



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council  
Chambers Ireland  
Local Authority of the Year 2024

## Annual Report 2024

# Foreword

**It is with great pride that we present the 2024 Annual Report of Donegal County Council — a year marked by innovation, community focus, and dynamic transformation across all areas of service delivery. Following the Local Elections in June 2024, a newly elected Council has taken office and is committed to building on the strong foundations laid by its predecessor, continuing to deliver for the people of Donegal in the years ahead. Our Corporate Plan 2024-2029 was adopted towards the end of 2024 and will serve as the Council's Strategic Framework over the term of our new Council.**

Few projects symbolise the spirit of Donegal more than the Creeslough Community Regeneration Project. With €13.5 million secured in funding, this initiative will deliver a new community hub, recreational spaces, gardens, and public amenities, forming a lasting legacy of support, healing, and hope following the tragedy of 2022. It represents the best of what can be achieved when people and purpose come together.

Across the county, similar momentum was seen in housing, with over 80 new homes delivered and hundreds more in development. Targeted grant supports enabled older people and those with disabilities to remain in their homes, while significant investment went into improving the energy efficiency and quality of existing housing stock.

Economic growth was bolstered through investment in enterprise support, broadband, tourism development, and innovation. Public realm enhancements in Bundoran and Letterkenny, and the continued transformation of Killybegs and Carndonagh, are helping shape vibrant town centres that are welcoming, connected and forward-looking.

On the infrastructure front, works progressed on active travel routes, public lighting upgrades and strategic road improvements. Greenway developments and public park projects across the county supported not just mobility, but also recreation and healthier lifestyles. The groundwork laid in 2024 will shape a more accessible Donegal for years to come. Community Development and

Planning Services saw a significant year, with the adoption of the new County Development Plan and the widespread roll-out of the ePlanning system — achieving one of the highest uptake rates in the country. A record number of applications were received, including those linked to the Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme, reflecting a community in transition and rebuilding. The adoption of the Donegal Integrated Framework Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023-2029, developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, sets out a roadmap for inclusive and sustainable community and economic development across the county.

In parallel, work continued to safeguard our natural environment with the adoption of our first Climate Action Plan. Projects supported through climate action funding, beach and litter management, and flood relief works reinforced the Council's commitment to sustainability, while public education and engagement helped build awareness around shared environmental responsibility.

Our Finance directorate continued to provide robust fiscal management, ensuring accountability, transparency, and the efficient allocation of resources across all council activities, with staff engaging and working closely with our commercial rates customers.

Every achievement in 2024 and winning the prestigious Local Authority of the Year Award at the 2024 Chambers Ireland's Excellence in Local Government Awards was made possible by the dedicated efforts of Council staff, the guidance of elected members, and the collaboration of partners across sectors. Together, we have delivered tangible improvements and laid strong foundations for the years ahead.

As this report shows, the work of local government is far-reaching but its impact is always personal. Whether through a new home, a safer road, a thriving community space, or a warm welcome for new arrivals, Donegal County Council remains focused on delivering for its people, every day.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Niamh Kennedy".

**Cllr Niamh Kennedy**  
Cathaoirleach



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John G. McLaughlin".

**John G. McLaughlin**  
Chief Executive



Bulbs being planted on Sentry Hill, Letterkenny by Scoil Mhuire gan Smál Students  
Photo Clive Wasson

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# Donegal County Council

## Elected Members

### Municipal District of Donegal



**Cllr Manus Boyle**  
Fine Gael



**Cllr Jimmy Brogan**  
Independent



**Cllr Noel Andrew Jordan**  
Sinn Féin



**Cllr Niamh Kennedy**  
Independent



**Cllr Michael McMahon**  
Sinn Féin



**Cllr Michéal Naughton**  
Fianna Fáil



### Municipal District of Glenties



**Cllr Brian Carr**  
Sinn Féin



**Cllr Micheál Choilm Mac Giolla Easbuig**  
Independent



**Cllr Michael McClafferty**  
Independent



**Cllr Denis McGee**  
100% Redress



**Cllr Anthony Molloy**  
Fianna Fáil



**Cllr John Shéamuis Ó Fearraigh**  
Sinn Féin



# Donegal County Council

## Elected Members

### Municipal District of Inishowen



**Cllr Joy Beard**  
100% Redress



**Cllr Fionán Bradley**  
Fianna Fáil



**Cllr Paul Canning**  
Fianna Fáil



**Cllr Terry Crossan**  
Sinn Féin



**Cllr Albert Doherty**  
Sinn Féin



**Cllr Ali Farren**  
100% Redress



**Cllr Martin Farren**  
Labour



**Cllr Martin McDermott**  
Fianna Fáil



**Cllr Jack Murray**  
Sinn Féin



### Municipal District of Lifford-Stranorlar



**Cllr Gary Doherty**  
Sinn Féin



**Cllr Martin Harley**  
Fine Gael



**Cllr Frank McBrearty**  
Independent



**Cllr Patrick McGowan**  
Fianna Fáil



**Cllr Dakota Nic Mheanman**  
Sinn Féin



**Cllr Martin Scanlon**  
Independent

# Donegal County Council

## Elected Members

### Municipal District of Letterkenny-Milford



**Cllr Liam  
Blaney**  
Fianna Fáil



**Cllr Ciaran  
Brogan**  
Fianna Fáil



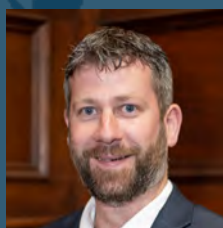
**Cllr Donal  
Coyle**  
Fianna Fáil



**Cllr Tomás Seán  
Devine**  
100% Redress



**Cllr Jimmy  
Kavanagh**  
Fine Gael



**Cllr Donal 'Mandy'  
Kelly**  
Fianna Fáil



**Cllr Michael  
McBride**  
Independent



**Cllr Pauric  
McGarvey**  
Independent



**Cllr Gerry  
McMonagle**  
Sinn Féin

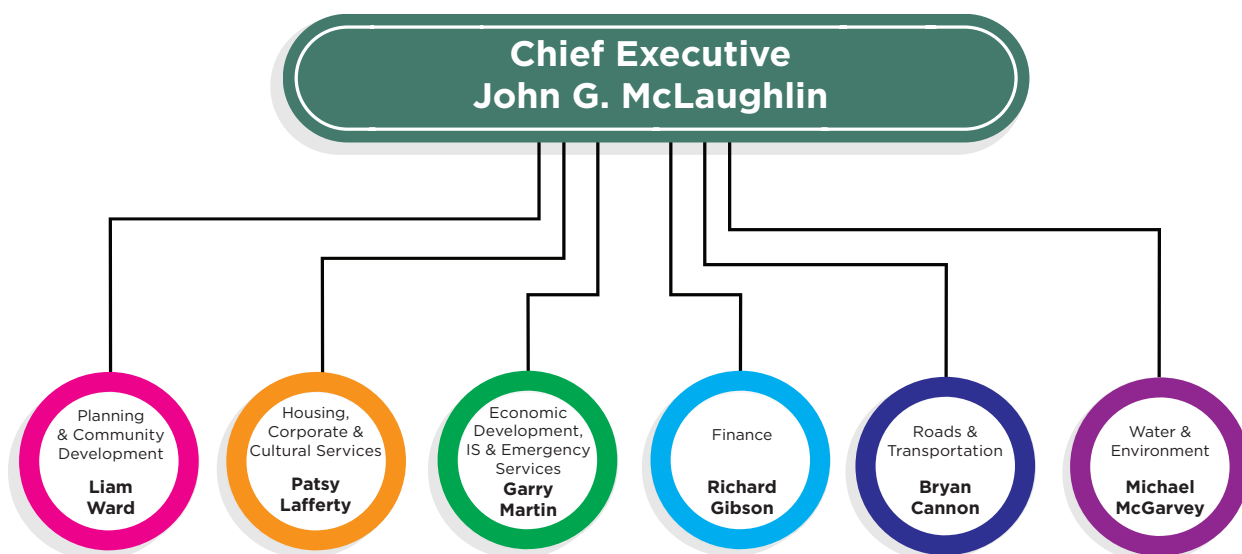


**Cllr Declan  
Meehan**  
Independent



# Donegal County Council

## Management Structure

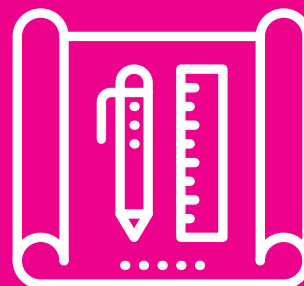


Chief Executive, John G. McLaughlin (Centre) pictured with members of the Senior Management Team.  
Standing: Bryan Cannon, Richard Gibson, Patsy Lafferty, Garry Martin;  
Seated: Liam Ward, John G. McLaughlin, Michael McGarvey

