



Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin
Roscommon
County Council



MANAGEMENT REPORT



MARCH 2020

QUARTER 1

Roscommon County Council
Revenue Account Income & Expenditure Summary by Service Division
Management Accounts Summary to 31st March 2020

	EXPENDITURE		INCOME		NET
	Expenditure Incurred up to 31/03/2020	Adopted Full Year Budget	Income Receivable up to 31/03/2020	Adopted Full year Budget	Actual Overall Surplus/ (Deficit)
	€	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building	1,401,379	6,640,134	1,851,645	7,294,094	450,265
Road Transport & Safety	3,673,026	24,288,076	251,530	17,645,706	(3,421,496)
Water Services	1,400,812	7,639,343	1,484,835	7,510,258	84,023
Development Management	979,558	7,126,358	582,559	1,631,071	(396,998)
Environmental Services	1,059,282	6,001,605	116,688	937,131	(942,594)
Recreation & Amenity	823,435	4,126,824	113,075	607,634	(710,360)
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	73,500	679,748	69,274	258,556	(4,226)
Miscellaneous Services	787,767	4,785,214	489,931	1,932,252	(297,836)
Central Management Charges	0	0	0	0	(1,418,338)
Local Government Fund/General Purpose Grant	0	0	1,802,935	10,817,200	1,802,935
Pension Levy	0	0	0	0	0
Rates	0	0	3,136,656	12,653,400	3,136,656
	10,198,759	61,287,301	9,899,129	61,287,301	(299,630)

Note 1;
The Central Management Charge is allocated one month in arrears. The costs included in the Central Management Charge are distributed among Divisions A-H and include costs from Area Offices, Corporate Affairs, Corporate buildings, Finance, Human Resources, IT Print & Post Room Services, Pension & Lump Sums.

Summary of Major Collections as at 31st March 2020

Debt Type	Opening Balance	Accrued	Vacant Property Adjustments	Write Off	Total for Collection	Collected	Closing Balance	Specific Doubtful Arrears	% Collection	% Collection Previous Year
Commercial Rates	1,358,169	12,546,623	175,716	21,752	13,707,324	1,496,514	12,210,810	79,006	11%	17%
Rents & Annuities	474,828	1,291,185		(68)	1,766,082	1,260,677	505,404		71%	68%
Housing Loans	120,379	45,872			166,250	67,720	98,530		41%	41%

Recourse to Overdraft;

There has been no recourse to overdraft during the month of March 2020

PLANNING SECTION

Forward Planning

Review of the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020*

Preparation was on-going internally within the Planning Section throughout much of Q1, in advance of the commencement of the statutory process for the review of the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020*. In accordance with the legislative provisions of Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the commencement of the review process was deferred in 2018 pending the adoption of the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)* by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA). The RSES was made by the NWRA on 24th January 2020. The statutory process for the review of the County Development Plan was required to commence within 13 weeks of that date.

Preparatory work undertaken in Q1 included the issuing of a request for tenders for environmental consultants to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) as required during the plan making process; work to finalise the development of a website dedicated to the new *Roscommon County Development Plan (RCDP) 2021 – 2027*; drafting of an Issues Paper (for circulation as part of the formal pre-draft consultation process); and the organisation of workshop in early March, attended by Elected Members, RCC's Management Team and officials from the Planning Section, to discuss a range of strategic issues, for consideration in the preparation of the RCDP.

The statutory process of the review of the County Development Plan formally commenced on 27th March 2020. This pre-draft consultation period was originally scheduled to run until 5th June 2020. However, in light of the unanticipated Covid 19 emergency measures introduced on the night of 27th March, and subsequent legislation extending the period of duration of planning related matters, the public consultation period has been extended by 42 days (until 17th July), to reflect the provisions of the Section 251A Extended Order (with the Extended Order applying to the period from 29th March to 9th May inclusive).

Amendments to the *Development Contribution Scheme 2014*

Following a public consultation on *Proposed Amendments to Roscommon County Council's Development Contribution Scheme 2014* (which ran from 13th December 2019 to 4th February 2020), the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received was prepared and circulated to Members. The proposed amendments and the Chief Executive's Report were formally considered at the Plenary meeting on 24th February 2020. The proposed amendments were agreed and the amended scheme came into effect on that date.

Development Management and Planning Enforcement Activity

The table below summarises Development Management activity in the Planning Section in Quarter 1. A total of 100 valid applications were received in Q1 of 2020, representing a reduction from 112 received in the same period in 2019. Decisions were made on 105 planning applications, of which 10 were refusals. A number of pre-planning meetings scheduled for the second half of March 2020 were postponed in response to social distancing requirements and other emergency measures subsequently introduced in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Postponed meetings are being rescheduled to take place via telephone.

Development Management Statistics

Period	Activity	Roscommon North	Roscommon South	Totals
Q1 2020	Valid app	44	56	100
	Invalid app	16	5	21
	Extension of Duration	0	0	0
	Refusal	6	4	10
	DED	8	2	10
	Pre-planning meeting	25	19	44

Enforcement Activity

Period	Activity	Countywide Totals
Q1 2020	New enforcement case	20
	Warning letter	8
	Enforcement notice	2
	Closed case	11
	Legal proceedings	0

Unfinished Housing Developments

A range of activity continued to be undertaken in Q1 as part of the on-going initiative to resolve unfinished housing developments. Developers undertook work on three sites in Roscommon town, two developments in Tarmonbarry and one in Lisacul. Semi-skilled workers employed directly by Roscommon County Council were also engaged in works at developments in Monksland, Barrybeg and Knockcroghery.

As part of the preliminary stage of the Taking in Charge (TIC) process, schedules were sent to Irish Water in respect of three developments – two in Boyle and one in Barrybeg. By the end of Q1, four further developments had reached the final stage of the TIC process – Riverview in Rooskey, Greenhills in Knockcroghery, Ascaill Eoghain in Lisnamult and Elm Close in Barrybeg, all of which were referred to the Roads Section for Taking in Charge.

ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION

Local Enterprise Office:

- 298 enquiries were recorded.
- 13 clients availed of detailed TOV Information.
- Local Enterprise Week took place between 2nd – 6th March with 15 local events held with a total of 224 attendees – this was a mixture of training, mentoring and information sharing events, ie ‘Remote Working - Grow Remote’ held in the Arts Centre in collaboration with Ken Whitelaw, IDA; Tracey Keogh, Bank of Ireland Grow Remote & Dee Coakley, Co-Founder & CEO of Boundless and a Breakfast Briefing on ‘How to Reduce Energy Costs’ in collaboration with Sligo IT. In addition, there were 2 Regional Events held in collaboration with LEO’s Galway & Mayo: “Promote Your Productivity & the Launch of the Lean Book of Case Studies” and “Building Innovation Capacity in your Business”.
- Training & Mentoring that had been organised, but not yet started or on site but not finished was postponed on Thursday, 12th March due to calls from participants (as the schools’ closure announcement had just been made due to Covid-19). Thereafter, alternative methods of delivering training & mentoring were sourced. The first piece of online training was delivered, very successfully with good participation, on Tuesday, 31st March entitled ‘Tools & Techniques for Remote Training & Consultancy’.
- The County Enterprise Award Event was held on Friday, 6th March and this year’s winning business from Co Roscommon is ‘Lidan Designs’, headed up by Dan O’Brien & Liam Casey.
- 2019/2020 Student Enterprise Award County Final was held in the Abbey Hotel on Thursday, 12th March. This was a great and inspirational Event with 21 mini-businesses displaying the culmination of their work throughout the academic year. All 9 second level schools in Co. Roscommon were represented. There were a total of 71 students displaying on the day. The overall winners were:
Intermediate Category:

Pamper Hamper – 2 students from Roscommon Community College.

Senior Category:

Mil ón mBaile – 3 students also from Roscommon Community College.

The National Final due be held in Croke Park on 1st May is now cancelled and will not take place this year. There will be a judging process, based on each Business Report and submissions are due to the National Co-Ordinator by Monday, 20th April.
- All LEO supports promoted on the LEO website and on various social media platforms.

Vacant Sites: Advertising of available sites continues.

Enterprise Development Plan to 2020: Strategic Objective 4 “Enhancing the Growth Potential of Ag Tech in the West”. The report has been completed.

IDA: HoE has had a meeting with Rikki Conneely, IDA Regional Executive, IDA re: attracting investment to Roscommon. A portfolio of lands is currently being prepared. Meeting to be rescheduled after COVID -19 restrictions.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Healthy Ireland

- Interviews held for HI Co-ordinator; Position Offered and Accepted. No start date as yet.
- 1st Initial Instalment of Monies received from Pobal.
- SLA's sent to all successful groups.
- A number of SLA have been signed and returned; resulting in Payment 1 of Year 1 having been processed for a number of Groups.

