

**HOUSING, SOCIAL & BUILDING SERVICES DIRECTORATE
STIÚRTHÓIREACT NA SEIRBHÍSÍ TITHÍOCHTA, SÓISIALTA AGUS
FOIRGNÍOCHTA**

Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €16,896,100

Draft Budgeted Income: €13,696,100

The following pages set out the above as per each Relevant Programme Group.

**HOUSING AND BUILDING
TITHÍOCHT AGUS FOIRGNÍOCHT**

Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €12,950,900
Draft Budgeted Income: €12,790,000
(Pages 1-3 of Blue Pages)

REVENUE ACCOUNT - OPERATIONS

2006 again witnessed a high level of activity with direct housing assistance having been provided to over one thousand (1,000) individuals/families which represents a significant contribution to the accommodation and well being of the people of Donegal.

The types of assistance provided ranged from a combination of allocation of tenancies under the Council's own Social Housing Programme and the Voluntary Housing Programme, the provision of assistance in the form of loans under the reconstruction loans scheme, the purchase/erection, shared ownership, tenant purchase, caravan and affordable housing loans schemes and the provision of assistance under the Disabled Persons and Essential Repairs Grant Schemes.

Other activities during the year included the completion of the revitalisation/regeneration of 13 no. Local Authority Housing Estates under the Peace II Programme; the continuation of the Local Authority Housing Estate Enhancement Scheme in the CLÁR areas, the initiation of a separate refurbishment programme in a number of local authority estates and an acceleration of the Central Heating Installation Programme in local authority houses.

The Budget now sought will enable the Council to meet the 2007 component of an overall programme of works as set out in the 5 Year Action Plan for Social & Affordable Housing 2004 - 2008.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Donegal County Council has 2,559 rented houses in over 190 individual Housing Estates. There are in addition 675 individual houses provided as specific instance/rural cottages or in some cases individual houses purchased within Estates. The latter cases are generally where the Local Authority bought back houses from its "own" Estates. The age of the stock ranges from 1953 to

the present day with many of the Estates being constructed in a number of separate phases.

Provision is made in the Draft Budget of €1,743,600 for housing maintenance at the same level as the 2006 adopted Budget. This will be utilised for a combination of emergency repairs, pre-letting repairs of casual vacancies and planned maintenance. Monies are set aside for planned maintenance/upgrading of estates in 2007 and this will be used to complement an application for a further allocation for remedial works as set out later in this report. The use of other schemes e.g. Central Heating, Refurbishment etc is greatly assisting in the upkeep of the Council stock.

The table below sets out, by Electoral Area and category, the current housing stock which the Council maintains.

ELECTORAL AREA	SCHEME HOUSES	S.I. HOUSES
INISHOWEN	494	122
DONEGAL	488	121
GLENTIES	447	205
LETTERKENNY	479	68
MILFORD	275	90
STRANORLAR	376	69
TOTAL	2559	675

As in previous years, 30% of the 2007 Draft Budget under this heading is to be specifically ring-fenced for the repair of casual vacancies/upgrading of housing stock.

It is believed that in this way, the remainder of the money has and will be safeguarded and facilitates a more planned spending of the money and proper management/control thereof.

CENTRAL HEATING PROGRAMME

The Programme of installation of Central Heating in local authority rented dwellings commenced in 2004 when an allocation of €250,000 (i.e. €200,000 Department grant and €50,000 from the Council's own resources) enabled the Council to provide heating/related energy improvement and safety measures in 42 dwellings throughout the county. A further allocation of €972,500 (€778,000 Department grant plus €194,500 own resources) was approved in 2005 which enabled the provision of central heating/related energy improvement and safety measures in a further 164 dwellings.

Provision of €200,000 had been made in Budget 2006 to meet the Council's contribution to an anticipated total allocation of €1m (i.e. Department grant of €800,000) in the current year. However, in early April, the Council was notified of an increased allocation for 2006 of €1.68m (i.e. Department grant of €1,344,000 plus own resources of €336,000). This necessitated the Council meeting a further €136,000 from its own resources as only €200,000 had been provided in Budget 2006. By the end of the year central heating/related energy improvement and safety measures will have been installed in a further 277 eligible dwellings.

It is proposed to continue the accelerated programme of works to the value of €1.662m in 2007 which will require an increase of €118,000 over the 2006 budget and provision is made in Draft Budget 2007 for same in the total sum of €318,000. This will deliver approximately another 240 houses with locations to be agreed on confirmation of allocation and will enable the Council to achieve the target date of the end of 2008 for delivery of central heating to all rented local authority dwellings in the county subject to Department grant and own resources availability.

The 5 Year Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing had identified 887 local authority rented houses as being without central heating (all houses post 1994 are centrally heated).