# What We Do...

## Community Development & Planning Service

- Community Development
- Local Community Development Committee
- Local Economic & Community Plan
- Social Inclusion Unit
- Public Participation Network
- Age Friendly Alliance
- Strategic Tourism Product Development
- Spatial Planning Policy
- Development Control
- Planning Enforcement
- Casual Trading Policy and Bye-laws
- Building Control
- Regeneration & Development Unit
- Vacant & Derelict Property Grant Scheme (Croí Cónaithe)
- Refugee Response Unit
- Capital Projects Delivery Unit
- Conservation Services



## Housing, Corporate & Cultural Service



- Building/Housing Construction
  - Turnkey Management
  - Part V House Acquisitions
  - Social Housing Support
  - Housing Assistance Payment
  - Stock & Tenancy Management
- Homelessness • Traveller Accommodation
- Housing Standards Inspections
  - Housing Grants & Loans
- Approved Housing Body Liaison
- Corporate Meeting Administration
- Motor Tax Services • Cultural Services  
(Archives, Arts, Biodiversity, Heritage, Libraries, Museum, Regional Cultural Centre)
- Freedom of Information
- Register of Electors • County Secretariat • Human Resources
  - Communications Office • Customer Service Centre

## Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services

- Local Enterprise Office
- Economic Development
- Tourism Marketing
- Diaspora Engagement
- Strategic Funding Unit
- Fire Service
- Major Emergency Management
- Civil Defence
- Information Systems - Networks, Support & Security
- Applications & Web Development
- Geographic Information Systems
- Broadband
- EU & Digital Unit



# What We Do...

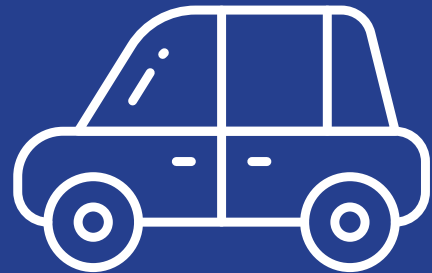


## Finance

- Financial Management
  - Budget Management
- Annual Financial Statements
  - Income Collection Unit
    - Payroll
  - Accounts Payable
    - Internal Audit
    - Procurement
      - Insurance
      - Loan Book
- Financial Information Systems
  - Property Management
- Central Invoice matching
- Timesheet Processing Unit
  - Tax Compliance
- Treasury Management
- Capital Account Management

## Roads & Transportation

- Public Road Asset Management
- Maintenance and Construction
- Traffic Signs
- Lines and Signals
- Road Safety Engineering and Awareness
- Public Lighting
- Roads Management Office Shared Service
- Piers & Harbours
- Active Travel Projects and Awareness
- Development of Greenways
- Public Parks and Open Spaces
- Public Parking Management



## Water & Environment Services



- Administration of the Enhanced Defective Concrete Block Grant Scheme on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage
  - Climate Action
- Environmental Protection
  - Waste Management
    - Pollution Control
    - Litter Management
    - Beach Management
- Swimming Pools & Leisure Centres
- Facilities and Energy Management
- Flood Relief Schemes on behalf of the OPW
- Water Services via Master Co-operation Agreement with Uisce Éireann

## Civic Honours & Receptions

### Freedom of the County for Clannad



On 17th May, 2024 the Legendary Donegal group Clannad were awarded the Honorary Freedom of the County of Donegal in recognition of their enormous contribution to our culture, the promotion of the Irish Language and traditional Irish music both nationally and internationally. Ciarán, Moya and Pól Brennan had their names entered into the roll of persons so honoured, making Clannad only the 12th recipient of this distinguished award.

### Civic Reception for Cockhill Celtic Football Club



On 5th April, 2024, Cockhill Celtic Football Club were honoured at a Civic Reception in recognition of their achievement in reaching the FAI Intermediate Cup Final, their consistent excellence in the Ulster Senior League and their dedication to promoting football at a local level.

# Council Meetings



Donegal County Council, its Municipal Districts and its committees met throughout 2024 to discuss a wide array of topics as follows:

| Meeting Group                                    | Number of Meetings | Meeting Group                                        | Number of Meetings |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Council Meetings                                 | 23                 | Fisheries Committee                                  | 4                  |
| Corporate Policy Group                           | 9                  | Defective Concrete Blocks Committee                  | 5                  |
| Donegal MD                                       | 11                 | Donegal Youth Council Expert Advisory Board          | 0                  |
| Glenties MD                                      | 8                  | Joint Policing Committee                             | 2                  |
| Inishowen MD                                     | 10                 | Coiste na Gaeilge                                    | 0                  |
| Letterkenny/Milford MD                           | 10                 | LCDC/LAG                                             | 10                 |
| Lifford /Stranorlar MD                           | 8                  | Value for Money Committee                            | 1                  |
| Climate Action & Environment SPC                 | 2                  | Audit & Risk Committee                               | 5                  |
| Community, Social & Cultural SPC                 | 2                  | Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee | 2                  |
| Roads & Transportation SPC                       | 2                  | Islands Committee                                    | 2                  |
| Housing & Corporate SPC                          | 2                  | Disability Strategy Committee                        | 2                  |
| Planning SPC                                     | 1                  | Donegal Heritage Forum                               | 4                  |
| Economic Development, Enterprise & Emergency SPC | 2                  | Working Group on Creeslough                          | 0                  |
| Emergency Response Committee                     | 1                  | PEACEPLUS Partnership                                | 1                  |
| Agricultural Committee                           | 4                  | Working Group on Constitutional Change               | 0                  |
| Total                                            |                    | 133                                                  |                    |

# Community Development & Planning Services

Empowering and Supporting Communities/Enabling Growth/Delivering Services

**257 projects benefited  
from €925,000 under the  
Development Fund  
Initiative**



**€296,000 allocated to circa  
382 community  
groups/projects from the  
Members Development Fund**

**Adoption of  
the Donegal  
integrated  
framework LECP  
2023-2029 in  
March 2024**



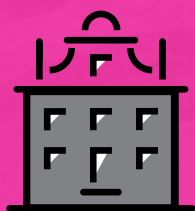
**1,020  
applications processed  
under the Croi Conaithe  
vacant property  
refurbishment grant  
scheme with**

**734  
approved by year end  
and 101 grants paid to a  
total value**

**€5.4m**

# 2024 Highlights

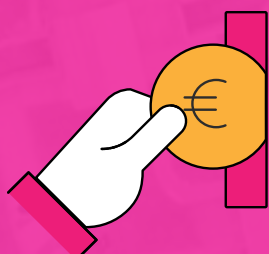
## Mainstreaming Climate Action/Building Organisational Capacity



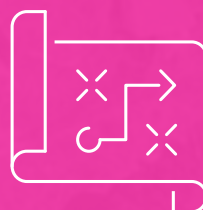
**€662,843** heritage grants allocated to approximately 60 projects



**4 town teams** established in Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Buncrana, Glenties and Creeslough to implement regeneration intervention



**€258,777** allocated to 129 projects under the Local Enhancement Programme 2024



**2,451** planning development applications received  
**€736,630** received in fees for new applications, submissions & searches



**89%** of planning applications submitted via the eplanning system – the highest rate of uptake in state



**€2.43m** funding drawn down under the Community Recognition Fund 2023 and **€3.29m** secured under the 2024 Fund

# Community Development

## Donegal Local Community Development Company (LCDC)

Donegal Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) comprises both public and private sector members and met ten times in 2024. The LCDC also hosted two joint meetings with the Economic, Enterprise and Emergency Services SPC regarding development and approval of the LECP.