LEADER:

- 60 payments made to promoters totaling €1,769,219.63
- 29 Projects paid in full.
- 5 projects paid in March
- Monthly Admin Returns and payments to LEADER Co. are ongoing.
- Article 48 checks are ongoing

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

LCDC meeting and Local Action Group meeting held 26th February 2020 and following agenda items dealt with:

- SICAP: Approval of 2020 Annual Plan and 2019 Annual Performance Review
- Healthy Ireland Fund
- Financial report
- LEADER Programme Implementation Update
- LEADER Sub-Committee Meeting Report
- Update on Expressions of Interest
- Consideration of recommendations of LEADER Evaluation Committee

Social Inclusion

- Review of Age Friendly Strategy to commence and development of new Strategy to be progressed.

Integration Strategy

- Development of strategy to commence in conjunction with LEADER and CYPSC

SICAP

- SICAP Annual Plan 2020 and 2019 Annual Performance Review were approved at LCDC Meeting 26/02/2020
- March payment made to RIDC
- Q2 SICAP Payment received from Department

Heritage

- www.roscommoncoco.ie/cemeteries: Updated details for three cemeteries to add new information submitted for inclusion by members of the public. New information was for Asslyinn Old Cemetery, Kiltoun Church of Ireland Cemetery & Killina Cemetery.
- **Táin March Festival:** All primary schools were invited to express an interest in participating in the Táin March Festival 2020 initially by availing of a schools visit with Heritage in Schools scheme expert Chris Thompson under the theme of 'Táin - Stories in the Landscape'. 20 schools with 542 pupils in total expressed interest. These workshops were all set to proceed when the schools were closed on March 13th. Schools have been informed that it is hoped to reschedule these workshops when the schools re-open. A project steering committee meeting took place on 11. 03.20 at which it became apparent that the Táin March Festival events scheduled for May 14, 15 & 16th had to be postponed. It is hoped that the festival can be re-scheduled to take place before the end of October 2020. This project is funded by Creative Ireland.
- **A Survey of Swifts in Co. Roscommon:** Birdwatch Ireland were appointed to lead this project in the county. The community engagement element of the project has been revised to take account of Covid-19 restrictions. This project is funded under the National Biodiversity Action Plan funding scheme operated by the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht

Tourism Development and Promotion:

COVID 19 – due to COVID 19 restrictions all Tourism ATTRACTIONS/Activities/Accommodation and Restaurants closed their doors in mid-March

Regional Projects:

- **IHH Website Scheme:** Improvement Scheme for new Website for King House tenders received and awarded to JDK Design. Funding Application made.
- **USEFE** – meeting postponed due to COVID 19
- **Fáilte Ireland** – Meitheal 2020 postponed due to COVID 19 – may be held in October
- **Shannon Master Plan:** Public Consultations commenced until end April 2020. Available in Boyle and Athlone Area Office to view as well as on line.

County Projects:

- **RTN:** Meeting proposed for the beginning of April has been postponed due to COVID 19 restrictions.
- **King House** – Full review of the Mary Mc Aleese collection, as lease up for renewal in June. Advert on social media and outside House to state that House and grounds closed until Government restrictions lifted. Una Bhan, King house Tea Rooms and Studios remaining closed under restrictions.
- **Tourism Trade Networking** – Inter County Tourism Trade event set for 8th April has been postponed
- **2019 Festival and Events:** All St Patricks Day Festival Cancelled due to COVID 19 restriction – full review of all Festivals and Events will have to be carried out in due course
- **Social Media:** Weekly plan on social media developed and being implemented. New Instagram account est. Agreed a six week schedule with JDK design on website for events – this has now to be paused during the restrictions
- **Outdoor Recreation: (2019 scheme):** Met with 4 success projects groups under Measure 1 to review Letters of Offer in Jan and outline the T&C of the schemes. NA extension will have to sought given the current restrictions in place on any works.

- **Outdoor Recreation: (2018 scheme): Boyle to Lough key Cycleway** – final designs to be agreed and amended. Met with Coillte on site at Sliabh Bawn to agree the placement of the last of the signs. Binoculars yet to be installed.
- **Marketing** – Editorial and advert agreed for Go West magazine
- **RECO (Creative Ireland Project)** – This is set for Sept/Oct 2020 in association with lough Key
- **Brochure Stands/Signs** : quotes sought for brochure stands for the Attractions/Activities. New sign design agreed for Caseys.

Publicity & Media:

- **Social Media:** Information from attractions and communities being updated on a daily basis. Competitions in coordination with Attractions to be run intermittently.
- **Events Calendar:** being updated on weekly basis on tourism website

Roscommon Arts Centre

- Celebrated “World Book Day” with a visit to the centre by children’s author Alan Nolan who delivered workshops to local primary school children
- Hosted part of Roscommon Drama Festival with 6 of the 9 shows proceeding before the venue closed due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Attendances at these shows was just over 1,000 and the remaining three performances were all sold out.
- The remainder of the March was spent rescheduling or cancelling performances and contacting patrons to authorise refunds to them or to arrange credit to their accounts. To date almost €10,000 has been refunded via box office staff,
- Funding of €99,000 has been drawn down from The Arts Council (90% of our 2020 allocation) as agreed to meet commitments to artists in terms of fees already agreed and which the Arts Council have agreed to honour.
- 35 upcoming events for the period April – July have now been provisionally re-scheduled to autumn/winter or postponed entirely until 2021.
- In relation to the visual art programme, **the Fibre Art Festival** (Frances Crowe) is now re-scheduled for November/December and the major **Martin Parr** exhibition will now not take place until 2021. The intention is that **Paul Hallahan** and **Mark Garry’s** shows will proceed later this year.
- Introduced an online programme of arts events to include:
 - **“Lockdown Sing-along”** a collaboration with The Hawk’s Well Theatre in Sligo and artist Cathy Jordan for a daily live-streamed choral session via Facebook.
 - The **“Home Schooler Alert”** daily online alerts providing arts related links to parents home-schooling for arts and crafts, dance, theatre, visual art and museum activities to either access online or to print and try at home.
 - **“Theatre Shop”** links to theatre performances, musicals, concerts and ballet performances that our audiences can view online – in March these included performances by the Abbey Theatre and Druid Theatre Company. There was also a plan to develop the **“Circular Gallery”**, which would invite children to create art work weekly, responding to different themes which would then be displayed in the arts centre’s front windows for passersby to view, however with the lockdown, this has now been shelved.

REGENERATION UNIT

Urban Regeneration Development Fund

Roscommon Public Realm Enhancement Project:

- URDF design proceeding in the absence of the GI investigation
- Material selection almost completed and consultants updating same.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund

Castlerea Hub Extension:

- Castlerea food hub proceeding with full design drawings currently 70% complete. QS will prepare BoQ for tender when drawings completed and signed off.

Boyle Enterprise Hub and Riverside Promenade

- Detail Design complete
- Contract Documents for Construction uploaded to eTenders. Response deadline – 2nd week of May 2020
- Anticipated Construction commencement – July 2020 (subject to COVID 19 restrictions)

Monksland Life Sciences Hub

- Application for funding for a Life Sciences Innovation Hub and Soft Landing Space was approved to the value of €2.751m in grant aid.
- Monksland Hub client brief almost completed. Preparing remaining documents for e-tenders

Outdoor Recreation 2018

Loughnaneane Park:

- New decking and drainage works completed.
- All resurfacing works completed.
- New Sculpture Trail installed and associated information boards.
- Outdoor amphitheatre and planting completed.
- Project now completed and has received very positive reaction locally and on social media.

Boyle Cycle Corridor

- Phase 1 and 2 main cycleway works contract completed
- Warning and Statutory Signage – 95% complete.
- Way Finding Signage – Poles erected. Design to be completed for fingerpost signs and procurement/installation of same.
- Cycleway Roadmarkings – 90% complete. Warren/Drum Road to receive new macadam overlay. Roadmarkings in this section deferred.
- Stage 3 Road Safety Audit to be carried on when all works are completed.

Slaibh Bán

All works completed which included new signage, paths, information boards, Binoculars and play area enhancement.

Town and Village 2018

Boyle

- Tenders received for footpath improvement and ducting works. Contractor currently undergoing assessment, by RCC H & S, for PSCS
- Quotation for new public lighting has been sought from Electric Skyline

Ballaghaderreen

- Works to Shambles complete
- Works to Community Garden Complete
- Contractor for landscaping works has been appointed. Works delayed due to Covid 19 Restrictions.
- Community Plan – Consultant has been appointed and a number of meetings with the community have been held.
- Content for tourist signs sourced from Community and price being sought for design.

Rooskey

- Number of meetings held with Town Group to agree on final design
- Enhancement works are approximately 60% complete. (Works have now ceased due to Covid 19)
- Installation of ducting for ESB and Public Lighting, to accommodate future undergrounding of cables has also been carried out as part of 2018 scheme.
- Quotations for additional footpath improvement works under preparation.

Monksland Urban Park

- The site location report was presented to Monksland Town Team.
- Monksland tender returned, awaiting opportunity to proceed.