E.U. PROGRAMME FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION 2000 - 2006: PEACE II PROGRAMME - REVITALISATION OF PUBLIC HOUSING SCHEMES - PHASE III:

Total funding of €492,000 had been secured by the Council to the end of 2005 under Measures 3.3 & 3.4 of the E.U. Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2000 - 2006 for the revitalization/regeneration of local authority housing schemes throughout the county. Works were carried out at 12 schemes in

2002/03 under Phase I of the Programme with a further 13 schemes being facilitated in 2004/05 under Phase II of the Programme.

In 2006 the Council secured further funding of €228,000 under Measure 3.3 of the E.U. Programme to carry out works at the following 13 no. schemes:

Inishowen E.A.: Craig Pk., Muff & Convent Rd., Carndonagh.

Donegal E.A.: St.Patrick's Tce., Pettigo & Termon Villas, Pettigo.

Glenties E.A.: Drumaghy Park, Ardara & Coislocha, Creeslough.

Letterkenny E.A.: Ard Baithin, St. Johnston & Glendale Drive, Letterkenny.

Milford E.A.: Skeog Cottages, Churchill & Chestnut Grove, Ramelton.

Stranorlar E.A.: Ard McCool, Stranorlar; Liscooley Villas & Doneyloop H/S.

In accordance with the terms of the scheme, works will be completed on all 13 no. schemes by the end of March, 2007.

Works carried out to-date have contributed to the upgrading of the selected estates by the improvement of their amenities and physical appearances. Specific works carried out have included the provision of picnic areas, sand pits, hard surface play/kick about areas, level tarmac areas with kerb surrounds, boundary fences and gates, the tidying-up of schemes including removal of weeds and rubbish, clearing of overgrown areas and landscaping.

Works funded under the Peace II Programme generally complement the Town and Village Renewal Programme.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Council obtained funding in 2004 to appoint Tenant Liason Officers to a number of specific estates. These appointments were made on a pilot basis and building on the success of the scheme, it was proposed to make the positions permanent but to extend the brief to include Housing Assessment Officers. The view was that it would be beneficial if these officers were also involved in the assessment \ allocation stages as this could also lead to better estate management.

The Council have moved forward and expanded the roles to include the Housing Assessment \ Tenant Liaison Officers and the work has been mainstreamed into the electoral area structure with appropriate budget provision made.

In addition to salary provision, a further €173,900 is provided for estate management initiatives.

HOMELESSNESS

€190,000 is provided in the Draft Budget 2007 under this heading - 90% of which is recoupable from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

This includes provision for the outreach worker currently located in the St. Colmcille Hostel in Letterkenny. The Council is presently working with another voluntary provider in relation to the provision of 2 further outreach services (a settlement worker and a tenancy sustainment worker) and provision is included in Draft Budget 2007 for same. It is proposed to bring the matter to the Homeless Forum for consideration early in 2007 prior to an application for approval being made to the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

Having regard to the number of voluntary projects being supported by the Council throughout the county the demand for Sheltered Accommodation is largely being met through that source.

REGISTRATION OF PRIVATE RENTED DWELLINGS

The Residential Tenancies Act, 2004, enacted in July, 2004 transferred the registration function including payment of registration fees to the newly established Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) with effect from 1st September 2004 rather than with the local authority as heretofore.

However under the Act, arrangements were made to provide funding to local authorities to take account of registration fee income foregone due to the introduction of the new system of registration with the PRTB under the Act. From 2006 onwards, the funding from the PRTB is linked to the enforcement of the regulations on standards by the local authority which is likely to result in a small decrease in funding in 2007.

While the Council is cognisant of the need to enforce the Standards and Rent Books Regulations, it is felt that this can best be achieved through the implementation of the Rental Accommodation Scheme as referred to hereunder.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME

The Rental Accommodation Scheme is a new initiative which was introduced to cater for the accommodation needs of persons who are in receipt of Rent Supplement, normally for more than 18 months, and who have a long term housing need. The Scheme is being administered by Local Authorities and it is intended to provide an additional source of good quality rented accommodation for eligible persons to enhance the response of Local Authorities to meet the long term housing need.

Donegal County Council has already transferred over 60 persons in voluntary accommodation to the Rental Accommodation Scheme and the attention is now moving to persons who are in private rented accommodation. As part of the mid-term review of the 2004-2008 Action Plan which was submitted to the Department earlier this year, the Council made a commitment to have 400 persons transferred by the end of 2008. The Department has sanctioned the allocation of additional staff to implement this scheme and it is intended that a new unit will be set up early in 2007.

