteraden Group Water Scheme. This project started in June 2006 and should be completed in May of 2008. The work consisted of the laying of 4400m of pipeline, the provision of a Booster Pumping Station, 5 bulk meters and a pressure reducing valve. Water Meter Boxes have also being installed on all non-domestic and agricultural connections. This scheme was approved for takeover at the Council Meeting in February 2008.

Watermain at Kilglass, Enniscrone

This scheme consists of the laying of approximately 4350m of water main along with 20 domestic connections and 6 agricultural connections. The estimated cost of this scheme is €400,000. The source of this scheme is Fortland reservoir which is serviced by the Lough Easkey Regional Water Supply. Work on the installation of the watermain is at an advanced stage and completion of service connections is ongoing.

Rural Water Programme

Water Services Investment Programme				
	Project	Est. Cost (€)	% Local	SCC Cost (€)
1	Sligo Main Drainage (WwTP)	25,785,664	0.282	7,271,557
2	Sligo Main Drainage (Sludge)	3,039,062	0.344	1,045,437
3	Enniscrone WwTP	4,882,298	0.280	1,367,043
4	Teesan/Lisnalurg SS	3,700,000	0.600	3,013,239
5	Kilsellagh WTP	9,618,982	0.235	2,260,461
6	Tubbercurry/G/S WwTP's	9,242,320	0.600	5,545,392
7	Mullaghmore WSS	610,018	0.248	151,284
8	Sligo SS (Network)	5,687,695		467,795
9	Carraroe SS	2,600,000	0.300	780,000
10	Cummeen SS	2,300,000	0.300	690,000
11	Ballincar/Cregg/RP SS	3,899,869	0.192	748,775
12	Lough Talt WSS	34,658,910	0.300	10,397,673
13	Cliffoney	5,046,811	0.600	3,028,087
14	Ballinacarrow	3,336,723	0.600	2,002,034
15	Ballygawley SS	3,592,121	0.300	1,077,636
16	Mullaghmore SS	9,468,590	0.300	2,840,577
17	Ballymote SS	3,000,000	0.300	900,000
18	Collooney SS	3,000,000	0.300	900,000
19	North Sligo WSS	4,000,000	0.300	1,200,000
20	Sligo & Environs WSS	4,000,000	0.300	1,200,000
21	Water Con - Ph. 3 (County)	39,382,847	0.100	3,938,285
	Total WSIP	180,851,910		50,825,275

Development Levy Schemes and Small Schemes				
	Project	Est. Cost (€)	% Local	SCC Cost (€)
22	Coolaney WwTW	1,645,260	100%	1,645,260
23	Dromore West WwTW	1,416,000	100%	1,416,000
24	Carney West WwTW	1,455,406	100%	1,455,406
25	Gurteen WwTP	1,622,993	100%	1,622,993
26	Coolaney Water Supply	252,000	100%	252,000
27	Ballintogher WwTP	1,420,345	100%	1,420,345
28	Castlebaldwin WwTP	1,393,680	100%	1,393,680
29	Rockfield WwTP	175,000	100%	175,000
30	Bunninadden WwTW	650,000	100%	650,000
31	Carraroe (WILT Zoning)	4,000,000	100%	4,000,000
	Total Development Levies	14,030,684		14,030,684

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Rural Water Programme

Small Schemes				
	Project	Est. Cost (€)	% Local	SCC Cost (€)
32	Imp. of Riverstown WwTW	92,000	25%	23,000
33	Imp. of Ballymote WwTW	92,000	25%	23,000
34	Clonacool Network	150,000	25%	37,500
35	Imp. of Collooney WwTW	100,000	25%	25,000
36	Ballinacree WwTW	600,000	25%	150,000
37	Lough Easkey WTP	180,000	25%	45,000
38	N. Sligo WTP Sludge Facility	200,000	25%	50,000
39	Calry Pipeline	200,000	25%	50,000
40	Ballinascarrow WTP	100,000	25%	25,000
41	Easkey Network Imp.	250,000	25%	62,500
42	Enniscrone Network Imp.	200,000	25%	50,000
43	Tubbercurry Network Imp.	300,000	25%	75,000
44	CSO Screens	150,000	25%	37,500
	Total Small Schemes	1,864,000		428,500
	Overall Total Costs	196,746,594		65,284,459

Health & Safety – (Infrastructural Services)

The function of the Health & Safety Section is to:

- ▶ Advise the Director of Services and Responsible Persons in all aspects of safety, health & welfare at work in particular to the observance of the requirements of safety, health & welfare at work legislation and associated provisions
- ▶ Compile, with assistance of the Responsible Persons the relevant Ancillary Safety Management System / Safety Statement
- ▶ Monitor the implementation of the provisions outlined in the relevant Ancillary Safety Management System / Safety Statement at the work locations of Sligo Local Authorities
- ▶ Communicate to employees provisions of the relevant Ancillary Safety Management System / Safety Statement and revisions that will ensue
- ▶ Ensure that the Responsible Persons or their delegate carry out their responsibilities outlined in the relevant Ancillary Safety Management System / Safety Statement
- ▶ Monitor accident / incident trends to eliminate shortcomings in the relevant Ancillary Safety Management System / Safety Statement
- ▶ Provide advice on remedial and preventative action to be taken following an accident / incident / dangerous occurrence and arrange for specialist advice where necessary

SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS / SAFETY STATEMENT

A Safety Management System is a documented systematic approach to the management of safety, health and welfare in the workplace.

The Safety Management System developed for Sligo Local Authorities are modelled on an internationally recognised Safety Management System.

The Systems are applicable to both the relevant sections offices and sites work locations.

The elements of Sligo Local Authorities Safety Management Systems are:

1. Occupational Health & Safety Policy
2. Planning
3. Implementation & Operation
4. Checking & Corrective Action
5. Management Review
6. Continual Improvement

The Water Services Section Safety Management System was implemented in January 2007. The Roads Section Safety Management System was implemented in June 2007.

Work is ongoing to develop additional systems for other relevant sections.

SUPERVISOR / LINE MANAGER TRAINING

Forty one line managers and supervisors took part in a 3 day 'Supervising Safely' training course, which is accredited to the Institute of Occupational Safety & Health.

HEALTH & SAFETY AUTHORITY

As a result of a Section 66 Improvement Notice an Improvement Plan entitled "Safety Management Systems for Roadworks" was approved by the Health & Safety Authority in May 2007. This Improvement Plan has had a significant impact on the management of national & non-national Overlay Projects and Surface Dressing Operations.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

A Vaccination Programme for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Tetanus was offered to Roads Section & Water Services Section personnel.

Risk Assessments for pregnant employees were commenced and are ongoing for all expectant mothers.

Visual Display Unit Risk Assessments were commenced and are ongoing for all VDU users.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY HANDBOOK

The Employee Safety Handbook, an initiative of the Local Authorities Safety Advisors Group (LASAG), the Local Government Management Services Board (LGMSB) and the Local Authorities National Partnership Advisor Group was launched in 2007.

Various presentations were made to staff throughout the county and the handbook was distributed. All new employees will receive the Employee Safety Handbook prior to commencing employment with Sligo Local Authorities.

MONITORING OF HEALTH & SAFETY PERFORMANCE

A schedule of Health & Safety Inspections was established for 2007 and a vigorous regime was carried out. 207 health & safety inspections were carried out across all sections of the organisation. Many improvements have been made through co-operation with line managers and employees.



PLANNING, ENFORCEMENT AND HERITAGE DIRECTORATE

Planning



During 2007 the Planning Department received 1,326 planning applications, representing a slight decrease (6%) on the previous year's intake. This reflects the consistently strong demand for development within the county.

Applications for single dwellings remain the most popular, amounting to 39% of all application types. The Development Management Team issued 1,218 decisions during the year with a refusal rate of 7.5%. Appeals have only been made to An Bord Pleanála in respect of 4% of all decisions made by Sligo County Council.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Development Management Team is committed to continuously improving the standards of customer service it provides to all the various stakeholders in the planning process. During 2007 Sligo County Council maintained its excellent record for efficiency when three-quarters of all planning decisions were determined in eight weeks or less. The low number of invalid applications (4%) continues to be amongst the best results of Planning Authorities nationally and it is noticeable that a considerable number of Planning Authorities are now changing their procedures to facilitate same-day validation, which has been in place in Sligo County Council for 3 years. The low invalidity rates can also be attributed to the continuous engagement between the Development Management Team and the Planning Agents who submit the majority of all applications. During 2007 a seminar was organised at County Hall for Planning Agents to introduce them to the Planning & Development Regulations 2006 and to outline the implications for submitting planning applications.

CONSULTATION

The relatively low rate of refusals is in a large part due to the extensive level of pre-planning consultations which take place between County Council Planning Officials and prospective applicants, primarily in the form of face to face meetings held in County Hall or Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry. During 2007 1,394 such meetings took place being the equivalent of more than one meeting for every application received.

ON LINE FACILITIES

Looking forward to 2008 Sligo County Council intends to provide additional on-line facilities to enable customers to interact with the Planning Department by electronic means. One of the most significant developments will be the introduction of a new Self-Service Pre-Planning facility on the Council's website, which will allow web users to view a map of the county and outline a potential site for planning permission. The system will then generate a brief report outlining the various planning constraints associated with that particular site and will list the most recent planning applications in the vicinity. It is envisaged that the facility will be particularly useful for planning agents, individual land owners and the Elected Members as an information tool. The new technology is not intended to replace pre-planning consultations with area planners but will serve as a preliminary stage prior to such meetings.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Development Planning Unit is responsible for drafting planning and development policy for Sligo County and City, in consultation with the public, members, officials, prescribed bodies and other stakeholders. The Development Planning team also carries out research, advises on development proposals, facilitates plan implementation and participates in a range of initiatives, at both local and regional level.

SLIGO & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2004 – 2010 (SEDP)

The National Building Agency (NBA) was engaged to prepare the mandatory mid-term progress report on the Sligo & Environs Development Plan. The Report was submitted to the Members in June 2007. The statutory review of the Plan, which commenced in December 2007, will take two years to complete. In order to assist and encourage the public to become actively involved in

Planning

Plan review and preparation, the Development Planning Unit (DPU) drafted a Guide to the Review of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan, which was made available on Sligo Local Authorities websites. While the review will be carried out in-house, specialist consultants will be engaged for the preparation of the new Retail Strategy and Housing Strategy, as well as the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the SEDP.

The new SEDP will address a range of issues related to Gateway growth, including land use and transportation, housing and retail strategies, economic development, infrastructural provision, community, social and cultural requirements, urban regeneration and design, recreational amenities, protection of the natural and built heritage and the preservation of landscape character.

The Plan will consolidate the sustainable development framework for making Sligo a more attractive place to live and work, facilitating the provision of housing, employment and recreational amenities for a growing population that could reach 42,000 by the year 2020.

LOCAL AREA PLANS UNDER SLIGO & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SEDP)

Within the SEDP boundary, it was decided to prepare Local Area Plans that will provide detailed development frameworks for various areas such as the North Fringe (Teasan-Lisnalurg area) and the Docklands Quarter.

While the new Development Plan will review the main parameters for the subordinate LAPs (zoning, main policies and objectives), the masterplanning and urban design of these areas would be addressed after specific public consultation.

As part of the Docklands Regeneration Initiative, the Council has commissioned an Urban Design Framework for the Hughes Bridge/Lower Quay Street area and urban design proposals for the Inner Relief Road corridor, including the Docklands area adjoining the Road. Consideration is being given to the holding of an urban design competition as a prelude to the preparation of the Local Area Plan for the Docklands.

TOBERCURRY DRAFT LOCAL AREA PLAN

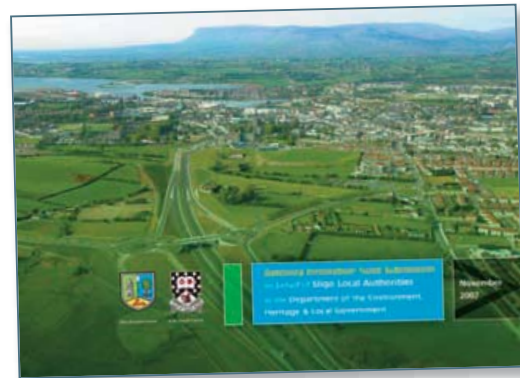
During 2007, progress has been made on the preparation of the Draft Tobercurry LAP, which should be taken through the adoption procedure in 2008.

Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

During 2006, a National Inventory for Architectural Heritage (NIAH) for Sligo was published which recommended that all structures on this database be protected. Detailed work has been done in 2007 to identify which NIAH structures are not currently included on the RPSs. Specialist consultants were employed to assess the structures that warrant listing or otherwise on both the Sligo & Environs and County RPS. On completion of this exercise, additions and deletions will be formally proposed under Section 55 of the Planning & Development Act.