Roscommon

- A bat and swift survey was completed.
- Meetings took place with lighting designer and the OPW and design is in place.
- A ministerial consent application has been approved for lighting the castle.
- Roscommon Castle and lighting tenders returned. Contractor appointed for bus park works - on hold Covid 19.
- Lighting element ready to proceed-on hold Covid 19.

Strokestown

- Strokestown Town Team have completed the Community Market Square element.
- Enhancement to buildings contract has been procured. – awaiting covid lifting and weather to paint.
- Lighting of Strokestown Park House Gate approach procured and awaiting covid restrictions lifting.

ORIS 2019

- Funding for two Measure 2 applications approved – Cloonlarge and Rindoon Loop and Judy's Harbour.

Town and Village 2019

7 projects were approved for funding under the 2019 scheme to the value of €688,000. These are Athleague, Castlerea, Creagh, Gortaganny, Rooskey, Keadue and Tusk.

Athleague

- Hot Desk Hub - Scope of works and price agreed with Contractor to complete builders finish. Quotation received for Meeting Pod. Fit out furniture costed – final spec to be agreed
- Bike stands - procured
- Approach road signage- First design complete-to be agreed on
- Landscape Architect - procured and in place.
- Tourist information boards - at design stage, content and images provided by Community Group.

Castlerea

- Town Painting Scheme - Currently on e-tenders. Tenders deadline is 8th May.
- Outdoor Gym – Quotations received and ready for to proceed with works.
- Approach Road Signage - design requirements sent to Town Team-awaiting response.
- Tourist Information Boards - design requirements sent to Town Team-awaiting response.

Gortaganny

- Carpark/Footpath –surveying and design completed by RCC.
- Met with Group. Land dedication maps prepared for group to sort.

Rooskey

- RCC element of project almost completed and initial discussion have been held on rollout of Waterways Ireland element.

Keadue

- Landscape Architect has been appointed and design works are ongoing.

Creagh and Tusk

- Initial conversations with Roads Section RCC have taken place in order to maximise where other works are taking place.

Historic Towns Initiative Roscommon

- Application for HTI Roscommon prepared and submitted.
- Successful application and initial consultation and surveying work completed.

Large Scale Sports Capital Infrastructure Scheme

- Initial announcement of funding towards detailed design work was announced in early February. Dept. are currently completing final assessment on same before final approval.

Destination Towns

- Funding approved for Boyle under Destination Towns.
- Landscape Architect has been appointed for the design of enhancement works to the Pleasure Grounds. This design work is ongoing.
- A Topographical Survey of the Pleasure Grounds has been completed and issued to the Architect.
- Quotations have also been sought for Architectural Services to assist in the design of the River Lane and Lane to Kinghouse. The appointment of this Architect is imminent.
- Deadline for this Project is approx. September 2021

Roscommon Bound - Global Rossie Project

- Roscommon Bound website was finalised and went live in early December 2019 following launch of it and Global Rossie Strategy by Minister Paschal Donohoe.
- A linkedin page for Global Rossies predominately living outside the County was developed and is updated several times/week – now having 715 members.
- A workshop was organised in the Aras to plan for Global Rossie Day 2020 – this is now under consideration for change due to Covid.
- A Global Rossie Influencer project has been developed but has been postponed due to Covid.

Future Planning and Applications

- Two RRDF Category 2 projects were prepared and submitted following consultations with respective groups.
- A number of meetings have been held with Strokestown Town Team to commence work on an RRDF Application Category 1.
- Work on a Masterplan has been substantially started and due to be completed in coming weeks for further consultation with Town Team.
- Procurement has been completed to provide architectural input for the Boyle RRDF Category 1 2020.
- Work is also underway for the next URDF application round due to close at end of May.

AEC

- Consultation held with WDC in relation to digital labs.
- Information provided in relation to businesses during Covid for AEC Newsletter.
- Work on going under a number of themes.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Library Events and Activities

Prior to the closure to the public, the library service delivered a large number of events. Healthy Ireland at Your Library events included an ePowering Parents workshop which aimed to empower parents to help keep their children safe online, a talk on the importance for play for children, "Playing for Health" and an Irish Red Cross Health Check. The County Library was a venue for 2 Local Enterprise Week Events and for a talk by the Environmental Awareness Officer.

Collaboration

Roscommon Library Service works in collaboration with many services within the community and recent collaborations include the delivery of 1 to 1 computer classes in conjunction with Age Action Ireland and working with the Roscommon County Childcare Committee to provide public information sessions on the new National Childcare Scheme.

Take a Closer Look Campaign and National Library Open Day

A new national advertising campaign ran in January and February asking everyone to take a closer look at what their local authority library has to offer. The campaign ran for four weeks across radio, cinema, TV on demand, digital and social. The aim of the campaign was to encourage people of all ages to join and use the library. 'Take a Closer Look' advert at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZOvJvHhYO>

On Saturday, February 29th, all libraries in Roscommon took part in the first ever National Library Open Day. There were events in every branch in Roscommon with the mobile library visiting Elphin in order to allow a bigger attendance at the events there. A total of 17 events took place including a Stop-Motion Animation workshop in conjunction with Foróige in Strokestown, Early Literacy workshops with the GRETB in 3 locations, a puppet show, an afternoon with bestselling author Patricia Gibney and a digital services demonstration of services such as gaming, 3D printing, eBooks and loanable tablets. 750 people attended their local Roscommon library during the Open Day.

Funding for the provision of Sensory Facilities & Equipment

In early March 2020, following an application process, the Department of Rural and Community Development approved funding of €27,160 for the development of a collection of loanable sensory equipment and the development of sensory kits for branch libraries in County Roscommon.

Library Closures

Roscommon Library Service was fully operational until 12th March 2020. From 13th March branch libraries and the mobile library service closed to the public in line with COVID-19 measures. The focus then turned to the delivery of online library resources and supporting the community in accessing these services.

Delivery of Online Services

Members of Roscommon County Council Library Services have access to a wide range of online resources through their library membership. These services include eBooks, Audio Books eMagazines, Online Courses, Online Language Learning, eMagazines and Online Newspapers. Year to date, when compared with the same period last year, the use of eBooks has increased by 186% while eAudiobooks is up 70%.

A mechanism has been put in place to allow people to join the library from home and gain immediate access to these online resources. Users need to visit www.librariesireland.ie/join. Email

and social media support has been made available to users who need assisting with accessing or using any of the resources. The Library service has developed a useful step by step guide on how to register and use all of the online library. This guide is available here: http://www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/Services/Community/Library/ICT_Resources_In_Libraries_/Roscommon-Library-Quick-Start-Guide.pdf

Right to Read

Every year, during the month of April, Roscommon Libraries host a series of 'Spring into Storytime' events for local families and schoolchildren to attend. This year, while libraries and schools remain closed, these stories will be delivered online on library Facebook and Twitter pages. These videos will remain online while library buildings are closed. The first 2 videos posted were viewed more than 8,000 times and shared by 99 people.

CORPORATE AFFAIRS

Register of Electors & General Election 2020

A supplement to the Register of Electors for County Roscommon was compiled and published for the General Election held on Saturday 8th February. A total of 2,436 electors were included on the Supplement and 49,883 electors on the Live Register (2019/2020)

The Live Register of Electors 2020-2021 was subsequently published on 15th February 2020. A total of 50,687 electors are included on the register.

Corporate Plan 2029 - 2024

The Corporate Plan was adopted by the elected members at their meeting on 24th February 2020. The Plan will serve as Roscommon County Council's strategic framework for action during the lifetime of the present elected council in line with the Local Government Act 2001. The plan sets out the Council's objectives under the following three priorities that will deliver our mission, reflect the views of our people and build sustainable communities in a changing environment:

- Quality of life and well-being for all
- Economic and community development
- Quality services for our people

Dermot Earley Bursary 2019-2020

Interviews were held in January to award two scholarships for First Year third level students. The scholarships were awarded to Ciara Corcoran from St. Dominic's GAA club and Jack Lohan also from St. Dominic's GAA Club. The formal presentation will be made later in the summer when it is safe to do so.

Events

The following events were hosted by Roscommon County Council at Áras an Chontae:

- Launch of Roscommon Drama Festival on 26th February 2020

A number of scheduled events have now been postponed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions.

HOUSING BUSINESS UNIT

1.0 Homelessness & Housing Allocations

1.1 Homelessness:

A range of responses to homelessness in accordance with the West Framework Homelessness Action Plan are in place. The Western Region Homeless Action Plan 2019-2022 has been prepared by the lead Council (Galway City Council) with input from the other authorities in the region.