In the interim however, the Council are proceeding to implement this scheme. While there are over 1,000 people in Donegal in receipt of Rent Supplement for more than 18 months, over 400 of these are in the Letterkenny area and this area is being targeted first with a view to having a limited number of transfers completed before the end of the year.

As part of the initial approach, it is considered that single persons should be facilitated through a transfer so as not to over compromise the Council's own Social Housing Programme. The members will be aware from previous reports, of the change in make-up of the housing need with the result and requirement to change the type of accommodation to be supplied. As a large percentage of the persons who are in receipt of rent supplement, are also on the Council's housing waiting list, were the Council to transfer all of these persons to the Rental Accommodation Scheme, the delivery of the extensive social housing programme which has already been agreed would not be justified (the Council has already housed 200 long-term Rent Supplement recipients in social housing over the past two years). It is therefore the view that for the purposes of the initial stages of the implementation of RAS, single persons should be facilitated first as they invariably receive a lower priority in the Council's own Social Housing Programme, particularly where they have not identified a long term housing need.

While this is the early stages of the implementation of the programme, the Council will have to revisit the overall position in relation to the various options

available for meeting the housing need, be that through the Rental Accommodation Scheme, the Council's own Social Housing/Voluntary Programme or other options such as Affordable \ Shared Ownership etc.

While the Department have sanctioned additional staff for the implementation of the scheme and while the Department recoup certain monies to the Local Authority, the Council will invariably have to carry a certain level of administration costs from its own resources and the provision of a contingency sum of €17,000 has been made in Draft Budget 2007.

RENTAL INCOME

The budget for rental income for 2006 was €5.607m.

Rents are reviewed annually and in conjunction with buoyancy from increased income from this source as well as new lettings in 2007 will realise an extra rental income which has been estimated at €0.597m bringing the total estimated income to €6.204m. This increased income is being targeted towards the maintenance of the existing stock as outlined above.

There has been a continued reduction of almost one quarter of a million euro in rent/tenant purchase arrears over the past 3 years and this will be a major focus again in 2007.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The Council adopted a new Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 2005 - 2008 on 29th March 2005. 47 families were identified as in need of permanent accommodation during the duration of the said programme. At the end of November 2006, 25 families identified in the Programme have been accommodated. It is also worth noting that all 47 families have opted for housing.

During the duration of the last Traveller Accommodation Programme 2000 - 2004 and the current programme to date, significant progress has been made in relation to accommodation of Traveller families throughout the County, which has alleviated the need for many of the temporary Emergency sites.

In relation to permanent Traveller Accommodation, the Council are progressing two permanent transient halting sites in the County, both are currently being

prepared for planning in 2007. These sites have been through the various stages of an agreed strategy, identified in Section 7 of the new Traveller Accommodation Programme, for the provision of permanent Traveller Accommodation. Other permanent Traveller Accommodation proposals being progressed at present include a small group housing development on an existing site and a refurbished SI, both at construction stage. Also, a number of house purchases and an SI construction for Traveller families have been completed recently.

Provision of €210,000 has been made in Draft Budget 2007 to provide a daily/weekly management and maintenance programme on the current temporary emergency halting sites and for the employment of a caretaker for same. 75% of the caretaker's salary is recoupable from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. A percentage of Management & Maintenance costs is also recoupable.

EMERGENCY REPLACEMENT OF CARAVANS FOR TRAVELLERS

Provision of €40,000 is being made in Draft Budget 2007 for the emergency replacement of caravans for Travellers, of which 50% is recoupable from the D.O.E.H.L.G. Caravans are replaced following emergency situations. A larger number of emergency purchases have been completed in 2006 following a number of various emergency circumstances that arose during the year.

LOANS FOR THE PURCHASE OF CARAVANS BY TRAVELLERS

This scheme has been in operation for over four years. The Council has been able to reduce this provision as a large majority of indigenous Travellers have availed of this scheme to date, and also due to the large number of Traveller families accommodated in standard scheme housing. 10% of the purchase price of the caravan is funded by the Council as a first time buyer's grant, the applicant also pays 10% also with, and a loan of 80% of the purchase price is then provided. The 10% Council contribution is recoupable from the D.O.E.H.L.G.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Council continues to play its role in relation to the renting of temporary accommodation for Asylum Seekers and provision of €712,500 is being made in the Draft Budget for 2007. There is presently just the one centre in operation in the county for the accommodation of Asylum Seekers located at Donegal Town. All costs under this heading are 100% recoupable from the Reception and Integration Agency of the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform.

Programme Group 5

**ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
COSAINN NA TIMPEALLACHTA**

Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €19,000

Draft Budgeted Income: €Nil

(Pages 14-16 of Blue Pages)

COMPETITION FOR BEST-KEPT HOUSING SCHEMES

The Draft Budget for 2007 again includes provision of €13,000 for the competition for the best kept housing schemes.