### Development of the Donegal Integrated Framework LECP 2023-2029

One of the roles of the LCDC is the preparation of a six year Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP). The LECP's are a part of the overarching policy framework of Project Ireland 2040, which includes the National Planning Framework (NPF), the National Development Plan (NDP), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) and County and City Development Plans.

Within this policy framework, the specific purpose of the LECPs is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support economic and community development within the relevant Local Authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and development stakeholders. In doing so, the LECPs are one of the primary mechanisms – at local level – to bring forward relevant actions arising from national and regional strategies and policies that have a local remit, and support collaboration to increase the quality of life in our communities.

Following a comprehensive programme of engagement the Donegal Integrated Framework LECP was adopted by Full Plenary Council in March 2024

The Donegal Integrated Framework LECP is a key document for County Donegal, providing a framework for advancing economic, community, social and cultural development in the county. It sets out a Shared Vision, informed by extensive consultations with community, statutory, and sectoral stakeholders, with Goals, Objectives and Actions to sustainably develop the county's natural, human, and capital resources, recognising the challenges facing the county in a volatile, uncertain and everchanging global environment, and seeking to address these challenges.

Even more importantly, the LECP recognises the advantages and the potential for sustainable development that County Donegal has to offer, and it seeks to capitalise on this potential for the benefit of the community. This Plan seeks to make the county an innovative, creative, accessible, and inclusive county, with opportunity and a good quality of life for all sections of the community.

### Rural Development/LEADER Programme

Donegal LCDC delivers the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme. The LCDC also acts as the Local Action Group (LAG) working in partnership with Donegal County Council as Lead Financial Partner, and with our four implementing partners, Donegal Local Development Company, Inishowen Development Partnership, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Comhar na nOileán.

Donegal LCDC, in its role as the LAG, approved the full allocation of LEADER funding awarded to the county for the 2014-2022 programme to projects recommended by the Evaluation Committees of the local Implementing Partners. The LAG also delivered the follow-on Transitional LEADER Programme and EURI (European Union Recovery Instrument) Programmes.

Both the Transitional & EURI Programmes were extended into 2024 which allowed the LAG to approve additional projects due to de-committed funds from projects previously approved and for partners to work with funded groups to complete local projects.

### New LEADER Programme 2023 – 2027

In its capacity as the Local Action Group (LAG), the LCDC are administering the new LEADER Programme through the LEADER Local Development Strategy 2023-2027. Donegal was awarded a €10.4m allocation for the delivery of the new LEADER programme to cover the period.

The new LEADER Local Development Strategy opened for expressions of interest and applications in April 2024 following approval of the final plan developed via consultation events across the county in partnership with Implementing Partners. Thirteen projects were approved in 2024, with a total allocation of €454,657 approved by the LAG.

## Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028

The LCDC is responsible for the administration of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP), with a new programme covering the period 2024-2028. The SICAP fund, which includes a ring-fenced budget for the delivery of supports to new arrivals to the county, is estimated at €17,873,774 across its duration and is being implemented by the Local Development companies working with the LCDC across three respective Lots. The SICAP lots are managed as follows:

- o Lot 1: Inishowen managed by Inishowen Development Partnership.
- o Lot 2: Donegal Gaeltacht managed by Donegal Local Development CLG.
- o Lot 3: Donegal managed by Donegal Local Development CLG.

Donegal County Council will continue to administer the SICAP funding on behalf of and in accordance with the instruction of the LCDC as the lead financial partner.

## The Community Recognition Fund 2023

The Community Recognition Fund 2023 aimed to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. The funding was specifically targeted at projects that are in communities, towns and villages that are hosting the Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection Applicants ('New Arrivals') across Donegal.

The Fund aims to support the development of facilities that will be used by all members of the community. It is separate in its objectives and scope to any other public funding streams and is administered by Donegal County Council on behalf of Donegal LCDC. Applications from 51 Community Groups seeking funding were successful, receiving funding totalling €3,014,395. At the end of 2024, the total amount drawn down from the Department was €2,439,588.46. This programme will run into early 2025 with the remaining projects due to complete by the end of Q1.

Several Donegal County Council maintained playgrounds received funding under the Community Recognition Fund 2023. Bundoran Waterworld Playground, Donegal Town Playground and Castlefinn Playground were fully refurbished with new play equipment catering for children across a range of ages and abilities. Works also commenced on Killybegs Playground refurbishment, and Railway Road Playground in Stranorlar is due to commence in early 2025.



CRF 2023 funded Playground at Ionad Cois Locha

## Healthy Ireland Fund Round 4

The objective of the Healthy Ireland Fund 2023 – 2025 is to improve the health and wellbeing of people of all ages and abilities living in Ireland through the implementation of the Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025. Donegal LCDC was approved a budget of €75,000 for 2023, €75,000 for 2024 and €75,000 for 2025 under the Healthy Ireland Fund Round 4 Programme. In 2024, Donegal LCDC supported key priority target groups through local activities delivered under the Healthy Ireland Programme.

Leas-Chathaoirleach of Donegal County Council, Cllr Jimmy Kavanagh, launched the Healthy Ireland Active Play Programme which aims to increase participation in physical activity for children through developing the capacity and skills of 'Play Leaders' within communities. Identified Play Leaders will receive training and support in how to encourage children in their domain to become more physically active through the medium of play.



Pictured L-R: Danny Gillespie, Donegal Sports Partnership; Margaret Fitzgerald, Healthy Ireland Programme; Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh, Leas-Chathaoirleach of Donegal County Council; Paddy Doherty, Senior Executive Officer, Community Development, Donegal County Council; Ciaran Martin, Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme; Kirsty Browne, Donegal Sports Partnership.

The Civic Dollars Project uses a smartphone app, to encourage increased time spent in local outdoor resources; give people an incentive and support to create behavioural change; improve health, encourage increased physical activity, and help users to engage with their communities.

The then Chair of Donegal LCDC, Cllr. Niamh Kennedy announced the extension of the Civic Dollars project for a further two-year period following on from the resounding success of its pilot launch in 2023.



Cllr. Niamh Kennedy, Chair of Donegal LCDC pictured launching the Civic Dollars Project with (L-R) Stephen McPeake, CEO Civic Dollars; Margaret Fitzgerald, Healthy Ireland Coordinator and Paddy Doherty, Senior Executive Officer, Community Development, Donegal County Council at the Shore Front Walk, Killybegs.

Donegal County Council Chief Executive, Mr. John G McLaughlin announced the extension of its Period Dignity Initiative in collaboration with the Donegal Family Resource Centre Network. The initiative aims to help end period poverty through access to free menstrual products, as well as hygienic spaces to use them and safe waste management in accessible public buildings.

Period poverty refers to the inability to afford and access menstrual products, sanitation and hygiene facilities and education and awareness to manage menstrual health. Access to these products may be because of cost, or for social or cultural reasons. Donegal County Council's headquarters and public service centres, alongside the Donegal Family Resource Centre Network provide access points to our communities throughout the County.



Pictured L-R: Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services, Donegal County Council; Margaret Fitzgerald, Healthy Ireland Coordinator, Donegal County Council; John G McLaughlin, Chief Executive, Donegal County Council; Liam Ward, Director of Community Development and Planning Services, Donegal County Council.

### Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme

The Sláintecare Healthy Communities Initiative is an inter-agency plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the most disadvantaged areas of society. The 3-year programme, which was administered by the LCDC and initiated in 2022, covers two areas in Donegal: Inishowen and An Gaeltacht. Two Community Development Officers deliver the programme in the pilot areas, with respective Seed funding of €75K per area annually as well as funding to cover staff costs. A new 5-year SLA has also been signed with the Department of Health, starting in 2025 that will build on the work to date. Projects delivered in 2024 included a mobility bus, Health and Wellbeing programmes for men, Men's Sheds, Grow Your Own initiatives in National Schools and the development of raised beds in eight community-led Day Centres.



Sláintecare funded raised bed project at Fanad Day Centre.

The Community Recognition Fund 2024

The Community Recognition Fund 2024 aims to build on the work completed under Community Recognition Fund 2023 and has a budget of €3,291,917 with all projects to be completed by November 2026. Funding was available to communities to apply across two windows in 2024, to allow for project development and provides large capital grants ranging from €50,000 to a maximum of €500,000 for the delivery of developments and projects in towns and villages which will benefit the entire Community in recognition of the support they have shown to New Arrivals.

Local Enhancement Programme 2024

The Local Enhancement Programme 2024 supported groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas to focus on small capital works/repairs/improvements, and the purchase of equipment for community use such as improved access for persons with a disability; enhancing community participation for disadvantaged and marginalised groups and improving energy efficiency of community facilities to reduce ongoing costs.

A total of 129 grants were awarded and administered by Donegal County Council on behalf of Donegal LCDC under the Local Enhancement Programme 2024 totalling €258,777 with €43,129 ring-fenced for Women’s Groups.

Creeslough Together Initiative

In 2023, the LCDC on behalf of Donegal County Council entered a Funding Agreement with Creeslough Community Association and the DRCD for funding in the sum of €497,000 towards the Creeslough Together Initiative. The funding is allocated over three years, and in 2024 this financial support saw the opening of the local centre and the delivery of funding for running and staffing costs to develop, manage and oversee Pastoral care of the Community, community engagement events/festivals and small-scale infrastructure projects under the Creeslough Plan 2024-2027.

Community Development Programme, Empowering Communities Programme and Dormant Account Funds

The LCDC continued to work in 2024 with the Department of Community and Rural Development (DRCD) on the roll out of several schemes initially developed on behalf of the Department.

| Empowering Communities Programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Community Development Programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Dormant Accounts Funds                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The Empowering Communities Programme targets several smaller areas experiencing challenges affecting the quality of life for those people living in them. Arranmore Island is a pilot location for the Programme and in 2024 Donegal LCDC administered the annual funding of €120,000 for the programme and continues to work closely with DLDC who are delivering a programme of activities to the community on the island.</p> | <p>In 2021, the DRCD awarded seven applicant organisations funding under a €1 million, three-year pilot Community Development Programme to trial community-led interventions that address poverty, social exclusion and inequality and promote human rights. The Donegal Intercultural Platform was approved funding under the theme “Migrants” to tackle racism and promote inter-culturalism, human rights, equality and inclusion across County Donegal. The LCDC has financial oversight of the development of the project locally and issued funding of €125,000 to Donegal Intercultural Platform in 2024.</p> | <p>The DRCD has developed the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2023 to address measures to ensure that existing community infrastructure is inclusive and welcoming to LGBTI+ people. DRCD allocated funding of €13,367 to Donegal LCDC to transfer to Donegal Youth Service to support the LGBTI+ communities across 2024 and to ensure that the funding would be used in the course of their work to implement the actions included in the National LGBTI+ Strategy.</p> |

Fund Management (Internal Funds)

Members Development Fund

609 allocations benefitting 382 community groups/projects throughout the county were made from Members Development Fund which had a budget of €296,000 in 2024.

Development Fund Initiative

A total of €925,000 was allocated to 257 projects/groups across the five Municipal Districts during 2024.

## PEACEPLUS Partnership Programme

Donegal County Council's PEACEPLUS Partnership secured funding under the PEACEPLUS Programme, Investment Area 1.1 – Co-designed Local PEACEPLUS Action Plans.

A Donegal PEACEPLUS Action Plan was developed in 2024 through a locally co-designed engagement process that allowed residents, community members, social and voluntary organisations to express their needs, priorities, and concerns to form the basis of the Plan.

A total of 32 creative and transformative projects will directly benefit 7,635 individuals by fostering a greater level of social inclusion, cross-community integration, and sustained interaction between people from different communities and cultural and political backgrounds. The Programme aims to build positive relations and make a significant difference in challenging prejudice, promote understanding of diversity and good relations for the creation of a more inclusive society with the benefit of a shared and better future for all.

## Social Inclusion

In 2024, the Council continued its commitment to supporting a variety of social inclusion initiatives, including Social Inclusion Week, Pride of Place, and numerous other projects spanning the county. These initiatives aim to foster inclusivity and strengthen community bonds across Donegal.



The Social Inclusion Unit played a leading role in coordinating the implementation of the Donegal Age Friendly Strategy, which is currently under review. A new strategy is set to be launched in 2025, reflecting updated priorities and objectives. Additionally, the Unit continued its work on the Black and Minority Ethnic Inclusion Strategy, ensuring representation and inclusivity for all communities.

The Donegal Youth Council completed their term in 2024, with a new council elected in November. During the Annual General Meeting (AGM), members reviewed key topics and set priorities for the next two years. The Youth Council remains an essential consultative platform, ensuring the youth perspective is reflected in Council policies and practice.



## Donegal Joint Policing Committee

The Donegal Joint Policing Committee (JPC) was a partnership between Government (represented by Council Members, executives, and Oireachtas Members), local communities (represented through Donegal PPN), and An Garda Síochána.

In 2024, the JPC continued its support for the Donegal Garda Youth Awards, celebrating exceptional young people between the ages of 13 and 21 across the county. The awards were presented in four distinct categories during a ceremony held at the Abbey Hotel, Donegal Town, where the winners were announced and honoured by Judge Éiteáin Cunningham, Chairperson of the Donegal Garda Youth Awards Adjudication Committee.

The award winners in 2024 were: Carmen Hernandez, Donegal Town (Individual Award); Seán Boyle, Arranmore Island. (Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada)(Special Achievement); Class 3B, Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana (Group Award); 5th Year Safe Internet Day Ambassadors, St. Columba's College, Stranorlar (Community Safety Award); Conor Callaghan, Deelee College, Raphoe (Special Recognition).

In June 2024, the JPC was officially dissolved as part of national reforms. Work is now ongoing to implement the new Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP), which will build on the foundations of the JPC while adopting a more community-focused approach to enhancing safety and collaboration across Donegal.

### Individual Award



Carmen Hernandez, Donegal Town

### Special Recognition



Conor Callaghan, Deelee College, Raphoe.

### Group Award



Class 3B, Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana

### Special Achievement



Seán Boyle, Arranmore Island  
(Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada).

### Community Safety Award



5th Year Safe Internet Day Ambassadors,  
St. Columba's College, Stranorlar

## Ferry Services

In 2024 Donegal County Council made financial contributions towards the operation of two ferry services; Greencastle-Magilligan (Foyle Ferry) and Buncrana-Rathmullan (Swilly Ferry).

## Irish Language Office

### Report on Performance of obligations under the Official Languages (Amendment) Acts 2021

Donegal County Council is committed to meeting all its obligations under the Official Languages (Amendment) Acts 2021.

From Senior Management, Liam Ward, Director of Community Development & Planning Services has been appointed to oversee performance and report on Donegal County Council's obligations under the Official Languages (Amendment) Acts 2021.

The following actions were taken by Donegal County Council during the year 2024 to ensure compliance with the Act:

- o Rannóg na Gaeilge provides daily support to staff in the Council's various Services throughout the county who require works to be translated in compliance with the OLA and provides advice to Services on the Council's obligations under the OLA.
- o Rannóg na Gaeilge also provides a simultaneous translation service at Council meetings/workshops and at other meetings where resources permit. This service promotes the use of the Irish language at Council meetings and facilitates those who are not so familiar with the Irish language.
- o Rannóg na Gaeilge provides Irish names for Housing Developments in Co Donegal.