GATEWAY INNOVATION FUND – SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF SLIGO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The establishment of a Gateway Innovation Fund (GIF) as part of the National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP) is a recognition of the need for targeted investment and concerted interventions in Gateway Cities. Sligo Local Authorities submitted a detailed proposal, consisting of four projects linked into a coherent vision for the short-term development of Sligo City.



The Development Planning Unit contributed to this submission by drafting sections of the text, providing a brief demographic profile of the City and preparing a set of maps.

The GIF submission was delivered to the Department of Environment and Local Government (DoEHLG) on the 15th of November 2007.

North Fringe Masterplan. The NBA initially produced a draft masterplan for the Teasan-Lisnalurg-Shannon Oughter area of Sligo & Environs. The document, which was presented to the Sligo-Drumcliffe Area Committee Meeting in November 2006, required further changes in order to incorporate infrastructure proposals such as realigned routes of national and local roads in the area.

It was eventually decided to conduct extended consultation with the public and produce a Local Area Plan instead of a Masterplan/variation of the SEDP. Pre-draft consultation is programmed to commence in January 2008. It is envisaged that the North Fringe LAP will be adopted by autumn 2008.

Sligo Docklands Local Area Plan. Sligo County Council assumed responsibility for Sligo Port in April 2006 and has earmarked Docklands regeneration as a priority Gateway initiative. The first task was to identify critical steps and inputs needed to kick-start the regeneration process.

A preliminary Background Information document drafted by the DPU served as a basis for extensive informal consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the legally-required Strategic Environmental Assessment associated with the Docklands Plan.

As part of the Docklands regeneration initiative, the Council has commissioned an Urban Design Framework for the Hughes Bridge/Lower Quay Street area and urban design proposals for the Inner Relief Road corridor, including the Docklands area adjoining the Road.

Sligo Heritage Office



During 2007, the Heritage Office continued to promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in the heritage of County Sligo, while seeking to facilitate appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage and in doing so co-operate with other bodies in the promotion of its functions.

The Heritage Office is committed to providing high quality advice on all matters relating to heritage issues. It also seeks to assist the development of the Local Authority's heritage strategy and policy and to advise on heritage impacts and consequences. During 2007, the Heritage Office has continued to play a role in developing and implementing heritage policy in County Sligo.

The launch of the National Heritage Plan and National Biodiversity Plan during 2002 set out for the first time a comprehensive strategy and framework for the protection and management of the heritage resource in Ireland. The National Heritage Plan recognises the increased focus on, and public support for the protection of our heritage. It recognises that heritage is valued by people not only for its intrinsic value, but for its economic, cultural and recreational benefits. Central to the delivery of both national plans is the increased role of Local Authorities in managing heritage at local level. This process has begun in Sligo through the establishment of the County Sligo Heritage Forum in 2001 and the launch of the first County Heritage Plan for Sligo in 2002 spanning the period 2002-2006. During 2007, Sligo saw the launch of the second heritage plan for the county. The County Sligo Heritage Plan 2007-2011 is an agreed action plan developed and overseen by the County Sligo Heritage Forum with the support of the Heritage Office of Sligo County Council.

COUNTY SLIGO HERITAGE FORUM

The County Sligo Heritage Forum membership is drawn from local government, Local Development, state agencies, educational institutes, the farming sector, the community and voluntary sector and County Sligo Heritage Groups. Through the County Sligo Heritage Plan 2007-2011, the members work to secure

benefits for the heritage of County Sligo and seek to increase awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of it for all. The Heritage Forum met four times during 2007 and agreed terms of reference in February 2007. The Forum membership was increased to allow for the engagement of key sectors. It was also agreed by the Forum to establish four working groups in the areas of, archaeology, natural heritage, architecture and cultural heritage in order to increase involvement and participation of interested parties in the delivery of the heritage plan over the coming four years. All working groups met at least once by the end of 2007. The working groups have been established on a pilot basis and the process will be reviewed at the end of 2008.

COUNTY SLIGO HERITAGE PLAN 2007-2011

The Heritage Plan, developed by the County Sligo Heritage Forum and co-ordinated by the Sligo Local Authorities was launched during April 2007 and heralded a new period for heritage conservation at local level, based on partnership and co-ordination.

In drawing up the second County Sligo Heritage Plan the Forum entered a broad consultation process during 2006. Through extensive public consultation, the heritage priorities and objectives for County Sligo were identified and the actions needed to achieve these were set out over the five-year period of the Plan. It is the second time that the diverse concepts regarding the value of and future of Sligo's heritage will be co-ordinated and articulated in a strategic manner. In doing so, it will reinforce the value of preparing a single strategy and framework for heritage management locally. Four key performance areas have been established to facilitate structured heritage development over the next five years, these are:

Sligo Heritage Office

HERITAGE INFORMATION

To advise on, promote and contribute to the development of a comprehensive heritage database for Sligo and to ensure the effective use of heritage data in policy formulation and decision-making in the county.

Key Initiatives in 2007

- ▶ Continued Habitat mapping in the county with a focus on Sligo City ahead of the review of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan.
- ▶ Historic Graveyard Survey of selected baronies in the County. This will be completed during 2008.
- ▶ Compilation of an archaeological excavations database for Co. Sligo.
- ▶ Condition reports were commissioned for two medieval churches in Sligo.

BEST PRACTICE IN HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

To propose and advise on, best practice standards for heritage conservation and management among key stakeholders and practitioners.

Key Initiatives in 2007

- ▶ Continued provision of heritage training and advice for Sligo Local Authorities.
- ▶ Liaised with Community and Enterprise Office in relation to collecting data on historic graveyards in County Sligo and their associated burial ground registers.
- ▶ Provision of Owners Day during April 2007, with over 140 delegates.
- ▶ Completion of a Conservation Plan for Inishmurray, Co. Sligo.
- ▶ Commissioned a Biodiversity Action Plan for Sligo in partnership with The Heritage Council.

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

To facilitate and strengthen the awareness, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of Sligo's heritage.

Key Initiatives in 2007

- ▶ Continued to support the local authority in developing a County Museum Service
- ▶ Continued the Field Monument Advisor Scheme initiative in Co. Sligo with updating of the FMA database for Sligo.
- ▶ Heritage awareness/biodiversity survey.
- ▶ Ongoing provision of advice to communities undertaking heritage projects.
- ▶ Ongoing development of Heritage Office website.
- ▶ Continued with press releases and radio interviews.
- ▶ Co-ordination of Heritage Week 2007 at county level.
- ▶ Publication and launch of County Sligo Heritage Plan 2007-2011.
- ▶ Publication and launch of the Natural Heritage of Sligo poster.

PROMOTING PARTNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

To promote greater co-operation and co-ordination between all sectors of society for the benefit of heritage in Sligo.

Key initiatives in 2007

- ▶ Continued to support the work of the Heritage Forum (4 meetings during 2007)
- ▶ Established four working groups to support the work of the Heritage Forum.

PROVISION OF HERITAGE FUNDING

Key initiatives in 2007

- ▶ Administration of the following heritage grant schemes:
 - ▶ LA protected Structures Grants
 - ▶ Community Heritage Grant Scheme
 - ▶ Heritage in Schools Scheme



SUPPORTING INTEGRATION OF HERITAGE POLICY IN DECISION MAKING

Key initiatives in 2007

- ▶ Provision of Heritage Policy advice for Development Plans – ongoing.
- ▶ Attendance and contribution at Major Planning Application Meetings
- ▶ Review of Environmental Impact Statements as required.
- ▶ Liaised with Forward Planning Unit re Strategic Environmental Assessment as required.
- ▶ Supported Sligo Local Authorities in review of the County RPS and the Ministerial recommendations transmitted to the Local Authority during 2006.

PROVISION OF HERITAGE INFORMATION

Key initiatives in 2007

- ▶ The Heritage Office continued to provide a heritage information service to LA staff, elected members and the general public on a broad range of issues by correspondence, email and phone.
- ▶ Maintained the heritage section of Sligo County Council website by updating regularly.

Building Control and Enforcement

The principal activities of the Enforcement section include: -

1. Enforcement of planning control
2. Collection of development contributions and securing bonds.
3. Monitoring/liasing with developers to ensure housing estates are completed to a satisfactory standard for taking in charge.
4. Building Control.
5. Dangerous Structures.
6. Derelict Sites.

1. ENFORCEMENT OF PLANNING CONTROL

The sections role in this area involves random inspections of developments in progress, dealing with prior to commencement conditions or conditions which have not been complied with, and investigating complaints from concerned citizens with regard to unauthorised development.

Unauthorised development is developments works, which are not exempted, that are carried out on a site without the benefit of planning permission.

In addition, it is considered to be unauthorised development where, a development is carried out, which is not in compliance with the terms (drawing, site layout, etc) or the conditions of the planning permission granted.

The Enforcement Section will investigate any case of unauthorised development, which comes to its attention. It will conduct a site visit and examine the planning history of the site and may serve a warning letter or an Enforcement Notice on the developer, as specified under the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Every effort is made to deal with breaches without seeking a resolution in the courts, where there are heavy penalties for a person convicted for carrying out unauthorised development.

A total of 237 complaints were lodged with the Section during 2007. The section carried out over 700 inspections, investigated 219 new complaints, served 217 warning letters and 129 Enforcement Notices, and initiated 56 prosecutions. During the same period 163 complaints were resolved or dismissed.

The success of the Enforcement section can be demonstrated by the payment of €89,626.40, during 2007, in respect of application fees for planning permission to retain unauthorised developments.

Making a Complaint

Details of the unauthorised development may be submitted in writing or emailed to the Planning Enforcement Section. These details can also be advised by telephoning the section. Details should include the nature and extent of the development, the person (if known) who is carrying out the development and should include a site location map or accurate location details to facilitate inspection by the Council.

A complaints form is also available online to facilitate the making of a complaint. All complaints are treated confidentially.

2. COLLECTION OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS & SECURITY BONDS

A revised Development Contribution Scheme has recently been adopted by the council under Section 48 of the Planning & Development Act 2000. This scheme will provide the required funding to improve infrastructure throughout the County. In addition, special contributions have been levied in respect of waste – water schemes where specific exceptional costs not covered by the Scheme are incurred i.e. Coolaney, Dromore West, Bunninadden, Carney, Gurteen, Castlebaldwin and Ballintogher.

A system has been put in place to ensure that development contributions which are levied are paid in accordance with the requirements of planning permissions granted. Where the contributions are not paid, appropriate action is taken up to and including legal action.

Bond

The Council imposes a condition on all housing schemes requiring that development work shall not commence until adequate security for the satisfactory completion of the development has been submitted to and accepted by the Planning Authority. Particular attention is given by this section to ensuring that adequate security is in place in respect of all housing developments. The security is only released when the development has been taken in charge of the Council. The phasing of the security can be permitted subject to certain conditions.

3. TAKING ESTATES IN CHARGE

Monitoring of Housing Estates / Taking in Charge

A Legal obligation has been placed on Local Authorities, under Section 180 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, to take in charge housing estates where certain conditions have been met.

Many new housing estates are presently under construction in the County. The activities of the Enforcement Section are geared towards ensuring that these estates are completed to a high standard and allowing the Council (where the developer or residents desire) to take them in charge.

85 inspections were carried out in 2007, and in addition applications to take 12 estates in charge have been lodged with the Council. 2 estates were Taking in Charge during the year.

Application Form

Any request to have a housing estate taken in charge by the Council must be accompanied by a completed application form, fee, appropriate certification and written confirmation of maintenance of open spaces. It is the policy of the Council to have carried out by an agent, on its behalf, a Close Circuit TV survey on all main runs of foul and storm sewers, to ensure satisfactory standards of construction prior to taking any estates in charge.

Building Control and Enforcement

4. BUILDING CONTROL

The Council is the building control authority for both Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council. The objective of the Building Control Section is to encourage good building practice, to ensure that buildings are constructed correctly and that access for the disabled and elderly is provided for in building plans. The Council is required, under inspection targets set nationally, to inspect between 12% and 15% of new works which were notified by way of the submission of a Commencement Notice.

The council continues to pay particular attention to compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations (which deals with access for people with disabilities), where a high level of compliance has been achieved.

In addition it is the policy of the Council when in receipt of a Commencement Notice for 2 or more houses or for commercial or industrial premises to require the developer, to submit drawings showing compliance with Part M – Section 11 (c) BC Act 1990. This has the effect of making both the developer and the architect / agent aware that Part M should be complied with both at the design and at the construction stages. Every effort is made to deal with breaches without seeking a resolution in the courts.

Commencement Notice

A Commencement Notice is a notice informing the council of intent to carry out building works. It must be submitted to the Building Control Section of the council at least 14 days and not more than 28 days before the commencement of any works which require compliance with the building regulations.