7 = homeless cases presented in Q1, 2020

5 = cases required short-term accommodation in Q1, 2020

Breakdown Homeless figures Q1 2020				
Presentations	Individuals	Families	Totals Households	Breakdown of Family unit
Jan	2	1	3	2A4C
Feb	2	1	3	2A4C
Mar	0	1	1	2A4C

Accommodated	Individuals	Families	Totals Households	Breakdown of Family unit
Jan	1	1	2	2A4C
Feb	2	0	2	na
Mar	0	1	1	2A4C

1.2 Housing Assessments & Allocations:

2020 Housing Needs Assessment is scheduled to be carried out mid-year.

383 = applicants (excluding transfers) on the approved housing list at end of Q1, 2020 – iHouse Report 19

688 = applicants are currently in private rented accommodation (increase due to RAS tenants pre 2011 in receipt of RAS and remain open) – iHouse Report 24

39 = offers of accommodation made in Jan-Feb, 2020

20 = new tenants appointed/allocated in Jan-Feb, 2020

2 = AHB Tenants appointed in Jan-Feb, 2020

15 = refusals recorded in Jan-Feb, 2020

1.3 Refugee Applicants:

Programme has concluded and the final account has been submitted to the Department for approval.

2.0 Social Housing Rental Accommodation Market

2.1 Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS):

Financial support continues via the RAS Scheme for those applicants who have a long-term housing need. As of 29 February, 2020, there are 387 households receiving support (285 private rented and 102 in voluntary housing - March figures not included).

2.2 Housing Assistance Payment (HAP):

Roscommon County Council is working closely with the Community Welfare Officers in the Department of Social Protection to continue the transfer of Rent Supplement recipients to the HAP Scheme. 45 HAP tenancies were opened in January and February and 27 were closed in the same period. As of 29 February, 2020, there were 439 social housing applicants in receipt of HAP (March figures not included).

2.3 Repair & Lease Scheme (RLS):

No significant change since Q4 2019; summary of activity end Q4 2019 is as follows:

- 64 = applications were received and were assessed since the scheme was rolled out in Q1, 2017; the majority of the applications related to properties outside areas of need/demand or were remote rural dwellings in poor condition
- 4 = applications are under further consideration; however, some of these have unresolved planning issues; one application for a 2-bed in Roscommon town is currently progressing
- 3 = number of lease agreements RCC has entered into under the RLS (two 1-bed apartments and a 4-bed house in Roscommon Town)

3.0 Provision of Additional Social Housing Units

3.1 LA Build (including turnkeys & PPP):

Summary of projects in progress up to March 2020 was as follows; however, works on all capital projects was suspended at the end of March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. The negative impact on the below programmes/schedules remains to be determined:

- 10 turnkey units at Lisroyne Ct., Strokestown – Works were completed in December, 2019 and units were offered/allocated to tenants in January, 2020. Final account is currently being finalised.
- Three 2-bed units at Cloonfad on HSE site - Construction commenced in Q4, 2019 with programme for completion scheduled for Q4, 2020.
- 7 units at Cluain Fraoigh, Roscommon - Construction commenced in Q4, 2019 with programme for completion scheduled for late 2020/early 2021.
- 2 Units Old Tuam Road (CPO) – Construction commenced in January, 2020 with programme for completion scheduled for Q4, 2020.
- 9 units at Longford Td. – Proposal to develop via an AHB is under consideration (material contravention of current Area Plan would be required)
- 12 units Silveroe, Boyle – Construction to commence in Q1, 2020 with programme for completion scheduled for Q3, 2020.
- 18 units Meadowbrook, Ballyleague – Tender process to commence in Q1, 2020 with works scheduled to commence on site in Q2, 2020. Target completion Q4, 2021
- 8 units Elphin Street, Strokestown – Part 8 planning process commenced in Q4, 2019. Tender process to commence in Q1, 2020 with works scheduled to commence on site in Q3, 2020. Target completion Q4, 2021.
- PPP Bundle 2 at The Walk (53 units) - Construction commenced in Q4, 2019 with programme for completion scheduled for Q3, 2021.

3.2 Housing Association Activity:

- Co-operative Housing Ireland delivered 10 units at Castle View Apartments (Block B) under the Capital Advanced Leasing Facility (CALF) Scheme at the end of December, 2019. These were substantially allocated in Q1 2020.
- A second proposal for 10 units at Block A (fronting onto Castle Street) received Department approval in May, 2019; these units require some post acquisition works and are expected to be available for allocation in 2020.
- A Tuath proposal for 35 units at Cloongowna, Monksfield, Athlone – A Building Agreement/Contract of Sale was entered into between Tuath Housing Association and the Developer on 31 October, 2019.

As per RCC's capital programme, works on the above projects were also suspended in March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. Impact on delivery remained to be determined.

3.3 LA Acquisitions (including Buy & Renew):

The acquisition programme (RCC's ability to purchase houses on the open market) was suspended by the Department from the beginning of 2020 in order to facilitate funding of capital works. Other than a few purchase that carried over from 2019 (estimated at 3 units), RCC will not be in a position to purchase units in 2020.

3.4 Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024:

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 was adopted in the June Council meeting. Capital schemes progressing under the programme include:

- Torpan Beg Extension of 4 units – project is suspended as RCC was unable to facilitate existing tenants to the satisfaction of said tenants or secure agreement from said tenants to relocate in order for the works to proceed.
- 2 Lough Road post fire reconstruction project – Awaiting stage 3 approval
- Proposal for 2 additional units at Killereeny was submitted to the Department for approval (initial stage).
- Proposal to alter units at Harristown is also in progress (one-bed units to be combined into larger more functional units)

As per other capital works, the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on progress remains to be determined.

3.5 Sale of Sites and Rural Houses:

- Approximately 6 vacant and derelict rural houses (without known legal complications) are being advertised for sale.
- The sale of 11 low cost sites at Forest View, Boyle were advertised in Q3, 2019 with a reduced purchase price of €10,000 per site. No applications were received (no change in Q1 2020).

3.6 Tenant Purchase:

The Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme was published under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014. At 29 February 2020, tenant purchase statistics were as follows:

139 = applications received to date
74 = offers made to date
56 = offers accepted to date
29 = sales completed to date

4.0 Private Rented Accommodation Standards

Inspections of private rented dwellings are carried out under the Housing (Standards for Private Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.

All inspections were suspended in March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

- 96 inspections were carried out in Q1 2020, 10 of which were follow-up inspections required to address issues arising from previous inspections.
- Inspection targets for 2020 (596 inspections in Roscommon) have been suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions.

5.0 Management of Existing Housing Stock

5.1 Energy Efficiency Programme (retrofitting existing stock):

- Phase 2 candidates have been identified and proposal for works submitted to the Department. Funding for phase 2 energy works likely to involve a matching local authority contribution of more than 50%. Phase 2 will be to survey and up-grade/rationalise heating systems and replace old single glazed windows and doors.
- Separate funding under the just transition programme has been identified for a number of counties, including County Roscommon. RCC is working with the Department to determine programme criteria and scope.

Works have been suspended on both the above programmes due to Covid-19 restrictions. The impact on the programmes remains to be determined.

5.2 Voids Programme:

There are no viable voids remaining within the housing stock and the national voids programme has essentially ended. Any remaining non-viable (derelict) units are in isolated rural locations with low or no demand. These properties will be sold unless a specific demand presents in the meantime.

5.3 Casual Vacancy Works (pre-letting works)

As of early March 2020, casual vacancies are being refurbished and held in reserve as Covid-19 isolation or cocoon units for vulnerable tenants/applicants; namely, homeless people in emergency accommodation and Travellers in Traveller-specific accommodation. Allocations are still being facilitated but only on a case by case basis and where there is a risk of homelessness.

5.4 Housing Maintenance

RCC Housing received 279 maintenance calls in Jan-Feb, 2020 and billed expenditure on maintenance works during the same period was €51,814.01 (March 2020 figures not included/available).

5.5 Housing Grants (including Improvement Works in Lieu)

The 2020 interim budget has indicated local authorities can allocate up to 65% of the 2019 allocation or approximately € 700,000. A further clarification advised local authorities could commit to grant funding over 65% to a maximum equal to 100% of the 2019 budget (approximately 1,076,963 for Roscommon). Commitments to date are in the order of € 943,297; however, processing of grants and associated grant works are suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions and the impact of this on the grants programme remained to be determined.

WATER AND WASTE WATER

There is an ongoing extensive Infrastructural portfolio, Capital Programme portfolio and Water Networks portfolio in place for Water and Waste Water schemes in the County. The following is a summary of works planned and underway.

INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO:

Roscommon Town Main Drainage:

The key objective of the Roscommon Town Main Drainage project is to address and remove the drivers for the Roscommon Agglomeration being listed on the *EU Commission's Letter of Formal Notice 2015 under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive*. Tobin Consulting Engineers have been appointed as the Clients Representative for the project. Tender documents have been issued to a list of contractors on the major civils framework. The tender period is ongoing and return of submissions is due by close of business on the 24th April 2020. Tender submissions will then be assessed over the summer and a recommendation sent for approval thereafter. All Wayleaves and land acquisitions are near complete with two outstanding. It is hoped that all agreements will be in place by the end of the summer. A Solicitor and Valuer have been appointed on behalf of Irish Water to carry out the land negotiations.