Programme Group 6

RECREATION & AMENITY CAITHEAMH AIMSIRE AGUS TAINTEAMHACHT

Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €6,000
Draft Budgeted Income: € Nil
(Pages 17-19 of Blue Pages)

DERELICT SITES/BUILDINGS

Provision of €12,000 in Programme Groups 5 & 6 is again provided in Draft Budget 2007 to deal with the issue of Derelict Buildings /Derelict Sites in line with decisions by the Council to address this issue. A data bank of derelict sites has been assembled and some premises have been registered. In addition some derelict sites/buildings have been acquired and redeveloped for housing e.g. Lifford, Killygordon, Ramelton, Milford etc.

Following a decision by the members to address priority areas including Ballyshannon a comprehensive audit of all derelict sites/buildings in Ballyshannon was carried out during 2005 and an action plan to deal with the premises was formulated between the Housing/Building and Planning Section with assistance from Community & Enterprise in 2006. Information has been assembled with regard to the status and ownership of each premises with a view to following up with each owner/occupier their intentions for the property and the constraints on the property within the Town Plan/Regulations as well as advice on the removal of dereliction, any assistance under conservation grants etc. The possibility of introducing a levy on derelict property in accordance with the Derelict Sites Legislation can also be considered in the event that our efforts to get agreement are not successful. It is also intended to address towns/villages in each Electoral Area with high levels of dereliction on the basis of processes which will be developed in Ballyshannon.

**MISCELLANEOUS
ÉAGSÚIL**

Draft Budgeted Expenditure: €3,920,200
Draft Budgeted Income: €906,100
(Pages 23-27 of Blue Pages)

MAINTENANCE OF COURTHOUSES

Provision of €57,500 has been made under this heading in the Draft Budget 2007 - an increase of €3,500 on Budget 2006. There are 5 Courthouses being used in the county at present located at Letterkenny, Buncrana, Carndonagh, Donegal and Glenties. Court sittings are also held at 2 rented venues at Dungloe and Falcarragh and at the Courts Service's new courthouse in Ballyshannon.

Although responsibility for the maintenance of Buncrana and Donegal Courthouses has been transferred to the Office of Public Works, the Council Courts Service is still responsible for payment of Caretakers wages at these locations. Responsibility for the maintenance of Carndonagh and Glenties Courthouses remains with the Council. The only costs incurred by the Council in relation to Letterkenny Courthouse relate to the provision of annual/sick leave cover for the Caretaker.

All expenditure incurred under this heading - maintenance costs, caretakers' wages and rental etc is 100% recoupable.

BUILDING CONTROL AND FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

Building Control

The submission of Commencement Notices is available at each Public Service Centre and the administration of Building Control register is centrally located in Letterkenny PSC allowing for the registration of valid commencement notices. Information is readily available through the computerised system for telephone and counter queries.

The DEHLG recommended targets for inspections are being reached through inspections by engineering staff. To date this year 2,244 valid Commencement Notices have been registered with the fees received amounting to €155,000 and it is estimated that the expenditure outturn under this heading will be €134,000. The number of valid Commencement Notices for 2005 was 2230 compared to 2,374 in 2004 and 1,979 in 2003. Enforcement of the Building Control regulations is being advanced and the Council's solicitors have been instructed to take proceedings in a number of cases against developers and agents for non-compliance.

Facilities Maintenance

Facilities maintenance continues to strive to maintain a clean, attractive, healthy, and safe environment for all staff, and customers. Facilities Management is designed to support the Donegal Local Authorities public service mission statement by providing quality and cost effective maintenance services in all buildings. Facilities Maintenance provides response and planned maintenance to maintain the effective operation of all services.

The Facilities Maintenance team comprises of a Senior Executive Engineer, Clerical Officer, Senior Supervisor and Building Facility Supervisors in each office provided. Experienced maintenance personnel back this up. The commitment to problem solving is evident through the varied issues and concerns dealt with successfully throughout the year. The operation of Facilities Maintenance protects Council assets specifically physical within financial constraints. Facilities Maintenance co-ordinates the resources necessary to purchase, maintain, and protect the systems, equipment and infrastructure of our buildings.

The Public Service Centres at Donegal Town, Dungloe, Milford, Carndonagh and Letterkenny are included in addition to the portfolio of existing buildings in Lifford. Progress is continuing in relation to Fire Safety with the provision of on-site fire safety training and fire drills at all locations.

Access for people with disabilities is to be improved through a range of improvements including automatic doors to allow easier direct access to services within each building including the County House.

Disposal of Assets:

As part of the Council's strategy to deal with High Interest Cost Mortgage Related Loans significant Capital debt and financing the completion of the Decentralisation Programme including refurbishment of the County House, Headquarters, a number of properties have been sold and preparation is being made for the disposal of others.