A Commencement Notice is required for:

- ▶ The erection of a building
- ▶ The material alteration or extension of a building
- ▶ A material change of use of a building to which the Building Regulations apply

A Commencement Notice Form is available online or it can be obtained directly from the Building Control Section of Sligo County Council.

5. DANGEROUS STRUCTURES

This department has responsibility for dealing with any dangerous structure, which come to our attention. Five such structures were dealt with in 2007.

6. DERELICT SITES

This section continues to work with developers to secure the development of such sites rather than simply improving their appearance. During the year, 64 inspections were carried out throughout the County. In addition, the Council served on the site owners of 8 sites, Notice of its intention to enter the sites on the Derelict Sites Register. 13 sites were entered on the register during the year.



COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE, ARTS AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Environmental Services



The Environment Section is responsible for a wide range of services spanning three programme groups. Objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan include the protection and improvement of water and air quality in Sligo, and to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

The following areas of work are carried out by the Environmental Services Section:

PROGRAMME GROUP 5 – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- ▶ Waste Management
- ▶ Water Quality Management
- ▶ Pollution Control
- ▶ Blue Flag Beaches
- ▶ Water Safety
- ▶ Casual Trading
- ▶ Environmental Awareness
- ▶ Environmental Enforcement
- ▶ Litter Management

PROGRAMME GROUP 7 – AGRICULTURE & EDUCATION

- ▶ Food Safety

PROGRAMME GROUP 8 – MISCELLANEOUS

- ▶ Control of Dogs
- ▶ Control of Horses

The objectives outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan (2004-2009) are to;

- ▶ Provide a clean living environment for the citizens of Sligo
- ▶ Promote the conservation of areas of natural environmental value
- ▶ Protect and improve water and air quality in Sligo
- ▶ Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill

The focus in 2007 was to continue to introduce and implement measures to achieve these corporate objectives.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The new five year Connaught Waste Management Plan (2006-2011) was adopted in May 2006. This plan re-emphasises the targets to be achieved by 2013 in order to comply with National and EU targets, namely: Recycle 48%, Thermally Treat 33% and Landfill 19%. Sligo's recycling rate for household waste continues to reach approximately 30%, an increase of 67% from 2005. In order to reach the ambitious target of 48% recycling of municipal waste, the 'third bin' for organic kitchen waste needs to be introduced to the collection system. Planning for this will be advanced in 2008.

Environmental Services

The management of commercial waste was a target in 2007, and great progress was made under the Packaging Regulations to increase the quantities of packaging waste recycled in the county.

Recycling Centres

Dry recyclable wastes are catered for at the two Recycling Centres in Sligo City and Tubbercurry. The use of these facilities continues to grow and complement the separate kerbside collection of dry recyclable materials, which is available in Sligo town and throughout the county. Adequate infrastructure is in place in County Sligo to cater for the quantities of dry recyclable waste produced, and the challenge now is to maintain and increase their use by both domestic and commercial customers.

Glass is diverted from landfill via a network of 47 bottle banks located throughout Sligo city and county. A total of 1,244 tonnes of glass were recycled in Sligo in 2007. This equates to 4.36 million glass bottles, or 71.5 bottles per head for every person in the county. A total of 28 bring bank sites were upgraded in 2007, with works including fencing, kerbing, paving and improved signage. This improved image of the bottle banks along with the installation of CCTV cameras at 9 of the sites has helped to greatly reduce the incidences of illegal dumping at bottle bank sites.

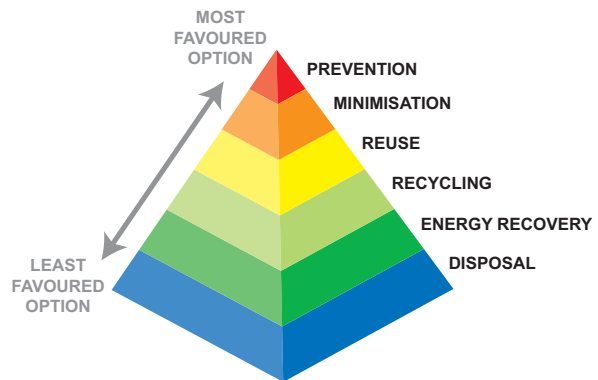
Composting

Organic kitchen waste makes up approximately 30% of all household waste generated. Home composting is a positive and simple option to deal with this waste stream. In 2007, the Environment Section continued to promote the use of home composters and offer them for sale at a subsidised rate. Home composting and the introduction of the 'third bin' for the collection of separated organic kitchen waste will greatly increase the diversion of organic kitchen waste from landfill, thus increasing Sligo's recycling rates. The 'third bin' is expected to be introduced in 2009.

Sligo County Council completed the construction of a Green Waste Composting Facility at Ballisodare, Co. Sligo, in 2007. Green garden waste is a bulky waste fraction that should be diverted from landfill. This facility will be operational in 2008 and will allow both domestic and commercial operators bring their garden waste to the facility for composting.

Waste Hierarchy

Landfill is the least preferred option in dealing with waste, and is at the bottom of the EU waste hierarchy. However, landfill is required to deal with the waste that cannot be recycled, composted or thermally treated, which is estimated to be 19% of all waste generated in Connaught. A greater percentage of landfill capacity is required until the necessary infrastructure is put in place to recycle, compost and in particular thermally treat waste. The development of a North Connaught Landfill to deal with this interim waste, and to ultimately deal with the 19% of residual waste in 2013, continued to be discussed by all relevant Local Authorities in 2007.



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

The Council's Environmental Awareness Officer actively promotes positive environmental action throughout County Sligo. The Environmental Awareness Officer works in tandem with schools, community groups and members of the public to encourage them to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

The level of interest in waste minimization and effective waste management has dramatically increased in recent years and diverting waste from landfill is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing our country.

The Environment Section promotes environmental awareness through a variety of education and information initiatives which are run on an on-going basis. Emphasis is placed on waste prevention campaigns along with campaigns to encourage greater use of the two recycling centers, bring banks, kerbside collection of dry recyclable waste and the use of home composting.

A survey of local authorities, conducted by the Local Government Management Services Board for the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, showed that Sligo's domestic recycling rate for 2006 was 29%, among the highest recycling rates in the country.

The high level of recycling has been achieved by the implementation of a number of measures which include the councils 'pay-by-use' policy to encourage waste minimisation, the roll-out of the separate collection of dry recyclable materials and the high level of household participation in the scheme.

WEEE DIRECTIVE

The Council will continue to promote the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, which allows householders to bring all waste electrical and electronic equipment to the recycling centers free of charge. In 2007, 113 retailers registered with Sligo Council under the WEEE Regulations and 570 tonnes of WEEE was recovered in County Sligo.

Solvent Regulations came into force in October 2007 which requires that businesses that emit solvent vapors register with their local authority and annually obtain a certificate of compliance. The Solvent Regulations were enacted to address the harmful effects of solvents on human health and the environment.

Environmental Services

GREEN SCHOOLS

The Environmental Awareness Officer organizes a number of initiatives with community groups and organizations throughout the county but one of the most successful environmental education campaigns is Green Schools programme. This campaign focuses on waste management and anti-litter awareness within schools and then progresses through the themes of energy awareness, water conservation, sustainable transport and biodiversity as it advances through the programme. School visits by the Awareness Officer are designed to assist schools towards achieving the Green Flag award by giving talks and workshops on waste and litter, energy conservation and water conservation. Annual Green School Seminars are also organised for both teachers and students on these themes.

In total 34 schools in County Sligo have achieved the Green Flag Award. 57 of Sligo's 63 National Schools are registered with the Green Schools Programme, 28 of which have been awarded the Green Flag. All 15 of Sligo's Secondary schools are registered in the Green Schools Programme, 5 of which have been awarded the Green Flag and 2 schools with Special Needs are registered in the Green Schools programme. One has achieved the Green Flag Award.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

The Environment Section continues to support national environmental campaigns e.g. Green Christmas Campaign, National Tree Week, National Spring Clean, National Recycling Week, Race Against Waste etc. by organizing local initiatives. In March 2007 1,000 sapling trees were distributed to community & voluntary groups and schools in County Sligo as part of the National Tree Week programme of events and Sligo County Council supported the community in Kilverneen, Tubbercurry to restore a piece of bog land that had been seriously damaged through illegal dumping as a flag-ship project for the Council as part of the National Spring Clean Campaign 2007

LOCAL AGENDA 21

The Anti-Litter Awareness Grant and Local Agenda 21 Environment Partnership Fund offers financial support to groups that wish to organize environmental projects. **The Local Agenda 21 – Environment Partnership Fund** promotes sustainable development by assisting small scale, non-profit environmental projects at local level. In 2007, 17 groups applied for funding under this grant scheme and 12 applicants were successful. €6,507 was granted from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, which must be matched by the local authority, bringing a total of funding to €13,014.

Funding of €23,000 was awarded for public education and awareness initiatives on litter under the **Anti-Litter Awareness Fund 2007**. Sligo County Council received 22 applications for funding of which 20 were successful.

The Environment Awareness Officer uses the local media in the form of local newspaper and radio advertisements, press releases and interviews to promote the campaigns as they arise. Sligo County Council's web-site and newly installed podcast service also broadcast environmental news and information.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

Since the Waste Management Act came into being in 1996, a large number of Waste Regulations have followed, covering a wide range of waste management activities.

Proceeds from a number of initiatives at national level including the Plastic Bag Levy and the Landfill Levy are funding waste enforcement teams in local authorities across the country. In 2007, a third waste enforcement officer was employed to assist in enforcement activities.

The main role of the enforcement section is in the areas of waste facility and waste collection permits, waste presentation, packaging, WEEE recycling, plastic bag levy, waste movements (including exports), general complaints, illegal dumping and burning, farm plastics, end of life vehicle issues and general compliance with all waste regulations that are currently in force. Waste Enforcement also involves advising businesses and the general public, as well as other sections of the Local Authority about various aspects of waste management and the implications placed upon those affected by the introduction of new regulations.

Over 1,300 waste management related complaints and issues were dealt with by the Waste Enforcement section in 2007.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

One of Sligo County Council's priorities in 2007 in this area was to ensure that hazardous wastes generated by sectors such as garages and the motor trade in general were being dealt with in an appropriate manner. This involved the production of a guidance leaflet and audits were carried out on a number of sites. Through this process, a number of sites were identified that were affected by the recently introduced ELV (End of Life Vehicle) Regulations. These regulations govern the proper storage and treatment of cars and would also relate to the permitting of Authorised Treatment Facilities (ATF) in the County for the free take back of old or scrap cars. Due to the restrictions imposed by the Regulations, many of the ELV's that were previously being stored inappropriately on unpermitted sites were sent to the permitted sites. The quantities of de-polluted vehicles that passed through the permitted sites rose significantly, and this material was exported from the County by ship and road. The exportation of this waste was subject to inspection and tracking during transport, both at road checkpoints and port inspections.

Another area which required attention was the issue of waste presentation, both from businesses and the domestic sector. There was an issue surrounding inappropriate presentation, coupled with the introduction of bye laws and the review and extension of routes. The work carried out in this area has resulted in an improved waste collection service for the county, and a greater volume of waste being collected and disposed of in an appropriate manner. This area will continue to require a significant investment of effort to ensure that services continue to improve and expand.

Environmental Services

The waste enforcement team also worked closely with businesses, mainly in the area of compliance with existing packaging regulations, and endeavouring to reduce the amount of packaging being used, and also to reduce the volume of waste going to landfill.

Also in 2007, a significant amount of time was devoted to construction and demolition waste related issues. This included the implementation of guidelines about the use of certain waste streams. Due to the composition and significant volume of this waste stream, it is envisaged that this area will continue to warrant sustained attention from the enforcement section.

As well as carrying out inspections at various sites, a number of alternative approaches to waste enforcement were employed. This included the carrying out of road check points relating to waste movements in conjunction with the Gardai and other local authorities. This exercise also helped to increase public awareness of the waste enforcement section.

ILLEGAL DUMPING

The covert camera system for surveillance of illegal dumping sites was deployed on a number of occasions throughout 2007. From discussions with other local authorities, the system will be of great benefit in identifying and possibly prosecuting illegal dumpers. There were also a number of CCTV systems installed at various sites, principally Bring Banks that had been adversely affected by illegal dumping. The Waste Enforcement team was involved in the monitoring of footage, and the issuing of fines to offenders, as well as the installation of the systems. Monitoring at one Bring Bank alone resulted in the identification of over 130 litter offenders and a significant number of litter fines being issued and paid.

Farm Plastics

In the summer of 2007, four points for the collection of farm plastics were set up around the county. There was no charge associated with this service, as it was funded by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government, and was intended to deal with a backlog of this material that had built up over the past number of years and had become an issue for farmers throughout the country. This resulted in the collection of over 1,000 tonnes of farm film plastic which was sent to Scotland for recycling. This initiative was very well received by the farming community.