Planning Permission has been granted for all new pumping sites around the town as well as proposed new structures within the existing wastewater treatment plant.

An approval of a budget for the project will follow on in Q3 2020 once a successful tenderer is known.

It is expected that construction works in the town of Roscommon will commence in late Q4 2020 or early Q1 2021.

Boyle WSS Extension to Grangemore RWSS:

This project is now complete and is in a defects period. The project involved extending the recently upgraded Boyle RWSS supply southward to the Grangemore RWSS and ultimately to allow the decommissioning of the Cavetown WTP. AECOM and Jennings O'Donovan Consulting Engineers were the appointed representatives for the project. All wayleaves compensation arrangements to landowners affected will be closed out with the final instalments of the compensation being paid out in May. Source Civil Engineering Ltd were awarded the contract in November 2018 and construction commenced in February 2019 and substantially completed by the 8th November 2019. Water is now being supplied to the people of the Grangemore Scheme from the Boyle Regional Water Supply Scheme.

A series of sampling and testing in the Grangemore network has taken place in order to demonstrate that the new water being supplied by the Boyle Regional Water Supply Scheme is in compliance with drinking water standards.

Grangemore is the last remaining scheme within County Roscommon currently on the EPA Remedial Action List- RAL -list being removed. The official opening took place on the 24th January, 2020. The project is now in its defects period with some snagging and reinstatement of roads and fields to be completed.

Upgrade works to Ballaghadereen WWTP:

The Ballaghadereen WWTP has been included under the 2017-2021 Investment Plan for assessment of its primary and secondary treatment processes. The current plant is at risk in terms of UWWTD compliance, overloading and failure to provide adequate capacity for growth. Ryan Hanley was appointed as Employers Representative for the Project but the project has now been moved a new delivery mechanism and will now be progressed under the ECI (Early Contractor Involvement) Contract. The ECI contract is divided into regions with Roscommon County in the Northern Region.

The successful Contractor within this region is Veolia who has now taken over the project since January 2020.

A project brief of the proposed upgrade has now been drafted and has been reviewed by Irish Water and the appointed consultants of the ECI Contract (Mott McDonald & MACE). The documents have been issued to Veolia to proceed to detailed design in consultation with all parties having their input to the overall outcome to the delivery of the project.

The first meeting with all parties has taken place and design has commenced.

The main items of work to be delivered as part of the ECI project are:

- Upgrade the terminal Pumping Station with increasing capacity of the tank on site as well as associated site works
- Upgrade the site Boundaries by separation of the entrance currently used as a common shared entrance to both Irish Water and Roscommon County Council
- Upgrade the Secondary Treatment process in order to improve capacity of the existing process
- Providing a new settlement tank
- Associated ancillary site works including upgrade of the SCADA System

Monksland and Boyle Drainage Area Plans:

The preparation of a Drainage Area Plan and Wastewater Source Control Study has been undertaken in Monksland and Boyle to accurately estimate the condition of the existing networks and the flow and load arriving to the Wastewater Treatment works. This Drainage Area Plan work has been carried out by Nicholas O'Dwyer Consulting Engineers together with McCloys Water and Environmental Consulting Engineers. There are four stages to the DAP Process: Stage 1: Scoping and Data Gathering, Stage 2: Surveying and Modelling, Stage 3; Risk Assessment and Needs identification and Stage 4: Strategy, Optioneering and Future Solutions Design. Stage 1, 2 and 3 of the process have been completed. A final report and recommendations will be issued in Q3 2020. Interventions will be developed in Stage 4 of the DAP Process in consultation with Irish Water.

The manhole and sewer CCTV survey are complete for both towns and the Flow and Load Survey in Monksland and the Flow and Rainfall Survey in Boyle are also complete. The Model build for the networks on both towns is complete. A Technical Solution Development Report was issued for both locations in June 2018. The Process Optimisation Report for Monksland was completed. On foot of the above a scope of upgrade works at Monksland was prepared which included the provision of new inlet works, storm tank and storm water overflow chamber and also a telemetry upgrade. Site Investigation work undertaken for the Monksland WWTP in early 2018. A procurement exercise was then undertaken to carry out the above works in Monksland WWTP. A Contract was then signed in December 2018. The successful contractor Glan Agua Ltd, commenced site construction works in February 2019 and is now substantially complete since January 2020. Some snagging and final account are to be completed by Q2 2020.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO:

Inlet Works, Sludge & Storm Programme:

Upgrade to the Inlet, Storm and sludge process at Termonbarry WWTP has been included in the programme. JB Barry has been appointed as Consulting Engineers. A Conceptual Design is complete. A technical options report has been reviewed and approved. Irish Water asset planning have reviewed the report and the following works have been approved: New inlet works, a storm tank and replacement of the old sludge tank with a larger sludge tank together with associated mechanical and electrical works and upgrades. This work will form part of a project bundle that Irish Water will roll out Q4 2020. The tender process for this bundle has been recently complete and is now being assessed.

It is hoped that a successful contractor will be appointed in August 2020 with work on the ground commencing sometime thereafter.

Planning Permission has been sought and approved for the structures proposed.

National Certs of Authorisation Programme (NCAP):

RPS Consulting Engineers were appointed and are currently gathering data for site assessment and site options report for 15no. sites in County Roscommon. The assessment is based on the impact the asset has on the environment rather than plant condition. Lecarrow, Croghan, Bellanagare, Cloonfad & Ballintober WWTP are identified as high impact sites. Roscommon County Council staff have engaged with RPS and have provided detailed information on each of the plants that have been examined under this programme. A draft site assessment report on each of the above locations has been reviewed in Q2 2019 and commented on by Roscommon County Council Operations engineers. RPS are in the process of preparing technical options reports for each of the sites based on the recommendations contained in the site assessment reports. It is expected that the technical options reports will be circulated. It is anticipated that a programme of works will be rolled out for these sites under the 2020-2021 programme of work.

Lead Mitigation Programme:

The aim of this programme is to provide Ortho Phosphate dosing in up to 200 WTPs countrywide by end 2019 as an interim measure for lead mitigation. The long-term solution is to remove all public side lead services by 2026. The permanent solution to have zero lead in the water supply by 2026. Five sites have been prioritised in Co. Roscommon as follows. North Roscommon WTP, Rockingham WTP, Ballinagard WTP, Killeglan WTP, Longford Springs WTP. The first site to be rolled out is North Roscommon WTP. EPS Ltd has been appointed and a detailed design is in progress. Following a request from RCC a repeat plumbosolvency test was carried out. The repeat test has indicated that since the water treatment plant upgrade, the water is not as aggressive as it was prior to the upgrade. Therefore, North Roscommon WTP has been reprioritised. IW are now focussing on sites that do not require Planning Permission.

Water Treatment Programme.

A Regional Water Treatment programme is underway in the North and West Region. The overall programmed completion date is June 2020. There are 12no. sites in the North West Region included in the programme. Mount Talbot – Four Roads Water Treatment Plant is included in the programme. EPS Ltd have been awarded the regional contract with a total value of €8million. Advance works are completed at Mount Talbot WTP. Raw water data gathering is in progress. This data will assist in the final scope for the plant upgrade. Some source protection works will progress in 2020.

Reservoir Refurbishment Programme.

Major repair works were carried out at Lissacurkia reservoir. The works has resulted in significant reduction in unaccounted for water. Drop tests have been carried out at a number of other reservoirs around the county. No major leakage has been identified to date.

Advance Investigation Works Programme.

This is a €1.5million Regional Programme. Mechanism for carrying out investigation works to include as part of upcoming tenders, optimise existing treatment processes and to gather data which will aid decisions on future treatment plant upgrades. Castlerea temporary WTP is included in this programme. Coffey Water Ltd have been appointed for the North West Region. Filter assessments has been carried out. The filter assessment report has identified a number of deficiencies with the existing filtration system. This report is under consideration by Irish Water.

Access to Heights and Edge Protection Programme.

This is a regional programme aimed at addressing medium and high-risk items identified in HSQE audits. There are 15no. Locations in Roscommon included in the programme. EPS Ltd have been

appointed to carry out the works. All works on the Roscommon sites were completed in 2019 and Q1 2020. Due to funding restrictions advised by Irish Water there will be limited works carried out under this programme in 2020.

Storm Water Overflow Assessment Programme.

Jacobs/Tobins appointed by IW to deliver this regional programme. A review of current list of WWTP's and storm water overflows (SWO's) was carried out. Site assessments were carried out at SWO's in Ballaghaderren, Ballyleague, Castlerea, Elphin, Frenchpark, Hudson Bay, Rooskey and Strokestown. Reports will be assessed when received.

Waste Water Pumping Stations and Rising Mains Capital Maintenance Programme.

Jacobs have been appointed by IW to deliver this regional programme. A review of the top 10 priority pumping stations and top 3 priority rising mains has been carried out. Surveys were due to commence in mid-March but have been suspended due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Reservoir Cleaning Programme.