The Council has completed the sale of the following properties and the proceeds have been applied to deal with High Interest Cost Loans leaving a balance to be dealt with from the proceeds of further Asset sales:

Lands adjacent to the Diamond Car Park, Donegal Town

Land at Dooballagh

Former Town Council building at Bundoran

Former Area Roads Office Gweedore

Sale has been agreed on the following properties and conveyance is ongoing:

0.5 acre site adjacent to Diamond Car Park

Walled Garden at Dungloe

Disused reservoir at Coolcholly, Ballyshannon

The following properties are on the market or shortly to be put on the market:

Lands at Finner

Former Bacon Factory, Letterkenny

Significant progress has been made in relation to providing alternative facilities for the relocation of the existing operations being carried out at that location.

It is expected that the New Civil Defence Building, which is to be located at Stranorlar will be ready for tender at the beginning of 2007.

All matters relating to the application of the proceeds from the sale of Assets will be brought to the Elected Members for formal approval. In the Adopted Budget for 2006 this strategy was set out in relation to the redemption of €2.8m of high interest rate Mortgage Related Loans and €2.0m Non Mortgage Loans. For 2007 a further €3.9m of high interest Mortgage Related Loans were redeemed and savings are factored in to achieving Budgetary Balance (please see Head of Finance's section of this report).

CAPITAL ACCOUNT AND ASSET FORMATION

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION CAPITAL PROGRAMME

HOUSING NEED

There are at present 2,639 persons in need of direct housing assistance. There has been a significant change in the make up of the list as to a number of years previously. The most significant change is in relation to the number of one-person households now requiring accommodation (42%). As already outlined in this report, in addition to the traditional role of meeting the needs of applicants on the housing waiting list, the Council now also has a responsibility of meeting the long term needs of persons in receipt of rent supplement, whether they are on the waiting list or not. These matters raise the need for a number of key policy considerations and decision to be taken by the Council which have been considered by the Housing SPC and at a number of workshops during the year. The increase in the number of separated applicants or divorced applicants comprising 16% of the list is a further trend which has significant implications in terms of how the Council meets that need.

The following table sets out the make up of the need from the perspective of marital status of the applicant and the family composition.

STATUS	LEVEL
Single	50.29%
Lone parent	16.34%
Separated	13.15%
Married	12.00%
Co habiting	2.96%
Divorced	2.96%
Widowed	2.11%
Other	0.19%
	100.00%

SIZE OF APPLICATION UNIT	LEVEL
1 adult	42.60%
1 adult + 1 child	26.68%
1 adult + 2 children	8.84%
2 adults	5.69%
1 adult + 3 children or 3+	4.54%
2 adult + 1 child	3.73%
2 adult + 2 children	3.58%
2 adult + 3 children or 3+	3.58%
3 adult	0.38%
3 adult +	0.38%
	100.00%

There has been a shift in the make up of the need in relation to the number of one person households which comprise 42% of the waiting list with two person households making up a further 26%.

Traditionally the Council have been providing a majority of three/four bedroom houses with a number of two bed units also provided. In early years, one-bed senior citizen dwellings were built although the senior citizens needs in later years have been met from the two-bed stock of bungalow type. It is no longer practical or indeed viable for the Council to be continuing to provide a majority of three-bed units given the make up of the housing need. This is particularly important in the larger urban centres where there is a huge demand and land is at a premium. The key consideration for the Council is to ensure that the type of housing being provided is targeted to match the needs of the persons on the waiting list.

Given the significant change in the composition of the waiting list, there is a need for the Council to look at the type of two-bed units that it is providing. Traditionally the two-bed units have been of the bungalow type and this is no longer seen as viable particularly for the single applicants. There is the need for the Council to look more to an 'apartment' type 2 bed unit and there are a number of available options in this category. These can generally be categorised into 3 groupings - 2 bed single storey bungalow type; 2 bed, 2 storey semi-detached and a 2 bed, 2 up/2 down type unit.

Having regard to the additional option of the Rental Accommodation Scheme, which is now available to the Council to meet long-term housing need of those

on rent supplement, the Council will have to revisit the policy issues which arise particularly relating to the implications for the Councils own Social Housing Programme.