The Waste Enforcement section will continue to work in all of the areas already outlined above, in addition to the new regulations that have been introduced since the start of 2007. These include:

- ▶ Waste Management (Tyres & Waste Tyres) Regulations, 2007
- ▶ Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations, 2007
- ▶ Waste Management (Environmental Levy) (Plastic Bag) Amendment (No.2) Regulations, 2007
- ▶ Waste Management (Shipments of Waste) Regulations, 2007
- ▶ Waste Management (Batteries & Accumulators) Regulations, 2008 (Draft)

LITTER

The issue of litter continues to be a major challenge. In 2007 activity continued on the enforcement of the Litter Pollution regulations.

In 2007, over 300 on-the-spot fines were issued for litter offences ranging from sweet wrappers and illegal signage to 2 or less bags of refuse illegally dumped on public property. Non payment of fines result in legal action being taken by the council and by the end of 2007 the Council initiated over 28 prosecutions.

In 2008 a zero tolerance approach will continue to be taken to littering at bring bank sites. With the purchase of CCTV cameras and installation of these at 9 bring bank sites in the county, it is expected that offenders will be more easily identified. In 2007, 74 on-the spot fines were issued as a result of monitoring of footage at bring banks.

CLEAN SWEEP

Operation Clean Sweep continued in 2007. Under Section 6 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997, occupiers of premises fronting onto the footway within the town limits are obliged to keep the area in front of their premises free of litter. Operation Clean Sweep has so far been introduced to seven towns and villages in the county.

Litter Monitoring surveys were again carried out by Sligo County Council from March to October by the Litter Warden in towns and villages in the county. This survey is an environmental management tool that enables local authorities to tackle litter more effectively, by providing a framework for consistent and accurate self-assessment by local authorities – “if you can measure the litter issue, you can manage it”.

The Environmental Awareness Officer continues to highlight the problem of litter through various programs of work and methods of advertising including competitions, newspaper and radio advertisements, posters, displays, signage and the publication of leaflets. Through the Green School’s programme a huge amount of awareness activity took place including school talks, litter competitions, discussions and debate.

WATER QUALITY

Water quality monitoring and management is governed by the EU Water Framework Directive which rationalises and updates existing water legislation and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBD). Small parts of County Sligo form part of the Shannon River Basin District and the North Western International River Basin District, while most of County Sligo is contained within the Western River Basin District, along with Mayo and Galway, Leitrim, Roscommon and Clare.

The overall objective of river basin projects is to establish an integrated monitoring and management system for all waters within a River Basin District, to develop a dynamic programme of management measures and to produce a River Basin Management Plan, which will be continuously updated.

The main responsibility for the implementation of this Directive lies with the EPA and Local Authorities, to be supported by a number of other public bodies. In 2007, monitoring of Sligo’s rivers and

Environmental Services

lakes took place under the National Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme. The existing monitoring obligations of the Council were integrated into this programme, with more focused monitoring in areas of poor water quality. This monitoring was carried out by the EPA on behalf of Sligo County Council.

WATER MATTERS

A publication 'Water Matters' was produced by all River Basin Districts in 2007 outlining all issues and proposed actions in relation to water quality, and inviting comments from the public. This formed part of the public consultation process which is an integral part of the whole process. Draft Water Quality Management Plans will be published in 2008, with the final Management Plans adopted and published in 2009.

In 2007, the water quality team continued their monitoring and enforcement work in the Agricultural and Industrial sectors. 352 farm inspections were carried out, with follow up enforcement action taken where necessary. Industrial discharges to both waters and sewers were investigated throughout the county to ensure compliance with Water Pollution Regulations. Tubbercurry town was a particular focus for discharge licenses to the sewer in 2007, with an overall number of 223 inspections carried out in the county. In relation to on-site treatment systems, Sligo County Council continued to work closely with the panel of approved site assessors to ensure a consistent approach to site assessments, and enforcement work was carried out on planning conditions. An information leaflet was published on 'Septic Tank and Effluent Treatment Systems' outlining best practice in the area. A total of 456 planning inspections were carried out by the water quality team in 2007.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

In 2007 the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), who were commissioned by Sligo County Council, did some preparatory work on a Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Sligo. It is envisaged that this scheme will be completed by the end of 2008.

In 2007, Source Protection Plans were prepared for the Kilsellagh, Calry and Lough Talt Public Water Supply Schemes, including risk assessments for Cryptosporidium.

Sligo County Council continued to participate in the Western Region Zebra Mussel Control Initiative. During 2007 this campaign was very active in promoting awareness of the zebra mussel issue with the aim of reducing the spread of zebra mussels.

DRINKING WATER MONITORING AND LABORATORY

New Drinking Water Regulations came into effect on the 12th June, 2007. In many respects the new regulations replicate the existing regulations; however supervision of drinking water supplies is one of the key changes introduced by the new regulations. The Environmental Protection Agency is now the Supervisory Authority over Public Water Supplies and has new powers of enforcement over local authorities in this regard. In turn, Local Authorities are the supervisory authority for all other regulated water supplies. The increased enforcement powers afforded by this new legislation ensure that actions are taken where there is a quality deficiency in the water supply. Open and

transparent communications between the supervisory authorities and the water suppliers is central to the implementation of these Regulations, and is crucial in terms of building and maintaining confidence in the new regime.

HIGH STANDARDS

Sligo continues to enjoy a very high standard of drinking water throughout the county. During 2007, an extensive programme of monitoring was carried out on 13 Public Water Supplies, 13 Private Group Water Schemes, and 21 Public Group Water Schemes throughout the County. All sampling was carried out at random sampling locations on each supply. Table 1 below shows the number of check and audit samples carried out on Drinking Water Supplies in the County during 2007. The type and frequency of sampling is governed by legislation.

Table 1 Number of check and audit samples carried out on drinking Water Supplies, 2007

Drinking Water Supply Type	No. Check Samples	No. Audit Samples
Public Water Supplies	259	29
Private Group Water Schemes	116	10
Public Group Water Schemes	74	4

Most of the analysis is carried out by Sligo County Council's laboratory staff in the council's well equipped Environmental Science Laboratory. Regular communication was maintained during 2007 with the Health Service Executive and the Environmental Protection Agency in relation to drinking water quality. Resources will need to be continually maintained in this area in order to meet our statutory obligations and in order to give the citizens of County Sligo full reassurance that the drinking water is being produced and tested to the highest standards.

In addition to drinking water monitoring, Sligo County Council's laboratory staff monitored the final effluent discharge from all urban waste water treatment plants in the county to ensure compliance with the standard set by the EC (Urban Wastewater Treatment) Regulations, 2001. In addition, discharges from over 21 licensed premises were monitored in accordance with the conditions of the discharge licence issued.

Blue Flag Beaches

Rosses Point and Mullaghmore beaches retained their Blue Flag for the 2007 season. However Enniscrone was not successful in 2007 due to a small number of water quality samples not reaching the very stringent blue flag quality standards during the 2006 season.

Blue Flags are awarded based on 26 criteria which must be met during the previous season. These include bathing water quality, beach management, environmental education, and life guard service. In 2006, Enniscrone beach complied with all EU mandatory water quality standards, i.e. acceptable and safe

Environmental Services

bathing water quality. Enniscrone beach was however just outside the more stringent Blue Flag water quality standards for one parameter, Total Coliforms - 80% compliance was required and Enniscrone beach achieved 75% compliance.

Sligo's full bathing water quality monitoring programme commenced in mid May and included this year for the first time, monitoring at Streedagh and Dunmorán Beaches. Water quality at all five beaches was monitored fortnightly during the bathing season, and results of this monitoring were displayed at each beach. All results showed full compliance with the mandatory bathing water quality standards.

Sligo County Council continues to work towards achieving the highest environmental standards at all our beaches.

WATER SAFETY

Sligo County Council provided a full-time Beach-guard service on Enniscrone, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point and Streedagh beaches and a weekend service on Dunmorán for the 2007 bathing season. A full-time Beach-warden service was also provided for Strandhill and Enniscrone beach in 2007. A similar level of service is envisaged for 2008.

AIR POLLUTION

Sligo enjoys excellent Air Quality, and is fortunate in not having heavy industry discharging to the atmosphere. Sligo County Council continued to monitor the activities of the one Air Pollution Licence holder in the county. A decision was made by Sligo County Council to issue two further licences, but these are under an appeal to An Bord Pleanála. Further efforts were made in 2007 to enforce the legislation in relation to backyard burning of waste, and in relation to the use of smokeless fuels in Sligo City. Sligo County Council continues to work with the Environmental Protection Agency to have ongoing monitoring of our air quality carried out if required.

FOOD SAFETY

Sligo County Council enforces Food Safety Regulations in small slaughter houses (abattoirs) and small meat manufacturing plants under Service Contract to the FSAI. The Service Contract between Sligo County Council and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) which is common to all local authorities was drawn up following negotiations between the City and County Managers Association, The FSAI and The Local Authority Veterinary Service. The current contract was adopted by the Council in 2006 and will be in place until 2010.

In 2007 the significant legislative changes introduced by the EU at the beginning of 2006 continued to be the main area of consideration. Work continued in 2007 on adapting and implementing these regulations. An implementation group consisting of the FSAI, the Department of Agriculture and the Local Authority Veterinary Service met regularly to discuss the specifics of the requirements and the need to introduce National Legislation to implement some of the new provisions. Sligo County Council continues to be represented on that group.

Funding for the service is provided by Central Government through the FSAI. While the 2007 allocation was sufficient to operate the service greater input is being sought by Local Authorities into how the Budget is allocated.

There are currently 2 abattoirs under the supervision of Sligo County Council. The supervision involves pre- and post- slaughter checks on all animals along with continuous monitoring of hygiene and welfare standards and BSE controls. Both plants were approved under the new legislation in 2007 and are now operating under full export standard. One of the results of the new legislation was to remove the distinction between small throughput plants and export plants. Both operators have undertaken training in HACCP which is a food safety management system and have introduced HACCP plans in their premises.

Sligo was chosen as one of the counties to participate in a project in the North West designed to promote and market meat produced by small abattoirs. This came about following discussions between the Local Authority Veterinary Service, Leader and the Department of Community, Gaeltacht and Rural Affairs. It is hoped to make further progress on this in 2008.

The inspection of liquid milk producers now takes place at an agreed level for all Local Authorities.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Sligo County Council is responsible for animal welfare under The Control of Dogs Act and The Control of Horses Act.

Implementation of the Control of Dogs Acts involves investigation and seizure of stray dogs and checks for dog licences. The number of dog licences has gone up from 2535 in 2003 to 4322 in 2007. This has been the result of a lot of work on the ground by the Dog Warden. Considerable work has also been done in re-homing dogs where possible.

Particular attention and resources were dedicated in 2007 to breeds which are listed in the Control of Dogs Regulations, 1998 and which are commonly called restricted breeds. This involved targeting owners of these breeds and working with the Housing section of both local authorities. As recent events in Britain have shown these breeds can be potentially very dangerous if not kept under strict control. Of the 374 dogs handled by the pound in 2007, 79 were restricted breeds and 54 of these were Pit Bulls/Pit Bull crosses. This focus will continue in 2008 both in the enforcement of existing regulations and the possible introduction of new bye-laws if necessary.

The Warden carried out some patrols at a number of the beaches in the County following the introduction of Beach Bye-Laws. These included a provision to have dogs on a leash at all times.

The issue of stray horses continues to be monitored. A number of difficulties at one location throughout the year resulted in the seizure of 6 horses in late 2007 for persistent infringement of the Control of Horses Act and bye-laws. Difficulties at this location and at one other location persist and further seizures will be considered if the situation does not improve.

The Council's responsibilities for Sheep Scab Control have been transferred to the Department of Agriculture.

Arts Service



In 2007 the Arts Department of Sligo County Council celebrated its 10th birthday with a special programme of arts events, performances and new commissions. Access to the arts, education, culture and design will be key elements in the development of an environment that promotes diversity, creativity, tolerance and the exchange of ideas.

Sligo Arts Service is a department of Sligo County Council, working in partnership with Sligo Borough Council, The Arts Council of Ireland, and key stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally to deliver a high quality Arts Service for the people of Sligo. Operating from the County Council offices in Market Yard, the personnel of Sligo Arts Service deliver a programme of arts activities covering all artforms, and provide advice, grants and information to individuals and groups who wish to set up arts projects in their own communities.

Sligo Arts Service celebrated its 10th year of existence in 2007 and it was a particularly good year for the arts department. The birthday celebratory programme culminated in the launch of the new **Space for Art, Sligo Arts Plan 2007-2012** in September 2007 which will map the way forward for Sligo Arts Service.

From January to March the input received from the arts community was essential to the development of the County Arts Plan. **Space for Art, Sligo Arts Plan 2007-2012** will guide and inform the planning and delivery of the arts service and annual programmes over the coming years.