Reservoir cleaning was carried out at Carrickmore, Ardcarne, Derrinacantha, Mullaghadoe and Lugboy reservoirs. Cleaning of Castlerea Water Tower was due to take place in Mid-March but this work was suspended due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Sewer Rehabilitation Programme.

AECOM have been appointed by IW to develop a National Sewer Rehabilitation Programme. A workshop was held with IW, RCC and AECOM to identify areas for rehabilitation. CCTV surveys have been completed on sections of sewer at Boyle and Ballyleague. Reports are due to be issued shortly for consideration.

National Water Resources Plan.

Irish Water is currently developing the first National Water Resources Plan (NWRP). The NWRP sets out the strategy of how we will move towards an environmentally sustainable, secure and reliable drinking water supply over the next 25 years. The plan involves assessing the external factors that will impact our water supplies, including changing environmental legislation, government policy on growth, spatial planning, water usage patterns and climate change. The plan also provides the framework for developing new water supply assets that will improve the reliability, sustainability and resilience of the water supply over future investment cycles.

As part of the plan, we will assess the water availability at all of our existing supplies and compare these to demand profiles over the next 25 years. The demand profiles include for growth, based on the national planning framework and leakage reduction targets. The plan also includes our proposed methodology for developing interventions where supply demand balance deficits are identified. Two regional workshops have been held to date.

A public consultation seeking feedback on the draft NWRP and associated environmental reports will commence later this year.

WATER NETWORKS PORTFOLIO:

Water Network Framework Programme:

Irish Water has rolled out a Water Network Portfolio under its Capital Investment Plan 2017 to 2021. Works intended to be rolled out under this programme include:

- New mains and service laying.
- Back yard lead replacement.
- DMA establishment.
- Pressure management.
- Resolution of shared services.
- First fix.
- Lead services.

Water Networks Rehabilitation Programme.

Contract Works:

Farrans Ltd are the appointed regional contractor to undertake works on behalf of Irish Water.

New Water Main and lead services replacement is completed at Arm, Castlereagh.

IW has advised that due to funding restrictions there will be limited water main rehab works carried out in 2020.

Direct Labour Works:

Bulk water meter installations on semi private group water schemes has been completed at a number of locations around the county.

Tranche 5 proposals for the next investment phase has been submitted and is under consideration by Irish Water. However, IW has advised that due to funding restrictions there will be limited water main rehab works carried out in 2020.

Find and Fix Programme:

This is a two-year programme targeted at District Metered Areas (DMA's) with high Unaccounted for Water (UFW) figures. The aim of the programme is to drive down leakage to Sustainable Economical Leakage Levels (SELL). This work commenced in late Q2 of 2018 with a regional contractor (Farrans Construction Ltd) appointed by Irish Water to deliver this programme of work. Farrans have also been tasked with examination of DMA establishment and they have employed the services of Jacobs Consulting Engineers to carry out this work. Under this programme, it has been agreed between Irish Water and Roscommon County Council that the local authority could form their own direct labour crew made up of a leak detection operative and two other operatives to carry out Find and Fix in other water supply zones and DMA'S (District Metering Areas).

The Find & Fix scheme involves leak detection crews undertaking surveys to prove the extent of the supply area, 'Step testing' to focus areas with leakage and using sounding and logging equipment on footpaths and other public areas to find the leaks. Once the leaks are found a repair crew then completes the repair. At present Farrans Construction Ltd (the contractor) has been working in a number of District Metering Areas (DMA's) within the Ballinlough Water Supply Zone and in North Roscommon Water Supply Zone. Target Leakage reduction has been achieved in a number of DMAs and are now closed and handed back to the operations caretakers. Other DMAs are still being investigated and in some cases have been split into sub DMAs to assist in leakage reduction and operational management process. Roscommon County Council Direct labour crew are currently working in the Lecarrow/Lisbrock Water Supply Zones in South Roscommon. This ongoing find and fix work has resulted in a reduction of unaccounted for water within County Roscommon and will continue to do so over the lifetime of the programme.

First Fix Programme.

Farrans Construction has been appointed by IW to carry out works under this programme. The duration depends on the take up by customers who will avail of the scheme. Letters have been issued to customers with meter usage <1M3/day. Farrans Construction will undertake the find and fix for customers who wish to avail of the scheme.

Non-Domestic Meter Replacement.

Farrans Construction have been appointed by IW to carry out works in the programme. Matched meter exchanges have been completed. Surveys of unmatched meters are ongoing.

Leakage Management System.

Netbase is now operational. However, Primeworks is still operational and is being supported by IT until 2021.

MULTI-ANNUAL RURAL WATER PROGRAMME 2019-2021

The Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2019-2021 is a scheme specific or project based approach to funding from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government.

The objective for this cycle is to provide enhanced funding certainty for priority investment needs to support the implementation of proper planning and sustainable development in rural areas. This is to assist in meeting the requirements of the Drinking Water Directive in relation to rural water supplies and to support the delivery of measures identified in the *River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021* to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

The 2019-2021 funding cycle of the multi-annual programme consists of eight measures (most are further broken into sub-measures). These measures reflect the key challenges currently facing the rural water sector in respect of funding support. In particular, the measures have been more expressly focused around a 'multiple barriers' approach, from catchment to consumers (source – treatment - distribution), to prevent the contamination of, and ensure that, drinking water is safe and meets quality parameters of the Drinking Water Regulations on a consistent long-term basis.

Approval of the schemes/projects under the MARWP 2019-2021 and the grant funding allocations were received from the Department in Circular letter dated 14th October, 2019.- €2,861,263

The eight funding measures are:

- **Measure 1 - Source Protection (Group Water Scheme Sector- Funding approved €303,000 for the period 2019-2021.**

This measure is aimed at protecting the raw water source of existing group water schemes thus contributing to the safety of water users through the ability of the scheme to sustainably achieve compliance with the water quality parameters of the Drinking Water Regulations on a consistent long-term basis.

Roscommon County Council is the lead Local Authority working in conjunction with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes and other stakeholders in a Source Protection Pilot Project developing full source protection plans including specific actions to improve the safety and security of Group Water Schemes drinking water. The work commenced in 2018 and continues in Q1 2020 with sampling at water sources to build a database which will inform actions and practical measures within each catchment to protect sources from current or future pollution risks. Mitigation measures for swallow holes are being discussed with farmers. Catchment walks are being undertaken by GWS managers to identify further sources of pollution and a campaign to raise awareness on source protection is being developed. A steering group and operational working group have been set up to progress the development of the source protection plans

- **Measure 2 - Public health compliance (Group Water Scheme Sector): Funding of €814,000 approved for the period 2019-2021.**

This measure is aimed at improving water quality in existing group water schemes, through upgrading their treatment facilities, so that the schemes can sustainably achieve compliance with the parameters of the Drinking Water Regulations on a consistent long-term basis. This includes work to upgrade the existing UV systems to validated UV systems and to replace equipment as deemed necessary and these Capital works are ongoing in accordance with a planned programme on the Design Build Operate Group Water Schemes.

- **Measure 3 - Enhancement of existing schemes including water conservation (Group Water Scheme Sector): Funding of €1,431,000 approved for the period 2019-2021.**

This measure supports projects to make existing group water schemes more efficient in their operation (e.g. water conservation and network upgrades, including storage) and contributing to good water quality on a consistent sustainable long-term basis.

Projects to the value of €230,013 have been tendered and agreed to progress in 2020 at the end of Q1 2020.

- **Measure 5 – Transition of Existing Group Water Schemes and Group Sewerage Schemes to the Public (Irish Water) Water Sector: Funding of €247,000 approved for the period 2019-2021.**

This measure enables existing group water schemes and existing group sewerage schemes, where they wish to do so and with the agreement of Irish Water, to transition to the public water sector (Irish Water). Talks are underway with 4 Group Water Schemes to progress to taking in charge by Irish Water.

- **Measure 6 - Community Connections (Water and Wastewater): Funding of €21,791 approved in respect of the period 2019-2021.**

This measure facilitates the continued expansion of the coverage of piped water supplies and central wastewater collection systems by extension off the public (Irish Water) network. Works were completed in 2019 under this measure.

- **Measure 8 - Individual wells (more commonly known as private or household wells) and on-site wastewater treatment systems (more commonly known as septic tanks):** This measure is aimed at allowing householders that are dependent on these services to obtain funding support for their improvement. Further guidance from the Department is due on this measure.

SUBSIDY -Payable towards the Operational Costs of Group Water Schemes Providing Water for Domestic Use:

With effect from 1st January, 2018, the subsidies have been increased, streamlined and new incentives introduced for smaller schemes. This is intended to bring greater equity and fairness to ensure that domestic users on group water schemes receive comparable benefits to those receiving their water supply from Irish Water.

Annual Subsidy - An annual subsidy per house is available to group schemes for the operational cost of providing domestic water. Annual subsidies in the sum of €88,473 have been paid to Group Water Schemes to end of Q1 2020.