### *Irish Language Translator*

Recognizing the obligations to be met under the OLA, Donegal County Council advertised for the position of a dedicated Irish Language Translator and the recruitment process is ongoing.

### *Public Services Centre*

An Clochán Liath, Leabharlann Phobal na Rosann, Leabharlann Ghaoth Dobhair agus An tSeirbhís Dóiteáin, Gaoth Dobhair - These Gaeltacht-based offices provide a service to the public through the medium of Irish. There is ongoing work being done to ensure that the Public Services Centre in An Clochán Liath meets the full obligations of the OLA.

### *Customer Services Centre, Baile na nGallóglach*

As a first point of contact for the public with the Council, an Irish language telephone service is provided from the Customer Services Centre. Procedures are being put in place to enhance this service in the future.

### *Complaints Received*

Significant progress has been made to rectify non-compliant signage on the county's roads with the support of the Council's Roads Services Section and the Council's Tourism Unit. Many of the case files have now been closed off by the Coimisinéir Teanga's Office.

### *Signage audit*

A signage audit was carried out in the Public Services Centre in Letterkenny and a number of non-compliant signs were identified. Donegal County Council is taking all necessary steps to resolve the issues identified as soon as possible.

### *Senior Management Team Meetings with Rannóg na Gaeilge and with Other Services of Donegal County Council*

The Senior Management Team of the Council liaise closely with Rannóg na Gaeilge and with other Services of the Council on a regular basis to oversee the progressive implementation of the provisions of the OLA.

### *Coiste na Gaeilge*

Donegal County Council has a strong and committed Coiste na Gaeilge, made up of 12 Elected Members, supported by Council Officials, whose primary objective is the promotion of the Irish Language and Culture both within the Council and on a countywide basis.

### *Website and Press Releases*

The Council's primary website was significantly overhauled and updated, and works are continuing to ensure that the website will be bilingual as expeditiously as possible. Procedures are also in place to ensure that press releases issue bilingually and simultaneously.

Approximately 25 Press Release were issued by Donegal County Council in Irish.

During 2024 the new obligations under section 10A (Advertising by Public Bodies) requiring a minimum of 20% (10A (1)(b) of all advertising undertaken to be in the Irish language was met. Donegal County Council also met the obligation of 5% of annual advertising spend on Irish language media as also prescribed under section 10A (1)(b).

### Bundoran as a Tourist Destination

The installation of bespoke pieces of public artwork on the three main approach roundabouts (Tullaghan/Drumacrin/Finner) into Bundoran was completed in March 2024 at a cost of €172,000. A second element of public realm works with a value of €447,000, also commenced in 2024 on the enhancement of several laneways in Bundoran to improve pedestrian connectivity between the Main Street, the Shorefront area and the main beach, as well as works to improve wayfinding signage to key tourist attractions and amenities around the town. All elements of this project are aimed at promoting tourism in Bundoran and enhancing visitor experience. This project was part funded by Fáilte Ireland and Donegal County Council



## Capital Projects – Community Development

### Malin Head Visitor Management Plan

The development and implementation of a Visitor Management Plan for the Malin Head Signature Discovery Point got underway in 2019. The plan will shape future development in Malin Head in the years ahead. The preparation of planning applications to develop the plan have been delayed with negotiations ongoing with landowners to access their lands. The Council is committed to progressing the construction of Phase 1, subject to securing planning approval and pending the availability of funding.

### Local Authority Weatherproofing and Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Scheme

Works were completed in 2024 at the new outdoor dining area adjacent to the An Grianán Theatre in Letterkenny along with safety/accessibility improvement works to the main theatre entrance. Donegal County Council received funding of €137,000 under the Local Authority Weatherproofing and Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme from Fáilte Ireland, with Donegal County Council also contributing to the project.



### Platform for Growth -Fáilte Ireland

The development of facility centres for water sports activities in Bundoran and Downings, funded under Fáilte Ireland's Platforms for Growth, continued to be progressed in 2024. Architect led integrated design teams have been appointed on both projects where designs are developing to inform comprehensive planning applications to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála by mid-2025.

### Development of Community Park, Stranorlar

The Council has finalised the acquisition of land at Drumboe, Stranorlar and appointed an architect led design team in 2024, availing of funding allocated under the 2022 Town & Village Renewal Scheme Project Development Measure, to progress a masterplan of the community park and undertake detailed design and the preparation of tender documents for its development over a number of phases when further national funding calls are announced.

## Urban Adventure Sports Project

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly under the Designated Urban Centre Grants Scheme approved funding of €357,000 to Donegal County Council in early August 2022 to deliver a 'Pump Track', a 'Performance Space' and an 'Activities Area' in the Bernard Mc Glinchey Town Park in Letterkenny. Match funding of 50% was provided by the Council. The 'Pump Track' and 'Performance Space' elements of the project were completed in 2023 with the 'Activity Area' completed in 2024.

## Donegal County Council Maintained Playgrounds

Donegal County Council is responsible for the management and control of 66 facilities consisting of 51 playgrounds, 4 multi-use games areas, 9 outdoor gymnasiums, 1 skate park and 1 pump track throughout the county. Alongside the regular maintenance programme of repairs and safety inspections, funding of €16,222 was awarded by the Department of Rural and Community Development for works on the Arranmore Island Playground. Funding was also awarded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth towards the full refurbishment of the Mall Park Playground in Ballyshannon.



## Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (2020-2023)

| Year                                  | Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2020<br/>(Measure 3)</b>           | Muckish Railway Walk -the procurement of a bridge consultant together with the detailed design of the works in conjunction with landowner engagement is ongoing with the procurement of a contractor to undertake this phase, including bridge replacement works, taking place thereafter. It is anticipated that this phase will be completed by the end of 2025.                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>2021<br/>(Measure 2 &amp; 3)</b>   | A further phase of the Muckish Railway Walk project was awarded funding under the 2021 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Measure 2. Work on this project commenced in 2023 and was completed in 2024. The Sliabh Liag Cliff Experience upland path project was awarded funding under the 2021 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Measure 3. Construction work on this project commenced in January 2024 and was completed in late June 2024.                                                                 |
| <b>2022<br/>(Measure 1 &amp; PDM)</b> | Five projects were awarded funding under the 2022 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme Measure 1 which was announced in August 2022. Projects in Kincasslagh, Kirkstown (Letterkenny), Rossylongan Estate Walk (Donegal Town) are fully complete with the Slí na Finne (Bealach na Gaeltachta) project expected to be fully complete in Q1 2025. Two projects were awarded funding under the 2022 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme Project Development Measure with works due to be completed in Q2/Q3 of 2025. |
| <b>2022<br/>(Measure 2&amp;3)</b>     | Two projects were awarded funding under the 2022 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme Measure 2 & Measure 3: Moville Shore Walk and Carrigart to Downings Walkway. Works on both are expected to progress to completion in 2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>2023<br/>(Measure 1,2 &amp; 3)</b> | Eight projects were awarded funding under the 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme Measure 1, 2 & Measure 3. All projects will be progressed to completion in 2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>2023<br/>(PDM)</b>                 | Two projects were awarded funding under the 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme Project Development Measure: The Swilly Way-Riverside Walk and Ballyconnell Estate & Gardens Falcarragh.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

Town & Village Renewal Schemes (2022-2024)

| Year                        | Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2022<br>(Main Scheme & PDM) | Five towns and villages across the county were awarded funding under the 2022 Town & Village Renewal - Main Scheme with one location awarded funding under the Streetscape Enhancement Measure (SEM) and a further project funded under the Project Development Measure (PDM). Work is complete in Lifford, Dungloe and Carndonagh with work progressing in Convoy, Manorcunningham and Stranorlar (PDM) with projects to be completed in Q1/Q2 2025. |
| 2023<br>(Main Scheme)       | Three towns and villages across the county were awarded funding under the 2023 Town & Village Renewal - (Main Scheme). Work is progressing on all three projects namely Rossnakill, Laghey and Tory Island with work expected to be completed in Q4 2025, and Q2 2026 for the project on Tory Island.                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2024<br>(PDM)               | Two towns were awarded funding under the 2024 Town & Village Renewal Scheme Project Development Measure 2024: Dunlewey and Ardara. The project in Dunlewey relates to the development a visitor hub for Errigal Mountain. The project in Ardara will assess the development of a dedicated cultural arts centre.                                                                                                                                      |