Public art (widely defined) has been a hallmark of Sligo Local Authorities arts work since 1997. In 2007 a retrospective and documentary exhibition entitled '**10 Years of Public Art in Sligo 1997 – 2007**' featured each artist commissioned through the Per Cent for Art Scheme since its inception. The exhibition provided a good opportunity to celebrate the achievements and innovations of public art in Sligo and all projects to date are profiled in a brochure available from the Arts Department.

Tribute was paid to the County Manager for this early impetus and to the members of the Sligo Local Authorities Public Art Working Group for their openness and willingness to engage with the process.

The idea behind 'Per Cent for Art' is to promote collaboration between the artist and the community, as former Minister for the Arts John O'Donoghue put it to "make an impact and create lasting memories",

Arts Service

VOGLER SPRING FESTIVAL

The Vogler Spring Festival 2007 featured seventeen world class performers and spanned four days in the picturesque setting of Drumcliffe, County Sligo. A welcome addition for the 2007 festival was a late night concert of *Klezmorim* – music based on traditional Jewish music. As part of the Arts Department's Birthday Celebratory Programme the Festival commissioned Elaine Agnew to write a work for children's choir and string quartet which was premiered as part of the festival. Six primary schools – St Patrick's NS (Calry), St Joseph's NS (Kilmastranny), St Michael's NS (Cloonacool), Ardkeerin NS (Riverstown), Owenbeg NS, SN Christ Rí (Enniscrone) – which were part of the Vogler Music Education Programme 1999-2004, took part in the composition project with Elaine Agnew and writer Eibhlín Nic Eochaidh. Sligo Arts Service continues to fund Con Brio in running a high calibre programme through Sligo Music Series.

CINEMA NORTH WEST

The re-designed mobile cinema is in response to the new partnership developed between the board of Cinema North West and funders Sligo County Council and Leitrim County Council. Local authority offices involved are the Sligo Arts Department, Leitrim's Department of Community & Enterprise and with support from Sligo County Council Library Services. This partnership is unique to the area and committed to developing and reaching audiences for film culture in the northwest. The Tubbercurry screenings that took place from September to December 2007 were the first fruits of Sligo County Council's five year commitment to the mobile cinema as planned for in 'Space For Art', County Sligo's Arts Plan 2007-2012. Sligo Arts Department are considering how the mobile cinema model might be extended to other rural parts of County Sligo and are working with the board of Cinema North West in planning the future locations for our world cinema screenings in 2008 and beyond.

BEALTAINE SLIGO 2007

The highlight of Bealtaine Sligo 2007, a festival celebrating creativity in older age was a 4-day Intergenerational Arts Celebration & Exhibition Programme at the Factory Performance Space. The celebration opened with a Discussion Forum on Building Community & Exploring Place. A screening of **Our Sense of Place**, a short film created by Maugherow Intergenerational Group in collaboration with Dermot Healy, Joanna Parkes, Catherine Fanning and Johnny Gogan created an opportunity for teachers, principals, active retirement groups, artists/facilitators and agencies to engage with the participants of the Intergenerational Projects. Sligo Active Retirement Association staged their original drama, in collaboration with actors John Carty and Sandra O'Malley from Blue Raincoat Theatre Company.



Arts Service



COUNTY SLIGO YOUTH THEATRE

Rehearsals for "The Crucible" got underway in early January with Galway-based director Niall Cleary and the production team consisted of both professionals as well as ex-youth theatre members who acted as lighting technicians and general prop and costume. The production was a great success and received praise from all who went to see it, both for its excellent performances and production values.

SLIGO OMAGH JOINT CULTURAL EVENTS PROGRAMME

Omagh District Council and Sligo County Council have been working together since 1996 through the Omagh Sligo Partnership. Since early 2007 the Omagh Sligo Joint Cultural Events Project has been providing both councils and its partners the opportunity to share experiences, develop joint actions and promote best practice approaches undertaken by the two authorities. One of the objectives has been to integrate the Arts/Cultural Departments in Sligo and Omagh and to develop a cross border cultural programme of events and activities through the mediums of performance, drama, music and visual arts. Development has been undertaken in the areas of youth arts, visual arts, arts and disability and ethnic minorities. The project has also facilitated networking amongst groups, organisations and cultural providers in the two local authority areas.

A series of weekend workshops during June culminated in a week long intensive summer school in early July, when Omagh Youth Theatre welcomed a group of young people from County Sligo Youth Theatre to their new space in the Strule Arts Centre in Omagh. Together they spent the week preparing a lively and colourful show for Strule Arts Centre that incorporated masks, live music, and puppets. The performance was staged in Sligo during November.

VISUAL ART

In the November - December issue of the **Visual Artists' News Sheet**, published by Visual Artists Ireland, the Sligo Arts Department secured a regional profile of the visual arts activity and resources in Sligo. The profile, extended nationally and to an international visual arts audience included an outline of the work of the Sligo Arts Department, the future plans for the Model Arts



& Niland Gallery in advance of its temporary closure for re-development, the visual arts programme of the Sligo Art Gallery and the four programmes related to the arts and design in the Institute of Technology, Sligo along with interviews with four professionally established visual artists living and working in County Sligo.

ARTIST SUPPORT

Sligo Arts Service, with other partners, provides a programme of professional development directed at supporting artists of all disciplines to work collaboratively in a range of contexts. The purpose of this programme is to support artists in Arts & Health and Arts & Education. In 2007 Sligo Arts Service, via Sligo Music Education Partnership, commenced a training programme for musicians and teachers, working in collaboration with Sligo Education Centre. Professional development opportunities for artists is also at the core of the Visual Arts Awareness Programme which has been delivered in partnership with Sligo Art Gallery since 2004 - incorporating an annual curated exhibition in Sligo Art Gallery for young people and an artist-led participative programme in the gallery and schools.

GRANTS & BURSARIES

Each year the Arts Department invests in grants and bursaries for arts programmes and projects in the county. Through the Community Arts Act Grants, the Arts Department assisted over 20 artists, arts groups and organisations in both rural and urban areas to use the arts to build their communities. A two week residency at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre which is an artist's retreat and workplace was awarded to local artist Heidi Wickham to work on a specific visual arts project. Through the Annual Grants Programme the Arts Department supports a number of important arts festivals that take place in Sligo throughout the year as well as numerous cultural events, such as the ever growing Sligo Live Festival.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCING

Sligo Arts Service continue the day-to-day provision of a high quality arts information service. The resources on the website www.sligoarts.ie include a guide to what's on in the region, art features profiling art projects and artists, a directory of local artists and the Sligo Arts Monthly E-Bulletin.

RAPID Programme

The RAPID Programme (Revitalising Areas through Planning Investment & Development) was launched in 2002 by the Minister for State for Local Development Eoin Ryan T.D. The RAPID Programme is now managed by Pobal under the auspice of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. There are now 46 areas in cities and towns around Ireland involved in the RAPID Programme, including the following parts of Sligo Town:

1. Cranmore Estate
2. Forthill Estate / Cartron Estate
3. Garavogue Villas / Doorly Park
4. St. Joseph's Terrace / St. Brigid's Place / Pilkington Terrace
5. Maugheraboy / Jinks Avenue / Tracey Avenue

The RAPID Programme has three specific objectives:

1. To develop a specific integrated policy focus, across the Social Inclusion Measures identified in the National Development Plan, directed at the social groups who are excluded, especially where cumulative disadvantage is pervasive.
2. To tackle, in particular, the spatial concentration of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion within the 25 identified designated disadvantaged areas.
3. To stem the social and economic costs of social exclusion by developing a range of integrated measures such that the physical, social and community infrastructure of designated communities are developed to allow them harness the social capital and capacity necessary for economic and community development.

The following Principles underpin the implementation of the programme:

- ▶ Community participation and local ownership.
- ▶ Promotion of strategic planning.
- ▶ Co-ordination of provision of state services.
- ▶ Targeting of additional services, investment and facilities.
- ▶ Building on existing structures .
- ▶ Complementing existing initiatives.

SLIGO RAPID PROGRAMME

A Focus on Disadvantage

Vision: "For communities and agencies to work together with a common purpose to eliminate disadvantage within the five RAPID areas of Sligo"

The RAPID Programme in Sligo is co-ordinated at a local level by Pamela Andison based in the Community & Enterprise Department and by an Area Implementation Team comprising of the following agencies – FAS, VEC, Dept Social & Family Affairs, Sligo LEADER Partnership Company, Health Services Executive, Sligo Education Centre, Sligo Borough Council, Sligo County Council, Garda Síochána and three community representatives representing the RAPID communities. The remit of the **Area Implementation Team (AIT)** is to take responsibility for the

planning and implementation of the programme locally. The RAPID Programme is monitored by the City/County **Social Inclusion Measure (SIM)** group to ensure that all plans developed are fully integrated with the CDB and agency strategies.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF SLIGO RAPID PROGRAMME TO DATE

The RAPID Programme in Sligo over the past year has achieved many tangible and intangible results through the work and commitment of the Area Implementation Team to developing the programme at a local level.

A second RAPID Local Area Plan is being developed at present to cover 2008-2012. This plan will involve community consultation, analysis of statistical data gathered from State and Voluntary agencies and development of an Action Plan.

The Plan will feature a number of Strategic Themes:

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Family Support
- ▶ Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour
- ▶ Youth Support
- ▶ Education and Training
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Physical Environment.

CURRENT PROJECTS IN RAPID AREAS

The total amount of new investment in RAPID areas from 2002-6 arising from the RAPID Programme is just over €6.5 m. The following are examples of projects and initiatives prioritised under the RAPID Programme:

Development of Community CCTV Schemes

After the announcement from DJELR and Pobal regarding the success of the two Community-based CCTV applications, the RAPID Co-ordinator progressed the proposal for CCTV in Cranmore and Forthill through the following process:

- ▶ Formation of a Steering Group comprising Sligo Borough Council, Gardaí and Community Representatives to agree an action plan;
- ▶ Liaison with the Joint Policing Committee for their approval;
- ▶ Community consultation regarding the implementation of the CCTV projects in each community;
- ▶ A tendering process to satisfy Local Authority legislation and funders' requirements;
- ▶ Developing the technical specification of the cameras and equipment to be used.

Fifteen cameras will be placed in strategic positions in the two estates with Monitoring Rooms in City Hall and the Garda Station accessed by approved personnel only. It is expected that the CCTV system will act as an aid to the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences and breaches of tenancy, improving the quality of life for local residents.

RAPID Programme

REVIEW OF ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

Voluntary and community groups working in RAPID areas of Sligo Town are required by Government Departments to seek endorsement of funding applications from the RAPID AIT so as to ensure co-ordination of resources and strengthen the applications that are being submitted. During 2006 the AIT reviewed the endorsement process in Sligo and has adopted guidelines to be issued to groups who are seeking endorsement so as to simplify the process. A number of applications were endorsed under the Sports Capital Programme and Dormant Accounts Fund, and many were successful. The AIT takes very seriously their responsibilities around endorsement and measures are being taken to revisit successful projects to remind them of their obligations towards RAPID residents.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION ON AREA IMPLEMENTATION TEAM (AIT)

Currently there are three community representatives on the Sligo AIT, who represent all five RAPID areas. Community participation on the RAPID Programme is of paramount importance and it is seen as crucial that community representatives are supported in feeding into the AIT and in turn, back to their communities. A **Community Representatives Team** is in place, so that all communities have a voice in the RAPID Programme.

RAPID LEVERAGE FUNDING

A number of Leverage Funding schemes have been put in place by the Dept Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs in partnership with both National and local agencies for each of the designated RAPID Areas throughout the Country in 2006.

Sligo benefited from these schemes in the following areas:

Playground Scheme

Funding was announced in 2005 for the provision of Acorn Park, a children's playground in Cranmore and this was formally opened in September 2006. A code of practice was developed by the community, for the responsible use of the playground by children and parents.

More play facilities were provided in 2007 – such as the featured I-Play Unit in Doorly Park. An additional item of equipment will be provided in Hillside Playground, Forthill to complete the upgrade of this playground.

Traffic Calming

The Mercy Convent area in Pearse Road, Sligo was seen as a traffic black-spot at school collection and drop-off times, so through the AIT an application was made for the Traffic Calming Leverage Grant and provision of a lay-by was soon completed. Sligo Borough Council matched funding and this initiative was provided in a very short timeframe.

Housing Estate Enhancement Scheme

Preparatory works for the playground in Cranmore were necessary before the play area could be provided – so for this reason the HES grant was utilised in Cranmore in 2006.

The funding for the 2007-8 initiative was awarded to Cartron Estate and Fairgreen for environmental works including levelling and fencing.