Operational and Maintenance Subsidy – This subsidy is payable towards Operational and Maintenance (O&M) costs associated with “bona fide” Design/Build/Operate (DBO) contracts for group schemes that have their own water treatment facilities. O&M subsidies have been paid in the sum of €72,534 to Group Water Schemes to the end of Q1 2020.

INDIVIDUAL WELL GRANTS:

The funding for Individual Well Grants is demand led and applications continue to be processed for those who do not have access to an alternative water supply in their area. The maximum grant available is €2,031.58 or 75% of the cost of the work, whichever is the lesser. To the end of Q1 a total of 2 applications for the upgrade of individual wells have been received with 2 receiving Provisional Approval for financial support. Grants have been paid on 4 completed applications in sum of €7,308 for Q1 2020.

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

RMCEI

Roscommon County Council, on an annual basis, prepares and submits to the EPA a plan relating to its functional area. This Inspection Plan encompasses routine environmental inspections carried out by Roscommon County Council. It includes monitoring and inspecting the Council's own activities and ensuring compliance by the public, the farming community and the commercial and industrial sector with environmental legislation. The RMCEI Plan for 2020 was submitted to the EPA in Quarter 1.

Bulky Goods Recycling Service

Roscommon County Council introduced a new bulky goods recycling service at our civic amenity sites located in Ballaghaderreen, Boyle, Castlerea & Roscommon.

The following is the list of items now being accepted

Couch	€25.00 per item
Arm Chair	€15.00 per item
Mattress	€15.00 per item
Divan Bed-base	€10.00 per item

Bounce Back Recycling have supplied the containers which are placed in each of the sites for the collection of these items and will collect items as required by Roscommon County Council. Bounce Back Recycling will recycle items collected thereby diverting them from landfill

Complaints

The Environment Section continues to deal with litter/pollution complaints on a daily basis. All complaints are recorded and every complaint is investigated. Set out below are the complaints received in Quarter 1 2020. During this period 208 complaints were received, 170 were investigated and 147 complaints were closed.

Complaint Type	Athlone	Ballaghaderreen	Boyle	Castlerea	Roscommon	Strokestown	Total
Water	3	1	2	1	2		9
Waste	3	7	9	11	5	1	36
Noise		1		2	1	1	5
Litter	25	20	23	30	39	18	155
Air	1		1	1			3
	32	29	35	45	47	20	208

ASSETS, CLIMATE ACTION AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT

ASSETS

- PIR (Property Interest Register) Roscommon for all Building / Land Assets ongoing.
- Full listing of RCC Assets across all Sections prepared and issued for reconciliation of Fixed Assets Register (FAR) and PIR Roscommon by all Sections – partial completion to date.
- Housing Assets being reconciled with iHouse IT system.
- Policy documents approved and to sign off in Q2 2020 for:
 - Disposal of Land/Property
 - Acquisition of Land/Property
 - Property Asset Management Plan

ENERGY

- **Public Sector Energy Partnership Programme –**
 - Agreement signed on 25th April, 2016 - new Partnership Support Manager, Niall Kiernan, assigned to Roscommon County Council and first meeting has taken place.
 - Energy Action Plan 2020 – preparation ongoing.
- **Grant Applications –**
 - Better Energy Communities (BEC) Application for King House, Boyle, Dillon House, Ballaghaderreen, Library HQ and Aras an Chontae submitted to SEAI.
- **Optimising Power @ Work Programme –**
 - Submission in respect of Aras an Chontae accepted.
Monitors installed in June, 2017 and ESB Networks data connection complete / monitoring ongoing – subject to data commissioning / verification.

New OP@W Mentor, Mark Skerrit, appointed and first meeting has taken place with further meetings planned.
 - Monitors installed to 5 no. Buildings in Roscommon Town and ESB Networks data connection complete / monitoring ongoing with support from ResourceKraft - subject to data commissioning / verification.
- **Energy Monitoring & Reporting (M & R) 2018 –**
 - Data for 2019 – Part 1 submitted by 24th January, 2020 and Part 2 to submit by 1st May, 2020.
 - Currently at 27.7% of targeted 33% energy efficiency improvement by 2020, based on 2018 energy usage.

PUBLIC LIGHTING

- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Funding Applications:
 - **2019** - Retrofit of 476 no. PLs complete with exception of a small number of “scan” poles.
 - **2020** – Funding Application submitted for 164 no. PLs (this represents balance of TII PLs in Co. Roscommon).

- RCC-funded Project of retrofit of 1,230 no. PLs throughout Co. Roscommon approved in sum of €550,000.00 ex. VAT – commenced in Q4 2019 and completed in Q1 2020.
- Section 85 Agreement with Mayo County Council for National LED Retrofit Project placed before February Plenary Meeting and agreed by Elected Members.
- Updates to DeadSure Inventory and UMR Database in preparation for National LED Upgrade – ongoing.
- Taking-in-Charge of Estates (Public Lighting) – in conjunction with Planning and Roads Sections ongoing.

CLIMATE ACTION

- RCC represented at inaugural Eastern & Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) sub-Region Meeting – further meetings planned.
- Climate Action Implementation Team – majority of Section nominations forwarded and to finalise in Q2 2020.

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

Roscommon County Council Road Works Scheme 2020 was agreed by the three Municipal Districts in March 2020. The 2020 programme is summarised in Table 1 below. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) provided an allocation of €22,695,636, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) provided an allocation €17,612,347 and funding of €2,049,600 was provided from the Council's own resources. The overall budget for national primary, national secondary, regional and local roads for 2020 is €42,523,583

Table 1: Roscommon County Council Road Works Scheme 2020

Road Works Scheme Summary 2020 - All Municipal Districts								
Grant Description	National Primary	National Secondary	Regional Roads	Local Roads	Low Cost Safety Measures	Contingencies	Lighting/Other Works	Total
Ordinary Maintenance - TII Grant	155,705	183,838						339,543
Winter Maintenance - TII Grant	129,500	139,500						269,000
Route Lighting- TII Grant	58,367	51,484						109,851
LA Eng. Support-Maintenance Schemes- TII Grant	107,300							107,300
Ordinary Maintenance - DTTAS Discretionary Grant			850,000	1,889,000			370,000	3,109,000
Surface Dressing - DTTAS Restoration Maintenance Grant			27,200	1,855,500				1,882,700
Winter Maintenance Grant-ex DTTAS Discretionary Grant			150,000					150,000
Training Grant - DTTAS							69,000	69,000
Maintenance & Contingencies - RCC Own Resources				1,406,900		30,000		1,436,900
Public Lighting -RCC Own Resources							612,700	612,700
TOTALS - MAINTENANCE WORKS	450,872	374,822	1,027,200	5,151,400	0	30,000	1,051,700	8,085,994
Improvement Works - TII Grant	10,570,000	9,300,000						19,870,000
LA Eng. Support Improvement Schemes-TII Grant	1,999,942							1,999,942
Specific Improvement Works Grant			0					0
Bridge Rehabilitation Grant			375,000					375,000
SR/RR - Restoration Improvement Grant			3,512,800	6,982,600			61,900	10,557,300
Speed Limits and PSCI: Survey Support - DTTAS				45,800				45,800
Low Cost Safety Improvement Grant - DTTAS					370,500			370,500
Drainage Grant DTTAS							803,047	803,047
Specific Improvement Works Grant			250,000					250,000
TOTALS - IMPROVEMENT WORKS	12,569,942	9,300,000	4,137,800	7,028,400	370,500	0	864,947	34,271,589
TOTALS - ALL WORKS	13,020,814	9,674,822	5,165,000	12,179,800	370,500	30,000	1,916,647	42,357,583
Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)								166,000
Total - All Works plus CIS								42,523,583
Roads Allocations								
National Road Grants - Revenue	825,694							
National Road Grants - Capital	21,869,942							
Total TII	22,695,636							
Non-National Road Grants DTTAS	17,612,347							
Council Resources ex Revenue Budget Roads	1,436,900							
Council Resources ex Revenue Budget Public Lighting	612,700							
Total Council Resources	2,049,600							
Community Involvement Scheme DTTA	166,000							
Overall Total	42,523,583							

N5 Ballaghaderreen–Scramoge: The Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge Road Project is 33.4km in length and extends from the east tie-in point of the N5 Ballaghaderreen By-pass to Scramoge and bypasses Frenchpark, Bellanagare, Tulsk and Strokestown. The Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) was made on 11 December 2017. The application for Development Consent and for confirmation of the CPO and associated documentation was submitted to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) on 20 December 2017. The closing date for receipt of submissions to An Bord Pleanála was 6 March 2018. An Bord Pleanála made a request for additional information and same was submitted to the Board on 7 June 2018. Following an Oral Hearing convened by An Bord Pleanála ('The Board') in October 2018 the Board approved the scheme and confirmed the CPO in January 2019. CPO notices have been served on all persons listed in the CPO and land negotiations are progressing. Land & property valuation services and legal services to assist with land acquisition have been procured. Various works and services contracts procured in advance of the main construction contract including archaeology, asbestos survey, fencing, tree felling and hedgerow removal, topographical survey and geotechnical investigations are ongoing. Technical consultants have been appointed to assist in progressing the project through the tender and construction stages. In addition, an Independent Project Supervisor for the Construction Stage (PSCS) was appointed for the duration of the advance / enabling works and services contracts. Shortlisting of Design Build Contractors is nearing completion.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus site works initially continued in full compliance with Government and HSE guidance, however on the 27 March 2020 the Government introduced significant additional restrictions and directed a cessation of all non-essential construction works. In compliance with Government direction all archaeological works, topographical surveys, fencing, tree felling and hedgerow removal works, and geotechnical investigations have ceased until further notice.