Sliabh Liag Cliff Experience

Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais CLÁR (2023-2024)

| Year                | Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2023<br>(Measure 1) | Fifteen projects received funding under CLAR Scheme Measure 1. Five of the projects were completed in 2024 with the remaining projects due for completion in consultation with the relevant stakeholders in Q1/Q2 of 2025. |
| 2024<br>(Measure 1) | Fifteen projects received funding under CLAR Scheme Measure 1. Works are commencing on these projects with all projects expected to be complete in Q1/Q2 2026.                                                             |

## Refugee Response - Integration & Migration

In 2021, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) published A White Paper to end Direct Provision and to establish a New International Protection Support Service. A key commitment in the Paper was the expansion of the existing model of integration and the establishment of a permanent integration system at local level to provide support both to refugees (programme refugees and beneficiaries of temporary protection) and International Protection applicants.

DCEDIY worked closely with the County and City Management Association (31 Chief Executives of Local Authorities), the Local Government Management Agency, and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to develop and agree the new permanent model of integration to be implemented in the Local Authority.

In 2024, with the rollout of the new expanded integration remit in the Local Authorities, the Community Response Forum was established. The Forum is led by John McLaughlin, Chief Executive of Donegal County Council and comprises key stakeholders including An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive, Tulsa, Donegal ETB, ATU, Department of Social Protection and Local Development Partnerships.

In 2024 the Local Authority Integration Teams (LAITs) were established as a subgroup of the Forum. The LAIT role is to support and empower individuals integrating into Irish Society and foster a sense of belonging and inclusion. Support includes providing access and signposting to language, employment, education, and health supports. LAITs operate under the principle of 'Integration from Day One'. This means that LAITs provide integration support to people who need it as soon as they arrive in Ireland.

The Donegal Team located in the Local Authority offer information and advice on a variety of topics through clinics, one-to-one appointments, online and at information sessions.

### Offer a Home Programme

The Offer a Home Programme was launched in 2022 and is managed by Local Authorities on behalf of Local Government and coordinated by the Local Government Management Authority. Under this initiative, Donegal County Council appeal to those that have unoccupied properties to offer them as temporary homes for those fleeing the war in Ukraine. 2024 saw the registration of 754 tenants in 247 homes in Donegal under the 'Offer a Home' Programme which is facilitated by the Refugee Response Team.

The Refugee Matching and Relationship Officers manage the portfolio of offered properties and all aspects of resettlement agreements, including stakeholder relations, licence agreements, codes of conduct, emergencies, complaints, move-ins, move-outs, and terminations. They determine the suitability of properties by carrying out inspections, and match individuals and families for placement in properties as they become ready. Support is provided to build positive relationships and assist those in seeking accommodation.

The Team continues to provide an inclusive approach to individuals pledging their property and ensures the process is skilfully managed.

One of the key aspects of community integration relies on the importance of accommodation. The Offer A Home Team work closely with the LAIT to ensure that Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (Ukraine) are informed of all necessary supports available to them.

# Planning Services Division

Across the service there was a high level of activity in 2024 with a consistent demand for services across the key Planning functions.

New and emerging statutory obligations (e.g. Residential Zoned Land Tax) arising from changes to planning legislation (Planning & Development Act 2024), the review of the National Planning Framework, and the implementation of ePlanning during 2024 demanded continued commitment from the service.

2024 saw the first joint training event with colleagues in the Planning Service of Derry City & Strabane District Council that was undertaken in conjunction with the National Parks & Wildlife Service. The event focused on issues that were common to both jurisdictions including climate change and the planning policy frameworks in both local authority areas. It is envisaged that this forum will continue as an annual event focusing on common challenges.



## Enforcement Unit

There was a 20% increase in new enforcement cases in 2024 and, notably, there was also a 79% increase in the number of cases closed in 2024. The continued upward trend in the numbers of new complaints and caseloads in the Enforcement Unit continues to be a significant element of the function of the Planning Service. A substantial number of historic, unresolved cases remains and within this overall caseload the focus is to address current complaints that are not ‘statute-barred’ due to the passage of time, and to seek to resolve contemporary unauthorised development complaints in a timely fashion either by negotiation or by recourse to the court system.

The profile of the Enforcement Unit’s caseload in 2024 is:

| New Cases | Cases Closed | Warning Issued | Enforcement Notices Issued | Proceedings Instigated |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 245       | 212          | 296            | 106                        | 15                     |

## Central Planning Unit (Forward Planning)

### Key Project Milestones:

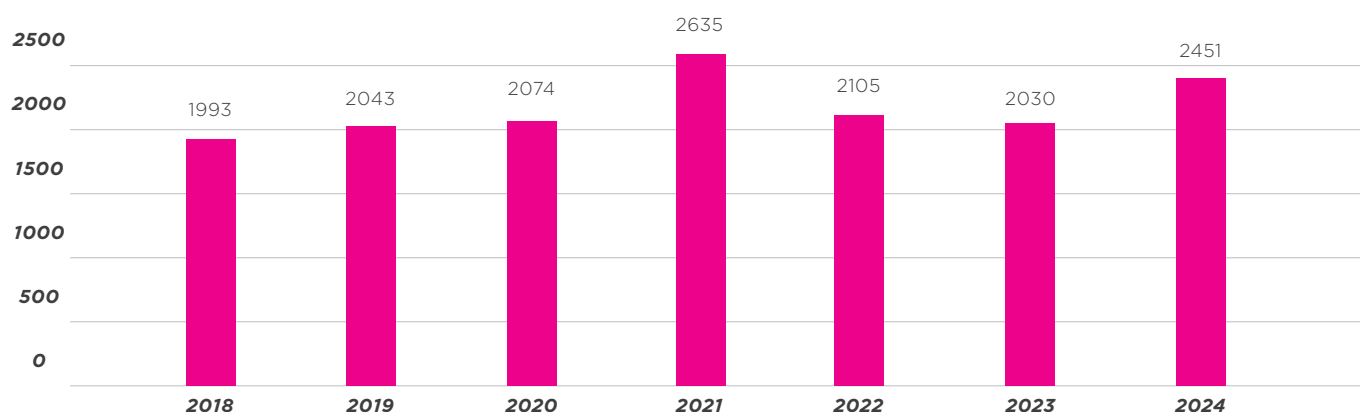
- o January 2024 Commencement of the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029.
- o Adoption of the County Development Plan (CDP) (incorporating Area Plans for Buncrana; Ballybofey & Stranorlar; and Bundoran), 2024-2030. The CDP is subject to a Draft Ministerial Direction on certain matters that are being considered by the Minister. It is expected that this process will be finalised upon the formation of the new Government and the appointment of a Minister.
- o Residential Zoned Land Tax – publication of Draft Map and associated public consultation (February), and publication of Final Map (December). This is an annual programme ensuring alignment of the RZLT with planning land-use policy.

### E-Planning

The ePlanning system that enables planning applications to be submitted digitally went online in January 2024. The current rate of take up of the ePlanning service by the sector is 89% of all applications that have been received by the Planning Service. This is one of the highest rates of the ePlanning system use in the State. Internal practices have been reviewed and continue to be updated to enable the administration of both ePlanning applications and the traditional hard copy applications. The Planning Service have facilitated several online seminars with agents and architects to introduce the new system and this has contributed to an encouraging high level of use of the new process.

### Development Applications Unit

A total of 2451 new planning applications were received in 2024.



In addition, the Service received a total of 284 formal pre-planning enquiries in 2024. Year-on-year the service has approximately 5000 service requests (telephone, email, person-to-person) reflecting the continuing commitment to provide an advisory service to the public.