Educational Leverage Schemes

A new initiative was launched in 2006 relating to the provision of equipment, furniture and other small capital items. This was in response to requests by AIT's for educational funding in RAPID areas. National and secondary schools servicing RAPID areas are eligible to apply for funds from the Department of Education and Science.

Dormant Accounts Funding (DAF)

A number of applications were successful under the DAF in 2006 including:

- ▶ **Forthill Municipal Park** - €200,000 was awarded under the RAPID Additionality Scheme
- ▶ **Older People's Measure** – four successful projects were awarded funding namely Merville Community centre, St.Anne's Youth and Community Centre, Sligo Leader Partnership Co and Social Services Meals on Wheels. Further applications were supported in 2007 under the Measure and are awaiting assessment by Pobal.
- ▶ **ICT and Young Peoples' Measures** – these two projects were endorsed and both received funding for improvement of Youthreach IT facilities and for multi-media upgrade for a consortium of groups including Northside CDP and Cranmore Community Platform.

OTHER RAPID INITIATIVES

- ▶ **WAVES (Domestic Violence Service)** – a support worker has been working in RAPID areas with community groups and individuals funded by the Equality for Women Measure. This funding has also supported the Refugee Development Plan for Sligo Town.
- ▶ **Sligo Inter-Agency Refugee Support Group** – a measure to address the needs of United Nations programme refugees from Iran on their transfer to Sligo Town. This was facilitated by the Social Inclusion Measures Group of the County Development Board.
- ▶ **Sligo Inter-Agency Traveller Group** – also facilitated and initiated by the SIM group, involving a number of agencies in work to avoid duplication and address gaps in provision of services for this target group.
- ▶ **E-Citizen Women's Computer Training Project** – this Equality for Women funded measure involves local groups being trained in basic computer skills and passing on those skills to other women.
- ▶ **Sligo County Drugs Taskforce** – member of group
- ▶ **Cranmore Community Safety Taskforce** – the RAPID Co-ordinator co-convened this group which involves Gardai, Fire Officers, County Veterinary Officer and community members in designing solutions to issues affecting the estate.

Burial Grounds

The Burial Ground Policy 2006-2010 which was adopted by the Council in March 2006 focuses on a number of key issues:

- ▶ Condition of all Council controlled burial grounds
- ▶ Current level of plot space available
- ▶ State of buildings/structures in burial ground

The policy identified the following 10 burial grounds which required urgent action:

- ▶ Ahamlish (Grange)
- ▶ Keelagues (Ballinrillick)
- ▶ Knockbrack (Culfadda)
- ▶ Carrigans (Maugherow)
- ▶ Killery (Ballintogher)
- ▶ Court Abbey (Achonry)
- ▶ Kilmacowen
- ▶ Dromard
- ▶ Mount Irwin
- ▶ Easkey

It is hoped to commence a programme of works in relation to these burial grounds on a phased basis throughout the life of the policy document. Extensions to Easkey and Keelagues Burial Grounds are now complete. Improvement works were carried out in Carrigans Burial Ground resulting in the provision of extra grave plots. Ministerial consent was granted from the Department for necessary works to be carried out in Knockbrack Burial Ground. Work is ongoing in trying to secure suitable sites for the provision of extensions to burial grounds in Grange, Killery, Kilmacowen, Court Abbey, Dromard and Mount Irwin.

The maintenance and conservation of burial grounds is carried out by Sligo County Council in consultation with the community. The Office of Community & Enterprise promotes the establishment of burial ground committees, the aim being to involve the community in the upkeep and maintenance of the area. Each year, Sligo County Council administers a burial ground grant scheme, to encourage and support these groups to maintain their local cemeteries and enhance their communities. The Council acknowledges the great voluntary efforts of community groups and local burial ground committees involved in care and conservation of these areas. The Council is pursuing this partnership approach throughout the county; with the community taking on more responsibility in the upkeep and maintenance of these places of natural heritage.

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY GRANT SCHEME 2007

The Community & Voluntary Grant Scheme 2007 attracted 111 valid applications from a wide and varied selection of Community and Voluntary Organisations throughout the County.

The Scheme is divided into three distinct categories:

(a) Community & Voluntary General Grant

Under this heading 46 applications were received and Groups were awarded grants of between €300 and €1,500. The aim of the Scheme is to support and encourage the work and activities of Community & Voluntary Organisations.

(b) Burial Ground General Grant

Under this heading 46 applications were received. Grant aid of €75 was awarded to Burial Ground Committees who do excellent work to enhance and maintain their local burial ground.

(c) Burial Ground Enhancement Works Grant

Under this heading 19 applications were received and burial ground committees were awarded grant aid of between €75 - €2,000 for enhancement works.

Tourism Facilities

In April 2007 Fáilte Ireland, under the NDP, announced funding opportunities for local authorities to develop a set of tourism facilities in the key product areas in 2007. The Fáilte Ireland grant of 75% was matched with 25% of local authority funds. This represented a major opportunity to work in partnership with Fáilte Ireland to develop the infrastructure necessary for success in an ever more challenging tourism market. The three projects undertaken were:

Drumcliffe Visitor Management Project (Phase 1)

Phase 1 was to prepare the location for the onset of increased visitor numbers through the enhancement of the area by improving its physical presentation through a series of improvements. These included: improving parking facilities, implementing traffic control measures and the provision of soft landscaping in the area.

Strandhill Visitor Management Project

The project consisted of resurfacing works at the public car park located on Lower Buenos Ayres Drive, introduction of soft landscaping, attractive street lighting thereby increasing the overall attractiveness, appeal and usage of this ample and currently under-utilized parking facility. Strandhill has great tourism potential with a wide variety of activities on offer to visitors including surfing, golf, rugby, equestrian activities and cultural/walking. This project was aimed at increasing the length of stay and ensuring return visits by visitors to this popular seaside location.

Rosses Point Promenade Enhancement Project (Phase 1)

Phase 1 sought to improve walkers' safety and comfort at the hugely popular and well utilised local promenade. The surface of the promenade walkway was restored and street furniture was provided at intervals for people to sit and enjoy the scenic Knocknarea mountains, the islands and Sligo Bay.

The projects adhere to the challenges outlined in the County Development Boards Integrated Strategy and in particular supports Priority 5 Tourism Development - focusing on developing quality tourism products appropriate to its economic, social and cultural characteristics. The projects also support a key objective of Sligo Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2004-2009 promoting Sligo as a tourism destination by facilitating development of tourism amenities in the county.

Community Smoke Alarm Scheme

The Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government allocated funding to local authorities in 2007 for the provision of smoke alarms to vulnerable households across the country.

The objective of the Community Smoke Alarm Scheme was to target vulnerable households (non local authority housing) which might not be captured by other funding measures already available.

Sligo County Council with the assistance of the voluntary sector identified vulnerable households which were in need of smoke alarms and arranged for the supply of two free 10 year self contained smoke alarms per household. A total of 250 households benefited from this scheme. Sligo County Council acknowledges the support and assistance given by the community & voluntary sector in identifying the households and in the installation of the alarms. This scheme would not have succeeded were it not for their assistance.

Sligo County Development Board

Sligo County Development Board in their Ten Year Strategy 2002-2012 highlighted the need for targeted intervention in CLAR areas to stimulate and create economic activity and assist with the regeneration of smaller towns and villages in the county that have suffered from population decline and emigration over the past few decades.

Sligo County Development Board in their Ten Year Strategy 2002-2012 highlighted the need for targeted intervention in CLAR areas to stimulate and create economic activity and assist with the regeneration of smaller towns and villages in the county that have suffered from population decline and emigration over the past few decades.

In particular the CDB identified the towns of Enniscrone in West Sligo and Tubbercurry in South Sligo as important second tier, key support towns which have not benefited from the economic boom of the late 1990's to any great extent and which service extensive rural hinterlands.

In May 2006, an Economic Development Officer was appointed with the remit of developing an Economic Development Strategy for both areas. This is a two year project, funded under the Dormant Accounts Funds.

Aims/Objectives of the project.

- ▶ Development of an Economic Development Strategy for both areas.
- ▶ Community Enterprise Space – develop a marketing strategy for existing space in Enniscrone and access the feasibility of developing same in Tubbercurry.
- ▶ Provide assistance with improving the overall aesthetic look of both areas.
- ▶ Advice on Business Start-up and expansion in conjunction with Sligo C.E.B.
- ▶ The main aim of this project is to provide a focused, cohesive and strategic approach to development in Enniscrone and Tubbercurry.

In order to ensure the focused and strategic management of the Economic Development project a steering group was established with representatives from:

- ▶ Enniscrone & District Community Development Ltd
- ▶ Tubbercurry Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Sligo County Enterprise Board
- ▶ Sligo County Council – Community & Enterprise.

SUMMARY OF WORK TO DATE

Both Economic Development Strategies are now near completion. Draft copies were circulated in Enniscrone and Tubbercurry and community feedback invited. All feedback has now been considered and included in the Strategies.

Business and Street Survey's were carried out in both Tubbercurry and Enniscrone, with Public Consultation Sessions also being held in both areas. The Street Survey was also conducted in both secondary schools – in order to be fully inclusive we consulted a broad range of age groups. The results of both surveys form the core content of the Economic Development Strategies.

Priority projects have now been identified in both areas and working groups have been established around these projects. The aim of these working groups is to plan for and undertake tangible activity for the benefit of the community and to work in partnership with Sligo County Council, funding and state agencies.

Working groups have been established in Enniscrone to look at the development of:

- ▶ **The Castle Field** – a community owned area in the centre of the town.
- ▶ **Tourism** – primarily the extension of the tourist season.
- ▶ **Walking** – the development of a number of walking groups in and around Enniscrone.
- ▶ **Pier/Marina** – this group is examining the feasibility of developing a marina in Enniscrone and improving current facilities at the pier.
- ▶ **Water Activity Centre** – to provide facilities for surfers, divers and other water based activities.

In Tubbercurry working groups have been established to look at the following:

- ▶ **Tourism** – develop a number of walking routes in and around Tubbercurry and to also undertake a number of small projects at Lough Easkey, Beal an Eassa Waterfalls, Masshill.
- ▶ **Business & Enterprise Development** - currently considering several options for the development of Community Enterprise Units in Tubbercurry.

This group is concerned with the provision of training and as much back up support as possible for small businesses in the area. A Start Your Own Business Course, in conjunction with Sligo County Council and Sligo County Enterprise Board was held to provide training and advise.

Sligo County Council Led Peace II Task Force

PEACE II EXTENSION PROGRAMME

MEASURE 3.3 Building Better Communities and Improving Rural Communities



**Project part financed
by the European Union**
Peace and Reconciliation Programme

The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation is a unique EU funded programme for all of Northern Ireland and the Border Regions of Ireland (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo) which is financed by the European Union Structural Funds (75%) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (25%).

The main aim of the PEACE II programme is:

to promote reconciliation and help to build a more peaceful and stable society.

Funding under Measures 3.3 focused on a wide variety of projects to encourage revitalisation of areas, to support regeneration, development and enhancement of village and rural community facilities and to develop tourism related projects in order to reposition the area as a competitive tourism destination in the international market place.

Activities during 2007 on a selection of PEACE II extension programme projects included:

- ▶ **Ox Mountain Walking Festival** – April
- ▶ **Dedication ceremony in Kilmactigue cemetery** – May
- ▶ **Launch of 'Ocean Dreams' at Mullaghmore Sailing Club** – June
- ▶ **Blue Raincoat Cairde Festival** – July
- ▶ **Sligo Play Day in association with National Play Day** – July
- ▶ **Official Opening of the Ancient Ireland Theme Park, Banada** – Sept.

Other projects / groups funded include:

- ▶ Rosses Point coastal walk
- ▶ Calry Community Walkway
- ▶ CLASP - Upgrading of Keash Hall
- ▶ Moylough Community Resource Centre
- ▶ Youth Reach Sligo
- ▶ MCR Community Centre
- ▶ Ballygawley Development Group
- ▶ Skreen & Dromard Community Council
- ▶ Ballymote Community Enterprise
- ▶ North Connaught College
- ▶ Geevagh Community Centre
- ▶ Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann
- ▶ CLASP - Community Transport
- ▶ CLASP - Ballinafad Village Amenity Area
- ▶ Coolaney Development Company

- ▶ Marketing Sligo Forum – County Sligo Tourism Initiative
- ▶ Ballinrillick Environmental Group
- ▶ Kid's Own Voices
- ▶ Tubbercurry Community Arts Development project
- ▶ Sligo Sport & Recreation Partnership- Active Communities project

Projects applying for funding under the PEACE II extension programme were required to show that they would contribute to at least one of the overall objectives of the Programme as follows:

- Objective 1: Addressing the legacy of conflict**, i.e. the Programme aims to address specific problems generated by the conflict in order to assist the return to a normal peaceful and stable society.
- Objective 2: Taking opportunities arising from Peace**, i.e. to encourage actions, which have a stake in peace and which actively, help promote a stable and normal society where opportunities for development can be grasped

The projects are also required to demonstrate how they address five additional interwoven and related strands:

- ▶ Building positive relationships
- ▶ Acknowledging and dealing with the past
- ▶ Developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society
- ▶ Cultural and attitudinal change
- ▶ Social, economic and political change

The Managing Authority for the Peace II Programme is the **Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)** which is one of North/South Implementing Bodies, set up under Strand Two of the Good Friday Agreement:



The Sligo County Council led PEACE II Task Force (established as a sub committee of the County Development Board) which is the Implementing Body for Sligo received €1,033,000 under Measure 3.3 and supported 26 projects throughout the county. The aims and objectives of these Measures also match the objectives of the Sligo County Development Board's Economic, Social and Cultural Strategy for County Sligo 2002-2012. The Task Force draws its members from the four sectors, Local Government, Local Development, State agencies and the Social Partners.