N60 Oran Road Realignment Project involves the realignment of approximately 3.4 km of the N60 National Secondary route including 1.7 km of offline construction and 1.7 km of online widening to Type 1 single carriageway standard. The land acquisition process is currently ongoing, to date approximately 90% of the land cases have been settled. Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. commenced the Stage (ii) – (iv) Archaeological Resolution Contract in September 2017 and completed site works in April 2018 with 5 archaeological sites identified. Stage (iv) reporting has been completed on 3 of the sites with reporting ongoing on the remaining 2 sites. Detailed design and preparation of the main construction contract tender documents were completed in Q4 2018. The main construction contract was tendered on 1st November 2018. The latest date for submission of tenders was the 20th December 2018. The tender assessment process was completed in Q1 2019 and the Contract was awarded to Wills Bros Ltd. on 9th April 2019. Site works commenced in April 2019 with approx. 75% of construction works completed to date. All construction activity ceased on the 27th March 2020 in compliance with Government's requirements due to COVID-19. Roughan & O'Donovan Consulting Engineers continue to administer and supervise the main construction contract on behalf of Roscommon County Council.

N61 Ballymurray to Knockcroghery Road Project: This project comprises the improvement of the N61 National Secondary Road between Ballymurray and Knockcroghery which will incorporate a bypass of Knockcroghery village. A range of environmental and technical specialists have been appointed by RCC to progress the project through the planning, design and statutory phases. The Constraints First Public Consultation was held in March 2018. Roughan & O' Donovan-Aecom Alliance (ROD-A) was appointed as Lead Engineering Consultants in December 2018 following a procurement process using TII's Framework Agreement for Consultancy Services. The initial study area was increased in consideration of potential future upgrades to the N61 corridor. Throughout 2019 ROD-A progressed the project through the constraints and option selection phases. The Second Public Consultation presenting 6 Route Options was held in November 2019. Work is ongoing in relation to the refinement of the route options with a view to identifying the preferred route corridor option in Q2 2020.

N61 Coolteige Phase 1 Road Project involves the realignment and improvement of approximately 2.9km of a section of National Secondary Road on the northern outskirts of Roscommon Town predominately to Type 1 single carriageway standard. The land acquisition process is ongoing on foot of the approved CPO. Archaeological resolution field works were completed in November 2016. Post excavation archaeological works are ongoing. The main construction contract was awarded to Wills Bros Ltd. on 14 December 2017. Works commenced on site in Q1 2018 and are complete. The Defects Period extends to April 2020.

N61 Tulsk to Clashaganny Road Realignment Project involves the realignment of approximately 4.5km of the N61 National Secondary route from north of Tulsk village to Clashaganny. The Design Team has assessed the options, taking Public Consultation into account (August 2019) and has identified the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor as “Corridor C1”. An Emerging Preferred Route corridor brochure has been published on the Roscommon County Council website in Q1 2020 detailing the Corridor to the public and will be used by the Planning Authority for the referral of planning applications to the TII and the National Roads Regional Office. Following the publication of the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor, the Option Selection deliverables will be finalised.

National Road Pavement Projects: Contract documentation have been prepared for all pavement schemes receiving an allocation in 2020. The N5 Carrowntoosan to Tulsk contract was awarded in March 2020. It is anticipated that the N60 Castlerea South Pavement Overlay will be tendered in April 2020. Following the completion of water main replacement works undertaken by Irish Water, it is anticipated that the N60 Castlerea Pavement Overlay (Phase 2) will be tendered in May 2020

Local Improvement Scheme 2020

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) operates the Local Improvement Schemes for the improvement of local non-public roads. In March 2020 Roscommon County Council received a Grant Allocation of €355,104. The Local Improvement Scheme will proceed on the same policy basis as last year, including the maximum 10% administration costs to be claimed by each Local Authority and the €1,200 cap on the local contribution per individual household/landholder. Applications under this Scheme are being examined and a return will be made to the Department by 24th April 2020 for review.

Community Involvement Schemes 2020

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport provides grant assistance which must be matched by a minimum 15% from the community for eligible works including general maintenance, drainage works, pavement works and footpaths on public roads. Roscommon County Council received an allocation of €166,000 in 2020.

Cemetery Maintenance and Improvement Grants 2020

Roscommon County Council allocated €35,000 in the 2020 budget for the maintenance of burial grounds in County Roscommon. The *Cemetery Improvement and Maintenance Scheme 2020* was advertised in the local media and on the Council’s website. Application forms and details were also sent to all 2019 Cemetery Grant recipients. A total of 93 groups received notification of their allocation under this Scheme.

Road Opening Licences

Excavations made in a public road or footpath require a Road Opening Licence. Applications for licences to open the public road are lodged through the central portal with the Road Management Office www.rmo.ie. Roscommon County Council Roads department processes the licences for county Roscommon from this portal and attaches conditions and fees to the licence. The number of new applications for Q1 is 103.

Abnormal Load Permits

Local Authorities operate a permit system for abnormal loads on all or part of journeys where specific weight and height conditions apply. Roscommon County Council Roads department issued 31 Abnormal Load Permits to the end of Q1 2020.

Road Safety Office

AXA Roadsafe Roadshow delivers 'hard-hitting' message to students

The AXA Roadsafe Roadshow in partnership with Roscommon County Council, An Garda Síochána and Local Emergency Services delivered a hard-hitting road safety message to approximately 300 students at the Roscommon Arts Centre on 26th of February last. The show depicted what happens with driver inexperience and overconfidence with the aim to educate and highlight the various safety skills these young students need before they get behind the wheel of a car. It was told by Garda Pádraig Kelly, Fire Officer Michael Frain, Paramedic Darren Figgs, and A&E Consultant Dr. Jessica O'Connell. It culminated with a talk from Peter Reynolds who lost his brother Joe following a road crash and from Grainne Kealy, a survivor who has suffered life-changing injuries.

In 2019, figures reported by the Road Safety Authority show that 148 people lost their lives on Irish roads, and 1,243 were seriously injured. Over half of fatalities have been either a driver or passenger and one-third of all collisions had excessive speed as a factor. One-third of all driver and passenger fatalities were not wearing a seatbelt at time of collision.

Virtual Reality Headsets

In September 2019, Aviva Insurance financed the roll-out of the Virtual Reality Headsets to each Road Safety Officer in every county in Ireland. This new initiative aims to promote road safety particularly among younger drivers. The virtual reality units have been preloaded with an eight-minute video which simulates a fatal road collision from the perspective of a front seat passenger. The Road Safety Officer is working closely with An Garda Síochána visiting numerous schools in delivering this valuable tool. The feedback from students has been very positive.

Broadband

National Broadband Plan: In May 2019, National Broadband Ireland (NBI) was appointed the "Preferred Bidder". On 19th November 2019 the Irish Government finally signed the €3bn National Broadband Plan (NBP) Contract. NBI will carry out initial surveys of Eir infrastructure in Ballinasloe and Roscommon town regions in April 2020.

Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) will be set up within the first year of the rollout. Site inspections took place at each site in Roscommon during February and March in order to check line of sight. Installation of first sites to commence in April. These sites are primarily Community Centres and schools in the amber area, where high speed broadband will be made available to the public.

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment's High speed broadband Map shows progress in the deployment of high speed broadband but has not been updated since September 2019. Eir has completed its 300K rollout in County Roscommon, having passed 5746 premises. This includes 434 additional premises. As part of their €0.5 billion fixed network investment programme, Eir are currently in Boyle town and service is available to 35% of Boyle at this point, over 600 premises.

Digital Strategy: Work is continuing on the preparation of a Digital Strategy for County Roscommon. Questionnaires were completed and a joint business workshop took place on 22nd October 2019 to cover all USEFE (Upper Shannon Erne Future Economy) counties, namely Roscommon, Longford, Leitrim and Cavan.

WIFI4EU: Roscommon was successful in receiving approval for four vouchers. Tender documents are being prepared.

Digiwest: Funding was received under the Rural and Regional Development Fund as part of a joint scheme led by Western Development Commission, working with Donegal, Sligo and Mayo, to create *Digiwest* – a Western Region Network of Rural Digital Working Hubs. Roscommon's location is a vacant unit in Meadow Brook, Tulsk. Internal construction works almost complete. Tenders for internal equipment and furniture being prepared.