Notable in the increase in the numbers of planning applications is the 208 Defective Concrete Block related planning applications that were received during 2024. This represents an increase by approximately 79% compared to 2023. This trend has grown year-on-year and is, understandably, likely to continue and as a service commitment, all valid applications have been determined within the statutory timeframes and will continue to be treated as significant cases for the County.

The Planning Service have also progressed 104 requests for formal opinions on the exempted development status of affected homes under the provisions of the 'Remediation of Dwellings Damaged by the Use of Defective Concrete Blocks Act, 2022'.

## Conservation Service

The Conservation Service continues to provide direct advisory services to property owners of heritage buildings across the county and is heavily involved in securing central funding for vital heritage projects with a total of €662,834 drawn down for approximately 60 local heritage projects.

Details of the value of such funding streams in 2024 are set out in the table below, with an overall total allocation of €714,133 and an overall total draw down of €662,834.07.

|                                       | Total Allocated | Total Drawn Down                                                                                                                    |                                   | Total Allocated                                 | Total Drawn Down |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Built Heritage Investment Fund</b> | €96,000         | €94,701.07                                                                                                                          | <b>Historic Towns Initiative</b>  | €350,000 (match funded with a further €150,000) | €350,000         |
| <b>Ring Fenced Thatch (BHIS)</b>      | €87,133         | €87,133                                                                                                                             | <b>Thatching Rigs Portnoo</b>     | €20,000                                         | €20,000          |
| <b>Historic Structures Fund</b>       | €153,000.00     | €103,000 (One project was split over two years and therefore the remaining allocation of €50,000 will be drawn down at Easter 2025) | <b>Thatch Repair Grant Scheme</b> | €8,000                                          | €8,000           |

## Regeneration and Development Unit

The work programme of the Regeneration and Development Team is to secure funding for transformational projects under both the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund; to administer the Croí Cónaithé initiatives to address vacancy and dereliction in the County and to implement the Town Centre First Policy to create vibrant and attractive locations to work, live and visit.

### Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)

A call for funding under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) is generally made each year and Local Authorities can apply for a maximum of three projects. The funding secured is subject to a co-funding requirement from the Local Authority which can range from 10% to 25% of the project value.

During 2024, the Council was successful in securing funding of €12.1m for the Creeslough Regeneration Project under the fifth call for funding under this Programme for Category 1 - capital/shovel ready projects. The project has now transferred to our colleagues in the Capital Project Delivery Unit to advance the project through detailed designs and construction. The total value of the project is €13.5m.

### Rathmullan (Community & Heritage) Regeneration Project

This project is a partnership with Rathmullan The Way Forward CLG and is focused around the Battery Fort, Rathmullan Abbey and a new community hub proposal. Unfortunately, the project was unsuccessful for funding under the RRDF fifth Call. However, a category 2 funding call under the RRDF opened in late 2024 and the Council is working to submit the project to this funding call by the deadline in March 2025 for project development funding to advance the project.

### Milford Town Centre First Plan

The Milford Town Centre First Plan was published in late 2023. During 2024, the consultants commenced work to secure planning consent for the development of lands at Mount Marian which was identified as a priority project in the Plan, in readiness for a future funding call. This work is ongoing and entailed further extensive engagement with the community and local stakeholders. The development of the lands proposes to include a play park, performance space, community events/sports hub building, car parking, woodland area and community gardens/allotments.



### *Back to Ballyshannon*

Funding of €185,625 was secured to develop a transformational project to re-energise, re-imagine and sustain the social, cultural, historical, physical and economic fabric of Ballyshannon's historic town centre. The scope of the project was amended in late 2024 to include vacant and derelict properties on College Street, Ballyshannon in addition to the Market Yard. The team continues to work towards the publication of a planning scheme to position the project for a future RRDF Category 1 funding call for capital works.

### *Creeslough Community Regeneration Project*

In May 2024, an application for funding under Call 5 of the RRDF for the Creeslough Community Regeneration Project was successful and funding to a total project value of €13.5m has been allocated. The project includes a new community hub building, community field and recreational track, community gardens, play park, allotments, outdoor seating and performance space. The project is currently being advanced through our team in the Capital Projects Delivery Unit.



Artists Impression of the Creeslough Community Regeneration Project

### *Creeslough Minor Tourism Works*

Funding was secured under the Minor Tourism Works to carry out improvement works at The Garden, Creeslough. This work is being advanced in-house with our own architectural team with works due to commence in Q1 2025.

### *Dungloe Project Development – McGovern's Corner*

The Dungloe Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan was formally launched in September 2022 and funding has been secured through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2024 to advance a priority project identified in the Plan to project readiness for future RRDF funding calls. The Council are currently working to tender for an integrated design team to advance this project.

### *The Moville Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan*

GM Design Associates Limited was appointed in May 2024 to assist with the preparation of the Moville Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan, which is funded through the Town and Village Renewal Fund. A public consultation event was held in September 2024 to identify the priority regeneration projects within the Town and the Team are working to prepare the first draft, for further public engagement and consultation.

### *Glenties Town Centre First Plan*

In 2024, the Council was allocated €30,000 to prepare a Town Centre First Plan for Glenties. GM Design Associates Limited were appointed in September 2024 to assist in the preparation of the Plan and early inception meeting with our Elected Members, the Glenties Town Team and colleagues has commenced.



### Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

The Regeneration and Development Team continued to progress the projects funded under Calls 1 and 2 of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and to position projects for future funding opportunities.

#### *Cathedral Quarter Park and Church Lane Shared Surface Scheme*

In 2024, the Council tendered for an architect-led team to design within Cathedral Quarter, Letterkenny, a creative hub, with green urban parkland, public realm improvements and to repurpose a vacant building, funded under this measure. The tender has been awarded to Hall Black Douglas Architects who have commenced works to advance the project and secure planning consent. The Council have acquired a key strategic site required for the development, through agreement with the owner, and engagements with other landowners to acquire necessary lands is ongoing.

#### *Renewal at Lower Main Street, Letterkenny*

Throughout 2024, further valuations were obtained, and land acquisition offers made to acquire vacant properties at Lower Main Street as part of the wider regeneration strategy. This work is continuing.

#### *Revival of the Courthouse*

During 2024, EPIC Heritage Consulting Limited continued to progress the preparation of a Visitor Experience Plan/Product Identification Plan and Business Plan for the development of a major visitor attraction at the Courthouse, Letterkenny. This work is currently being finalised and included further community consultation events to ensure that all ideas and suggestions were captured, in addition to detailed market research.



### Strategic acquisition to enable a Regional Transport Hub

The URDF provided funding to acquire lands for a Regional Transport Hub in Letterkenny with a potential site identified on the Pearse Road. Valuation services were appointed to take forward all previous engagements and act on the Council's behalf as regard land offers/acquisitions. Land acquisition offers were made during 2024 and the Council continue to work towards determining the scope of the project and acquiring the necessary lands.

### Strategic acquisition to enable LK Green Connect (Phase 2)

The 1st phase of LK Green Connect was opened in June 2023. The development provides high quality walking, cycling and public realm infrastructure in the town centre. It forms the first phase of a wider planned network that will ultimately connect across a series of town centre destinations.

Planning consent for Phase 2 to improve the existing pathway and public spaces between An Grianán Theatre, the Regional Cultural Centre and Donegal County Museum to create a vibrant Cultural Quarter in Letterkenny was approved in 2023. This will position the project well for capital funding under a future URDF funding call.

Our in-house team continues to work towards the development of a planning scheme for Phase 2 of the LK Green Connect (from constructed Phase 1 to Pearse Road).