The Office of Community & Enterprise, Sligo County Council, provides secretariat and technical assistance to the Task Force on the implementation of the PEACE II extension programme.

Play and Recreation / Cross Border Seaside Towns Initiative

Throughout the year a number of events were organised to promote the value of play in relation to health, education, creativity and social development:

- ▶ Kite-making workshops using recycled materials were promoted organised and facilitated in primary schools and in Globe House
- ▶ National Play Day in Mitchell Curley Park was co-ordinated and play initiatives supported in a multi agency approach
- ▶ Community groups were encouraged to promote the importance of play at local level.

Play and recreation development in 2007 also included developing linkages with Local Authorities in Northern Ireland in the area of best practice in the development of Play and Recreation opportunities. A site visit to Omagh District Council's playgrounds, meeting with local community groups and attending conferences and workshops in Northern Ireland regarding play were all part of the cross border networking activities.

CONSULTATION:

Sligo County Council held several consultation workshops in 2007 working closely with Sligo Sport & Recreation Partnership, Sligo County Childcare Committee and a number of local schools. These consultations have helped to identify the needs of children and young people in Sligo when it comes to developing play and recreation infrastructure and opportunities for play.

The Play & Recreation Officer also advised community groups and facilitated open meetings with a number of committees interested in recreational development in their areas.

PLAYGROUND DEVELOPMENT

During 2007 a number of playgrounds were developed around the county in conjunction with local playground committees:

- ▶ Ballisodare
- ▶ Ballinacarrow
- ▶ Coolaney
- ▶ Skreen (opening 2008)

Funding for these playgrounds came from various sources – local contributions, county council funds, Urban & Village Renewal Programme, PEACE II Extension Programme and Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government.



The Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council Councillor Seamus Kilgannon welcomed all the guests to the final celebration event of the Seaside Towns Initiative and officially launched the new tourism based website www.discoverseasidetowns.ie in December 2007.

This joint cross border local authority project part-financed by the European Union through the Interreg IIIa Programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the ICBAN Partnership resulted in major infrastructural works being undertaken in five council areas.

The Seaside Towns Initiative was led by Sligo County Council and partnered with Donegal County Council, Coleraine Borough Council, Larne Borough Council and Moyle District Council. In 2003, the project was awarded €1,275,000 under Priority 1 Measure 1 of INTERREG IIIA through ICBAN. The aim of this four year initiative was to undertake environmental improvement works in nine seaside towns in the partners' areas and to undertake a co-operative marketing programme to increase international and national visitors to the region.

The resorts that participated were:

1. Sligo - Enniscrone, Mullaghmore;
2. Donegal - Donegal, Buncrana, Bundoran;
3. Coleraine - Portrush;
4. Larne - Glenarm;
5. Moyle - Ballycastle

Works in **Enniscrone** put the finishing touches to a much loved family resort, providing soft landscaping and improved access facilities for visitors to the area. With its 5km of sandy Blue Flag beaches it offers plenty of water based activities for the adventurous, a championship golf course and Waterpoint Aqua facilities for family entertainment.

A 19th century stone built harbour is the focal point of **Mullaghmore** and funding received was used to further enhance the spectacular views of this resort with its wild sweeping ocean and golden sandy beaches.

ICBAN Project Officer, Mr. Garret McGinty stated that ICBAN were delighted with the outcome of this unique project. He said that the cross border project had brought together local authorities to share knowledge and technical expertise and this had resulted in mutual economic, social and cultural benefits for all the parties involved.

Sligo Volunteer Centre

Throughout the year Sligo Volunteer Centre took part in many events to promote volunteerism, as well as gaining much publicity in local media. Below are some facts and figures for the year as well as a number of special events highlighted.

2007 FACTS & FIGURES

- ▶ 112 individual volunteers registered with Sligo Volunteer Centre
- ▶ 4 Corporate bodies registered staff volunteers
- ▶ 45% of those who registered with us in 2007 never volunteered before
- ▶ We made 101 placements in Community & Voluntary Groups in 2007
- ▶ The 101 placements totaled 5739 voluntary hours.

SPECIAL EVENTS IN 2007

Launch January 2007

Wednesday 24th January 2007 saw the official launch of the Sligo Volunteer Centre with Minister of State Noel Ahern delivering the official opening speech. It was a great occasion for the Community & Voluntary sector in Sligo.

The evening comprised of addresses by a variety of public representatives as well as the perspective of a volunteer - Mr. Kieran McGill, Sligo Person of the Year 2006/2007 contributing to his community in rural Sligo.

The launch also incorporated an opportunity for community and voluntary groups to have information stands. The launch acknowledged the work of community and voluntary groups and demonstrated just how vital they are to the Sligo Volunteer Centre. There were approximately 20 stands and in total there were approximately 120 attendees.

RAPID Programme: Community Skills Survey 2007

Sligo Volunteer Centre had in their 2007 plans an aim to work with a RAPID area of Sligo Town. The project that SVC got involved in was in conjunction with Cranmore Community Co-op. The Co-op were conducting a Community Skills Survey in their estate to establish what kinds of skills and talents lay within the community itself. The results of the survey will feed information on the type of training which can be developed in the area, ideas for local enterprises and locally based skills exchange.

Sligo Volunteer Centre recruited 8 volunteers to "buddy" with local volunteers to carry out the surveys. Sligo Volunteer Centre are currently in the process of evaluating the outcomes and working with the Cranmore Community Co-op on the feedback received to learn from the experience and perhaps see how similar projects could be implemented in other areas.

Give it a Swirl 2007

'Give it a Swirl Day' was organised by Volunteer Centres Ireland and was the first National Day of volunteering. Schools, businesses and individuals all over the country were encouraged to take part in voluntary activity for the good of their community on this day. The theme was "Community Makeover" and took place on Wednesday 26th September 2007. Sligo Volunteer Centre has been involved in supporting two local projects.

Training Pitch Redevelopment at Sligo Showgrounds

Sligo Rovers FC wanted to re-develop an area of waste ground in order to extend the training pitch area in Sligo Showgrounds. The area was covered in rubble and waste. The volunteers also sorted and chopped wood for distribution as firewood to the elderly of the area for the winter. Volunteers from the ESB, the Bank of Ireland, MBNA and Sligo Borough Council as well as a number of individuals from the locality took part on the day.

Tree/shrub planting at Skreen/Dromard

The project involved supporting the Skreen/Dromard Community Council to plant trees and shrubs around the site of a new playground which was being developed for the community. Unfortunately, due to the late start to the construction side of the project, the volunteers were unable to get into action on Give it a Swirl Day. However, the shrub and tree planting took place on Saturday 20th October. Twenty people took part on the day and two plum trees, as well as various bulbs were planted and the hedge area was prepared for further planting in the Spring.

International Volunteer Day 5th December 2007

Sligo Volunteer Centre hosted a successful celebration evening for International Volunteer Day 2007 in the Model Arts Centre on Wednesday 5th December. The event was attended by local community & voluntary groups and by volunteers from a variety of organisations around the county. The special guest on the night was Mr. Hugh Brennan, CEO of the Niall Mellon Township Trust. He himself started as a volunteer on the Niall Mellon project a number of years ago, and has now taken up a full time position as the CEO of the Charity. Mr. Brennan highlighted the fact that every volunteer's contribution here and abroad all makes a difference.

Sligo County Council Tidy Towns Competition 2007

This was the second year of the highly popular County Tidy Towns Competition which was organised by Sligo County Council. A total of 136 entry forms were received in 2007, an increase of 22% on the volume of application received in 2006.

Tidy Towns 2007 / Pride of Place

This was the second year of the highly popular County Tidy Towns Competition which was organised by Sligo County Council. A total of 136 entry forms were received in 2007, an increase of 22% on the volume of applications received in 2006.

The following Groups were awarded prizes:-

Best Kept Housing Estate

The Links, Enniscrone
Newtown Residents Association - Grange
Hillcrest Park Residents Association, Strandhill
Gort na Sí Residents Committee, Coolaney
Highfield Estate Residents Association, Tubbercurry
Woodbrook Heights Residents Association, Ballisodare
Cloondara Residents Association, Ballisodare

Best Kept School

St. Johns National School Ballisodare
Killavil National School
Scoil Criost Ri, Coolaney
Knockminna NS, Ballymote
Colaiste Iascaigh, Easkey
St Attracta's Community School, Tubbercurry
Colaiste Mhuire, Ballymote

Best Kept Shop Front/Business

Sligo Aluminium, Grange
The Strand Bar, Strandhill

Best Community Managed Bottle Bank

Enniscrone Tidy Towns Committee
Keash Village Enhancement Group
Banada Development Agency
Grange Tidy Towns

Best Kept Street

Ballintogher Tidy Towns - Main Street
Strandhill Comm Development Assoc. - Village
Open Space/Green or Riverside Area
Ballymote Tidy Towns - Town Park
Enniscrone Tidy Towns Committee - Promenade
Grange Tidy Towns Committee - Village Park

County Award

Ballintogher Tidy Towns Committee
Ballisodare Tidy Towns Committee
Ballymote Community Enterprise - Tidy Towns Committee
Banada Development Agency - Tidy Towns Committee
Carney Tidy Towns Committee
Coolaney Tidy Towns Committee
Easkey Community Council - Tidy Towns Committee
Grange Tidy Towns Committee
Mullaghmore Active - Tidy Towns Committee
Riverstown Tidy Towns Committee
Tubbercurry Tidy Towns Committee
Keash Village Enhancement Tidy Towns Committee

Towns and villages throughout County Sligo also took part in the National Tidy Towns Competition run by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and sponsored by SuperValu since 1992.

SLIGO PRIDE OF PLACE COMPETITION

Sligo County Council in co-operation with Sligo Borough Council once again came together to reward and honour communities and areas engaged in ongoing or recently completed projects which foster awareness and enhancement in the locale, promote civic pride and encourage full community participation. The Pride of Place Competition recognises and celebrates the vital contributions that community groups make to society.

The focus is on people coming together to shape, change and enjoy all that is good about their local area. It differs from other similar projects in that it specifically recognises the involvement of the local community in all aspects of rural and urban life including regeneration projects, promoting social inclusion and cohesion, the promotion of heritage and environmental awareness. Nominations are made by local authorities, who see at first hand what is being carried out at local level.

Four groups went forward to represent Sligo at the All Island Pride of Place Awards:

- ▶ Banada Development Agency,
- ▶ The Catalyst Project,
- ▶ Forthill History Art and Mens Group and
- ▶ Tubbercurry Fair Trade Committee

National Pride of Place Awards Ceremony 2007

The Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place winners were announced on the 10th November at a gala awards ceremony in Westport's Knockranny House Hotel. The competition is run by the charity Co-operation Ireland in partnership with the All-Island Local Authority Steering Forum, a forum which seeks strategic and sustainable approaches to cross border co-operation by local authorities.

In 2007, there were nominations received from villages, towns and cities from practically every county in Ireland. All of these nominees demonstrated what can be achieved when people work together to enhance and change parts of their area for the good of the whole community.

Although there were no overall prizes won by those groups representing Sligo, Banada Development Agency was shortlisted in its category of a population of less than 200.

Urban & Village Renewal Programme

2007 concluded the 2001-2006 Urban and Village Renewal Programme funded by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The amount of money spent this year was approximately €1,000,000 which consisted of village enhancement works to the rural villages of Coolaney, Ballysadare and Ballinacarrow and one urban enhancement project titled "The greening of Sligo" in Sligo City Centre.

Works on the three rural village enhancement projects were carried out by Streamline Construction Ltd. and included a number of aesthetically pleasing landscaping schemes coupled with soft infrastructural improvements, lighting, walking/running routes and playground facilities.

Coolaney: Improvement works concentrated on the Millenium Park and River Walk area. This involved a complete transformation of the existing green field site into the public recreation space it has become and the provision of a new macadam surface to the existing stone gravel path. Works also included the provision of entrance features to the river walk and millennium park and an overhaul of the entrance to the new community/sports facility. The project also included the provision of much needed street furniture to replace the existing aged, weathered and broken ones.