2004 - 2008 HOUSING CAPITAL BUILDING PROGRAMME

The 5 year multi annual programme reached its halfway stage in 2006, and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government carried out a mid-term review of the programme across all local authorities. The Council was broadly on target to meet all its commitments under the various elements of the programme including the capital element for the provision of Social Housing. At the end of the third quarter of 2006, Housing Section had identified 891 of its 1100 scheme starts and 124 of the 200 SI rural cottage starts. The remaining 209 scheme starts are targeted for the towns of Letterkenny, Ballybofey/Stranorlar and Ballyshannon together with some small amounts in the Glenties and Donegal Electoral Areas. At the end of 2006 there will be 374 houses under construction including S.I.s which represents a high level of construction activity. In addition to this, tenders have been received for schemes at St. Johnston, Kilmacrennan, Greencastle and Glencolmcille involving a total of 77 houses and these will be on site in early 2007. Contracts will also have been signed for schemes at Burtonport, Meenaniller and Dungloe for a total of a further 66 houses and these will be on site in January 2007. The Capital allocation for Social Housing from the DEHLG was €30 million and the Council expended approx. €31.5 million, some €1.5 million in excess of its allocation. On the construction side the following Scheme houses were under construction in 2006.

ELECTORAL AREA	LOCATION
Inishowen.	Moville (29), Malin (10), Carndonagh (18), Bridgend (10), Carrigans (8), Moville (27)
Letterkenny	Manorcunninghaam (45) incl. 16 affordable, Letterkenny (32).
Milford	Ramelton (17), Kerrykeel (4), Rathmullan (18), Ramelton (33) incl. 6 affordable, Milford (28) incl. 6 affordable.
Glenties	Dungloe (8), Doochary (5)
Donegal	Donegal (31), Laghey (6), Frosses (6), Bruckless (6), Donegal (16), Dunkineely (9)
Stranorlar	Ballybofey (47 - including 8 affordable), Stranorlar (39)

There were 173 completions in 2006 including SI Cottages and individual purchases. The following schemes were completed in 2005: Moville (29), Donegal (31), Donegal (16), Kerrykeel (4), Doochary (5), Ramelton (17)

It is anticipated that the current high levels of activity in Housing Construction will continue in 2007 with the following schemes scheduled to begin or continue under construction.

ELECTORAL AREA	LOCATION
Inishowen	Carndonagh (18), Malin (10), Greencastle (2), Bridgend (10), Carrigans (8), Moville (27), Greencastle (8), Inch (4), Carrowmeena (4), Bunrana (20), Newtowncunningham(18)
Glenties	Dungloe (8), Lettermacaward (13), Burtonport (21), Dungloe1 (28), Dungloe2 (30), Fintown (12), Gweedore (17), Ardara (19), Creeslough(10)
Donegal	Frosses (6), Bruckless (6), Killybegs (10), Carrick (10), Dunkineely (9), Glenclomcille (6), Kilcar (6), Ballyshannon (20).
Letterkenny	Manorcunningham (37 incl. 8 affordable), St. Johnston (22), Ballindrait (4), Raphoe (20).
Milford	Rathmullan (18), Milford (28), Ramelton (32), Kilmacrennan (41), Carraigart (20)
Stranorlar	Ballybofey (47 inc.8 affordable), Stranorlar (39), Castlefinn (7), Castlefinn (6).

There were 31 SI's completed in 2006 and tenders for 20 SI's were received in 2006 and it is intended to progress another 40 SI's to tender and construction in 2007

A large portion of the current capital programme is being designed 'in house' by the Council's own architects and utilising the Council's own landbank. In this regard the Council is continually seeking suitable landbank throughout the county for housing development and in 2006 landbank was acquired in Killybegs and Carrowmeena. It is anticipated that more landbank will be acquired in 2007 in the areas of highest need. The current programme represents a significant challenge to the Council's Housing Construction Section to meet the targets set out. The outcome of the Housing Needs Assessment in March 2005 indicated an overall decrease in the numbers on the housing waiting lists and

also a significant change in the demographics of same. There are now a large proportion of single adult households with no dependents on the list and the Council will have to consider the type of units it will have to procure to meet this changing profile of need rather than the traditional 3 bedroom and 2 bedroom units it currently provides.

CLÁR LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING ESTATE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

In 2005 the Council secured further funding of €710,000 to continue the CLÁR Local Authority Housing Estate Enhancement Scheme which commenced in 2004.

The second phase of the Scheme runs from September 2005 to August 2007 and the allocation consists of a contribution of €337,250 by Donegal County Council (funded from Internal Capital receipts); a contribution of €337,250 by CLÁR and a 5% local contribution of €35,500 and will fund eligible works at the remaining 27 housing schemes for which funding was originally sought in 2003.

The type of projects covered under the scheme include landscaping, paving, play/amenity areas, development of open spaces, seating areas, lighting, boundary walls etc.

In accordance with the terms of the scheme, all approved works will be completed by the end of August, 2007.

REMEDIAL WORKS/REGENERATION OF RUNDOWN ESTATES

In the Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008, the Council indicated that remedial works would form an important aspect of the programme.

In November 2005, approval was received from the Department to carry out a remedial works programme to the value of €642,935 to be funded from the Council's surplus internal capital receipts. The Department indicated that the balance of the estimated cost of €103,688 should be funded under the Council's Planned Maintenance Programme (i.e. for replacement of bathrooms/kitchens).

Sufficient monies were provided in Budget 2005/06 in anticipation of such a programme of works being carried out. To-date, €616,822 of this money has been committed.

The Council have now submitted a further programme of works to the value of €1.7m to the Department for approval to enable works to be carried out. As in previous years, revenue funding is being provided in the Draft Budget 2007 for the continuation of the programme subject to Department approval.

ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS HOUSING THEMSELVES

Loans:

The following table sets out details of the number of applications received in respect of loans in 2002-2006:

	Purchase / Construction	Shared Ownership
2002	38	36
2003	67	67
2004	66	85
2005	77	68
2006 (TO 30/11/2006)	68	55

The Council will continue to promote the various loan schemes that are available.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Council recognises the importance of the Affordable Housing Scheme as a mechanism to enable lower income families who would not necessarily qualify for social housing but who would be unable to obtain a dwelling in the open market, to acquire their own homes.

To date, 40 Affordable Units plus 17 Social Units have been constructed under Part V. A further 59 Affordable Units have been constructed under the 1999 Affordable Housing Scheme.

€281,000 has been accepted in lieu of houses in 10 different schemes. The Council has made a submission to the Department to use these monies to improve the general affordability of Part V units and units provided under the 1999 Affordable Scheme by subsidising the sale price of units.

The Council has reached agreement with 3 major lending institutions to enable them to allocate mortgages to clients who have been approved for Affordable Housing. The Council are also in discussion with a number of developers with a view to direct sales of Affordable Units by the developers to nominated

persons as opposed to the Council purchasing the units and then disposing of them.

The Draft Budget provision for 2007 provides for the delivery of a further 45 no. units.

DISABLED PERSONS/ ESSENTIAL REPAIRS GRANTS

Donegal County Council carried out a detailed review of its policies in relation to the Disabled Persons and Essential Repairs Grants Scheme in 2002. Under the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme, works which are considered to be necessary in the context of the provision of better accommodation for a person with a disability are covered with standard costings also in place based on the level and standard of accommodation which is deemed necessary.

The policy, which is in place, meets the following objectives -

- Maintains the discretion of the Council in terms of what works are covered under the scheme.
- Has regard to and is in general accordance with the spirit of the Department Guidelines in relation to the provision of assistance under the scheme.
- Ensures that the grant remains a targeted grant for the provision of suitable accommodation for persons with a disability.
- Ensures that the funds available for grants will meet the accommodation needs of the most needy in the most appropriate manner.
- The scheme will meet its primary purpose to assist 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 and the ongoing need to obtain best possible value for money.

The Essential Repairs Grant Scheme is designed to specifically meet the needs of the elderly population whereas at the same time ensuring that the most essential elements of repairs are carried out. Again standard costings are in place and through this mechanism the Council ensures that the monies are being spent on the essential repairs, which are necessary. The scheme which is in place, in relation to works qualification, grant levels, coupled with applicants eligibility, maintains the key focus of the grant in that it is a targeted grant at meeting the needs of the most needy and the monies go towards covering the most essential repairs.

During 2005, the standard costings were revised to take account of the increased cost in the construction industry.

It is anticipated that over €3.8m will be spent in 2007 requiring €1.3m of own resources. The Council has spent €25m on these grants over the past seven years representing the highest spend by any Local Authority outside of the Dublin area. The Draft Budget proposed will sustain an increased spend on grants in 2007 to take account of the increase in the number of applications presently being received. In addition to making a direct revenue provision to fund the Council's contribution on the grants to be paid in 2007, provision is also made in Draft Budget 2007 for loan charges of €851,600 to repay loans of €10m raised in the past to fund the scheme.

The Department of the Environment and Local Government recoup to the Local Authority 2/3 of the amount of the Grant (full amount for local authority rented dwellings) up to a maximum of €13,546.67 in respect of Disabled Persons Grants and €6,353.33 in respect of Essential Repair Grants.

The Housing SPC is presently considering options for a streamlining of the assessment process for DPGs to overcome the delays presently being experienced.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING

Significant progress has been made in the promotion of voluntary housing and, in particular, in relation to the provision of general needs housing under the Loan Subsidy Scheme. Accommodation has been provided at 38 Centres with a total of 648 units of accommodation provided.