Ballysadare: The improvement works for this village concentrated around the community facility in Abbey Drive and the upgrading of the grotto and river-side features at the bridge. The grotto was stripped of the cobble block paving and steps and was replaced by bright paving slabs and uplifter lights to create a focal point in the village centre. The timber decking area was also replaced to enhance the site of the new art-piece "The flame". Works at the community facility included the installation of a playground facility and the provision of a walking/running track around the perimeter of the football pitch. Also included in the Ballysadare enhancement project was street furniture and floodlighting of the Church of Ireland.

Ballinacarrow: The focal point of this village is the community hall. The grounds of this facility was completely overhauled with the provision and installation of a new playground facility, cobble block paving around the community hall, kerbing and the provision of a new car-park surface and fencing, landscaping and painting the hall. The village was also enhanced by a floodlighting scheme to the local church and again the provision of new street furniture around the grounds of the community hall and playground.

Details of Conferences 2007

DATE	DETAILS OF ALL CONFERENCES APPROVED FOR ATTENDANCE BY COUNCILLORS IN 06	List of Councillors who attended
18/01/07	Positive farmers Conference	Cltr Gerard Mullaney
18/01/07	UCC Annual Business Conference, Cork	Cltr Jerry Lundy
25/01/07	Futourism, Mayo	Cltr. Gerard Mullaney
01/02/07	The Government Planning service, Waterford	Cltr Declan Bree, Gerard Mullaney, Gerry Murray
09/02/07	AMAI Conference, Tralee	Cltr Aidan Colleary, Veronica Cawley, Paul Conmy, Michael Fleming, Ita Fox, Deirdre Healy McGowan, Seamus Kilgannon, Tony McLoughlin, Gerard Mullaney, John Sherlock.
15/02/07	Mid West Regional Authority, Limerick	Cltr Declan Bree, Paul Conmy, Michael Fleming, Ita Fox, Margaret Gormley, Seamus Kilgannon, Gerard Mullaney, John Sherlock
17/02/07	Planning Seminar for Councillors, Tralee	Cltr Martin Baker, Aidan Colleary, Declan Bree, Tony McLoughlin, Joseph Queenan
21/02/07	Annual & International Tourism Conference, Wicklow	Cltr Declan Bree, Paul Conmy, Michael Fleming, Albert Higgins, Gerard Mullaney
23/02/07	CEC Conference, Dundalk	Cltr Patsy Barry, Aidan Colleary, Ita Fox, Albert Higgins, Seamus Kilgannon, Jerry Lundy, John Sherlock
23/02/07	Colmcille Winter School, Donegal	Cltr Paul Conmy, Michael Fleming, Tony McLoughlin, Gerard Mullaney
28/02/07	Flight of Earls, Dungannon	Cltr Deirdre Healy McGowan
02/03/07	Energy Seminar, Clonmel	Cltr Veronica Cawley, Paul Conmy, Ita Fox
08/03/07	ACCC Conference, Dungarvan	Cltr Mary Barrett, Declan Bree, Veronica Cawley, Aidan Colleary, Paul Conmy, Jude Devins, Pat McGrath, Tony McLoughlin, Gerry Murray, Joseph Queenan, John Sherlock
28/03/07	15th Annual Environmental Conference, Kerry	Cltr Aidan Colleary, Paul Conmy, Michael Fleming, Ita Fox, Albert Higgins, Seamus Kilgannon, Jerry Lundy, Tony McLoughlin, Gerard Mullaney, Joseph Queenan
12/04/07	LAMA Spring Conference, Killarney	Cltr Veronica Cawley, Aidan Colleary, Margaret Gormley, Deirdre Healy McGowan, Albert Higgins, Sean MacManus
13/04/07	Western Rail Corridor Conference, Claremorris	Cltr Michael Fleming, Jerry Lundy, Gerard Mullaney, Gerry Murray, John Sherlock
13/04/07	Roscrea Spring Conference, Tipperary	Cltr Pat McGrath, Gerry Murray
18/04/07	Irish Rural Dwellers Association, Killarney	Cltr Gerry Murray
20/04/07	Amnesty International Economic & Human Rights, Dublin	Cltr Mary Barrett
31/05/07	Irish Public Mutual Insurances, Dublin	Cltr Albert Higgins
08/06/07	Effective Communication for Councillors, Louth	Cltr Paul Conmy, Jim McGarry, Tony McLoughlin
13/06/07	BMW Regional Assembly Annual Conference, Louth	Cltr Jerry Lundy
21/06/07	Your Place or Mine Conference, Croke Park, Dublin	Cltr Jim McGarry
29/06/07	Byrne/Perry Summer School, Wexford	Cltr Jude Devins, Tony McLoughlin
01/07/07	Synge Summer School, Wicklow	Cltr Tony McLoughlin

Details of Conferences 2007

DATE	DETAILS OF ALL CONFERENCES APPROVED FOR ATTENDANCE BY COUNCILLORS IN 06	List of Councillors who attended
05/07/07	Local Government Planning Service, Baltimore, Cork	Cllr Imelda Henry, Joe Leonard, Sean MacManus, Pat McGrath, Gerard Mullaney, John Sherlock
15/07/07	Patrick McGill Summer School, Donegal	Cllr Imelda Henry, Seamus Kilgannon, Joe Leonard, Pat McGrath, Gerard Mullaney
06/08/07	William Carleton Summer School, Tyrone	Cllr Imelda Henry, Pat McGrath
10/08/07	Comhaltas Sliabh Luachra Summer School, Cork	Cllr Tony McLoughlin
12/08/07	Parnell Summer School, Wicklow	Cllr Jude Devins, Ita Fox, Imelda Henry, Sean MacManus, Jim McGarry, Tony McLoughlin
19/08/07	Merriman Summer School, Lisdoonvarna	Cllr Martin Baker, Declan Bree, Veronica Cawley, Aidan Colleary, Tony McLoughlin, Joseph Queenan
23/08/07	General Humbert Summer School, Mayo	Cllr Patsy Barry, Paul Conmy, Ita Fox, Seamus Kilgannon, Tony McLoughlin
06/09/07	Rural Tourism, Clare	Cllr Mary Barrett, Declan Bree, Margaret Gormley
07/09/07	Thatching a Galway's Perspective, Galway	Cllr Michael Fleming, Cllr Aidan Colleary, Deirdre Healy McGowan
12/09/07	Flight of the Earls, Donegal	Cllr Patsy Barry, Declan Bree, Sean MacManus
13/09/07	AMAI Conference, Wexford	Cllr Margaret Gormley, Imelda Henry, Tony McLoughlin
25/09/07	Local Government & Rural Development, Tullamore	Cllr Declan Bree, Paul Conmy, Jim McGarry
28/09/07	19th Annual La Touche Seminar, Wicklow	Cllr Declan Bree, Sean MacManus
04/10/07	Feile Frank McCann, Roscommon	Cllr Patsy Barry
04/10/07	Kimo International Conference, Wexford	Cllr Sean MacManus
12/10/07	TJK Planning Seminar for Councillors	Cllr Martin Baker, Mary Barrett, Sean MacManus
18/10/07	Associations of Irish regions, Kerry	Cllr Mary Barrett
26/10/07	Health & Safety Training, Tipperary	Cllr Mary Barrett, Margaret Gormley, Sean MacManus, Pat McGrath, Joseph Queenan
26/10/07	Developing Rural Creativity, Drumshanbo	Cllr Tony McLoughlin
02/11/07	Roscrea Conference	Cllr Mary Barrett, Margaret Gormley, Imelda Henry, Pat McGrath, Tony McLoughlin
03/11/07	Inclusion Irelands Parents Seminar, Athlone	Cllr Michael Fleming
09/11/07	LAMA Winter Conference, Carlow	Cllr Martin Baker, Patsy Barry, Aidan Colleary, Paul Conmy, Ita Fox, Deirdre Healy McGowan, Imelda Henry, Albert Higgins, Seamus Kilgannon, Jerry Lundy, Tony McLoughlin, John Sherlock
13/11/07	National Conference in Food, Mullingar	Cllr Martin Baker, Joseph Queenan
18/11/07	Effective Communications for Councillors, Letterkenny	Cllr Declan Bree
22/11/07	National Disability conference, Dublin	Cllr Sean MacManus
23/11/07	Clare Tourist Conference, Ennistymon	Cllr Aidan Colleary, Paul Conmy, Joe Leonard
23/11/07	Regional Development Conference, Galway	Cllr Gerard Mullaney
24/11/07	A Future for Co-Operation, Louth	Cllr Tony McLoughlin
01/12/07	Local Government Budget 2008, Wexford	Cllr Mary Barrett, Declan Bree, Jerry Lundy, Joseph Queenan

Finance Department

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2007

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure.

It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year.

Expenditure by Programme Group	Gross Expenditure 2007 (€)	Income 2007 (€)	Net Expenditure 2007 (€)	Expenditure 2006 (€)
Housing & Building	4,009,101	3,750,433	258,668	447,062
Roads Transportation & Safety	30,860,043	24,702,743	6,157,301	5,708,842
Water & Sewerage	7,595,485	3,483,419	4,112,065	3,795,858
Development Incentives & Controls	3,748,221	1,124,367	2,623,854	2,125,092
Environmental Protection	5,880,006	1,233,567	4,646,439	4,428,377
Recreation & Amenity	3,733,148	550,702	3,182,446	2,672,304
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	5,229,504	4,271,790	957,714	160,275
Miscellaneous	5,251,753	3,905,563	1,346,190	1,657,710
Total Expenditure/Income	66,307,260	43,022,583		
Net cost of programmes to be funded from Rates & Local Government Fund			23,284,677	20,995,520
Rates			4,139,340	3,916,266
Local Government Fund - General Purpose Grant			17,773,150	16,617,403
County Charge			2,985,499	2,716,560
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers			1,613,311	2,254,710
Transfers from/(to) Reserves			(1,584,356)	(2,066,630)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year			28,956	188,080
General Reserve @ 1st January 2007			(1,498,457)	(1,686,537)
General Reserve @ 31st December 2007			(1,469,502)	(1,498,457)

Finance Department

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2007

	Notes	2007 €	2006 €
Fixed Assets	1		
Operational		210,533,700	200,307,480
Infrastructural		1,391,990,642	1,399,247,467
Community		8,890,420	8,890,420
Non Operational		-	-
		1,611,414,762	1,608,445,367
Work-in-Progress and Preliminary Expenses	2	95,885,305	64,984,744
Long Term Debtors	3	20,002,792	19,693,185
Current Assets			
Stocks	4	260,413	233,089
Trade Debtors and Prepayments	5	18,519,788	9,688,499
Bank Investments		2,759,873	2,262,485
Cash at Bank		88,680	6,054,503
Cash on Hand		1,499	10,067
Urban Account	7	1,058,060	1,124,189
		22,688,313	19,372,832
Current Liabilities			
Bank Overdraft		-	-
Creditors & Accruals	6	13,066,433	8,047,284
Urban Account	7	-	-
Finance Leases		119,087	66,652
		13,185,520	8,113,936
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)		9,502,793	11,258,895
Creditors (Amounts greater than one year)			
Loans Payable	8	55,310,645	51,205,487
Finance Leases		476,351	142,691
Refundable Deposits	9	1,847,378	1,786,122
Other		-	-
		57,634,374	53,134,300
Net Assets / (Liabilities)		1,679,171,279	1,651,247,891
Financed By			
Capitalisation Account	10	1,611,414,762	1,608,445,357
Income WIP	2	94,511,664	68,120,090
Specific Revenue Reserve		1,103,774	1,103,774
General Revenue Reserve		(1,469,502)	(1,498,457)
Other Balances	11	(26,389,421)	(24,922,873)
Total Reserves		1,679,171,279	1,651,247,891

MOTOR TAXATION OFFICE

Sligo Motor Taxation Offices at Cleveragh Retail Park and Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry are endeavouring to maintain and improve a quality service to the public in the County.

The Offices work in Partnership with the Roads Safety Authority, who are co-ordinating Driving Licences, and the Vehicle Registration Unit, Shannon, Co. Clare, who are responsible for vehicle licensing, ownership, and 'on line' services for renewal of motor tax for private vehicles.

MOTOR TAX, DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

1. Postal Applications	11.62% (8,134)
2. 98% of Postal Vehicle Licence Applications are issued on the same day.	
3. 1.4% of Postal Vehicle Licence Applications are issued on the third day, or less.	
4. Total Vehicle Licences issued in 2007:	49,997
5. Total Driving Licences issued in 2007:	10,274
6. Tax Discs issued 'on-line' in 2007:	20.72%
7. Cumulative Total of business in 2007:	€10,650,948