There are presently some 184 no. units under construction and 193 no. units are at an advanced stage of planning as follows:

(i) Schemes in Construction

Location	No. of Units
Kerrykeel	16
Letterkenny (Fortwell)	30
Lifford	52
Carndonagh	56
Moville	30
Total:	184

(ii) Schemes in Planning (Advanced Stage):

Location	No. of Units
Ardara	29
Arranmore	21
Dungloe	37
Falcarragh	14
Letterkenny (Oldtown)	24
Letterkenny (Cheshire Homes)	6
Muff	30
Newtoncunningham	32
Total:	193

A number of the units provided for the elderly/homeless/people with disabilities would have been provided in the context of the Capital Assistance Programme and would, therefore, be units of accommodation within an overall building.

The Council is continuing to vigorously pursue the promotion of voluntary housing under both Capital Assistance and the Loan Subsidy Scheme to help address the gap between Housing Need and Housing Provision with a further 90 units targeted for 2007.

THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007 - 2009 FOR HOUSING

1.1 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING

House Construction/Acquisition:

2006: In 2006 it was estimated that the Housing Construction Capital Spend would be in the order of €42 million. The capital allocation received from DEHLG was €30 million and the estimated out turn at the end of 2006 is €31.5million.

2007: Between projects already under construction in 2006 that will carry over into 2007 and the projects scheduled to start as shown in the table in the previous section of this report there will be approx 650 units at various stages of construction throughout 2007. It is estimated that the capital spend on these units will be €28.5 million. The capital spend on Rural Cottages for 2007 is estimated at €2,000,000. This amounts to an estimated total capital spend of €30,500,000

2008:It is estimated that there will be 200 starts programmed for 2008 and it is likely that these will start on site in the second half of the year. At an average cost of €140,000 per unit this gives a capital cost of €28 million and given the time of year of the projected commencement on site this element of the programme will attract a capital spend in 2008 of €12 million. The carryover from the 2007 programme will be the order of €10.50 million. The capital spend on rural cottages for 2008 is estimated to be €2.50 million. This amounts to an estimated capital spend in 2007 of €25.00m

2009:The five-year multi annual programme is due to finish in 2008 but there will be a carry over in construction activity from schemes already started in 2008 and as shown above this will be of the order of €16.00 million. Given the scale of the previous multi-annual programmes and the decrease in the numbers on the waiting list from the last housing needs assessment it would be prudent to budget for some 175 starts in 2009. At an estimated cost of €150,000 per unit at that time this would give a cost of €26.25 million with just over half of this being incurred in 2009. This would give an estimated capital spend on scheme housing in 2009 of approx. €30 million. The spend on rural cottages is again estimated to be €2 million, giving a total estimated spend of €32 million.

Remedial Works/Regeneration:

2006: In 2006 it was estimated that 200 units @ €5.00m would benefit from our remedial works/regeneration programme. Department approval, however, was only received for works to a value of €746,623 thereby enabling works to be carried out on 74 No. units and these works are presently underway. In addition to the Remedial Works Programme, works under the Central Heating Programme were carried out on 277 units at a total cost €1.699m.

2007 - 215 units @ €1.7m

2008 - 215 units @ €1.7m

2009 - 150 units @ €1.2m

Traveller Accommodation:

2006: In 2006, it was estimated that 10 bays + 5 units would be provided. The 10 bays related to permanent transient sites which have been included in the County Development Plan will now advance to Part X planning. 10 traveller families have been housed in standard accommodation in 2006.

2007: 5 bays + 4 units - €0.823m

2008: 5 bays + 2 units - €0.6m

2009: 5 units - €0.75m

The Capital cost of providing standard accommodation for travellers is included in the routine Construction Programme.

Voluntary Housing:

2006: In 2006 it was estimated that 50 units under CAS + 40 units under LSS would be provided. 70 units have been completed with a further 102 units nearing completion.

2007: 50 units under CAS + 40 units under LSS - €11.5m

2008: 50 units under CAS + 40 units under LSS - €11.5m

2009: 50 units under CAS + 40 units under LSS - €11.5m

1.2 ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS HOUSING THEMSELVES

2006: It was estimated that 115 loans (Standard, Shared Ownership & Affordable Loans) would be advanced in 2006. 129 such loans have been advanced to-date.

2007: 115 standard loans/Shared Ownership/Affordable Loans - €14.95m

2008: 115 standard loans/Shared Ownership/Affordable Loans - €16m

2009: 115 standard loans/Shared Ownership/Affordable Loans - €16.5m

1.3 ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS IMPROVING HOUSES

2006: It was estimated that 650 grants would be paid in 2006. 573 grants have been paid to the end of November, 2006 and the likely expenditure is €3.8m at end of the year.

2007: 650 grants - €4.5m

2008: 650 grants - €4.5m

2009: 650 grants - €4.5m

(two-thirds of this is recoupable)