Letterkenny Green Connect Phase 2 (Image: Pasparakis Friel Architects)

### Call 3 URDF

In July 2023, the Council was successful in being allocated €4m under Call 3 of the URDF to address vacancy and dereliction in Letterkenny Town Centre. This funding will provide the Council with a funding mechanism to acquire long-term vacant properties or sites for onward sale and activation to bring properties back into productive use. There are currently 46 approved properties on the Programme and the Council engaged with all owners during 2024. Several properties have been brought back into use with support from the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme and a number have been offered for sale on the open market by the owners. In late 2024, the Council issued notices to 12 property owners of the Council's intention to include their properties on the Derelict Sites Register which attracts an annual levy as long as the property remains derelict.

### Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme

The Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme was launched in July 2022 and provides grants to bring vacant and/or derelict properties back into use that have been vacant for two years or more, for use as the owner's primary residence or to be made available for rent. The value of the grants is €50,000 or €70,000 if the property is deemed to be derelict. The grant amounts are increased by 20% if the property is on an off-shore island having regard to the additional transport costs.

During 2024, further drop-in events were arranged throughout the County to promote and provide information on the grant scheme. To date, 50 such events have been arranged with over 3,000 people in attendance.

|                                                                              |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Applications Received                                                        | 1,020 |
| Applications Finalised                                                       | 737   |
| Approved                                                                     | 710   |
| Deemed not eligible (eligibility criteria not met - vacancy/proposed works)  | 27    |
| In progress (first technical inspection/awaiting information from applicant) | 224   |
| Withdrawn (by applicant)                                                     | 59    |

|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| Grants Paid          | 101   |
| Value of Grants Paid | €5.4m |

## Capital Projects Delivery Unit

The Capital Projects Delivery Unit (CPDU) is responsible for managing and delivering several county-wide major capital projects through the detailed design and construction stages. CPDU projects include Tourism, Regeneration and Enterprise projects.

### Fort Dunree, Inishowen

€12.47m of funding has been secured to undertake a major refurbishment/development at this former military fort, Fort Dunree. The Part 8 Planning process commenced in 2023, however, following a referral to An Bord Pleanála by a member of the public the Board directed that an application should be submitted to the Board instead. That application was made in August 2024 and a decision is awaited.

### Riverine Park, Lifford

A funding application submitted to the SEUPB under the EU PeacePlus Programme (Re-Imagining Communities) to complete this project was successful in November 2024. Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council are now making arrangements to restart the project.

### Burtonport Harbour to Arranmore Island Regeneration - Phase 2

The Burtonport Harbour to Island Regeneration (Phase 2) project proposes a ferry terminal building and enterprise space in the new harbour environment in Burtonport. Approval was granted by the Department of Rural and Community Development to proceed with construction in June 2024, and subsequently construction commenced in August 2024. The project is scheduled for completion in Q3 2025.

### Killybegs 2040

Killybegs 2040 is a transformative town centre regeneration project with the following elements:

- o The change of use, extension, and modification of Island House to provide a tourist information and reception center, digital hub, public conveniences, café space, and all associated site development works.
- o Provision for a 1000 sq m civic space and alterations to road layout and car parking arrangements, including footpaths, open paved areas, planting, landscaping, public seating etc.

Construction works are anticipated for completion by Q2 of 2025.



Killybegs Public Realm

### Tús Nua Regeneration Project, Carndonagh

The Carndonagh Tús Nua Regeneration Project is based on a partnership with Spraoi agus Spórt and will see the delivery of a Co-working Hub, Fablab, Creative Hub and public realm infrastructure. An Bord Pleanála approved the Compulsory Purchase Order for the project at the end of October 2024. Detailed design is nearing completion. It is anticipated that construction stage tender process will commence in Q1 2025.

### The SEED Project, Ballybofey

The 'SEED' project in Ballybofey & Stranorlar proposes a public realm, car parking and enterprise development in the town center. Detailed design has been completed and it is anticipated that construction tender process will commence in Q1 2025. Agreement to purchase the former Ritz Cinema building has been completed. A Compulsory Purchase Order for other lands required for the project was published in May 2024 and a decision from An Bord Pleanála on this CPO is awaited.

### Market Square - Letterkenny

The proposed development consists of the demolition and removal of the existing public realm environment, provides for the re-imagining of the space through the construction of a new public realm environment inclusive of a new shared surface, traffic calming, stepped access to Main Street, 2 public plaza's including water feature, connecting accessibility infrastructure and integrated low-level planting, modified carriageways/junctions/footpaths, new public seating, lighting, street furniture and cycle stands. The proposed redevelopment will deliver an enhanced capacity for civic events and social purpose and will ensure all abilities access. An Integrated Design Team was appointed in April 2024, and it is anticipated that detailed design and tender documents will be completed to allow the construction tender process to commence in Q1 2025.

### Repowering Buncrana

This project is focused on regenerating and connecting the coastal edge of the town with the historic town centre. The project includes the following key interventions:

- o A new pedestrian bridge over the Mill River to connect the Amazing Grace Park to the harbour/pier environment
- o Regeneration of the Shore Front Green together with enhanced connection to the Main Street
- o Regeneration of the Shore Front walkway and promenade from the Shore Front Green to Swan Park and Cockhill Road, including a re-imagining of the Amazing Grace viewing point
- o Repurposing and extension of the old garda barracks building to create bespoke office accommodation.

A design team was appointed in November 2024 to develop the project ready for a construction tender including securing all necessary statutory consents. Acquisition of the Old Garda Barracks was completed in 2024.



### Creeslough Regeneration Project

RRDF funding for a new community hub building, a multi-purpose community field and a community garden and landscaped public realm was confirmed by the Department for Rural and Community Development in August 2024. The tender process for the appointment of a design consultant commenced in November 2024 and it is expected that appointment will be made in Q1 2025. The appointed consultant will then prepare detailed designs and construction tender documents during 2025.

### Ramelton Re-Imagined

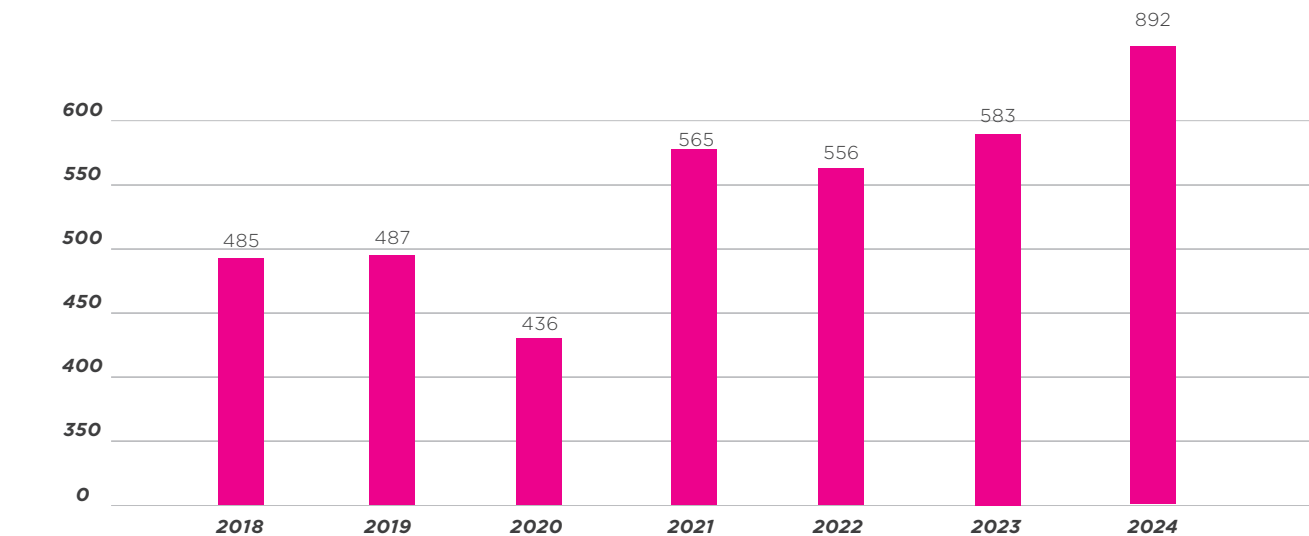
This project consists of the regeneration of public areas throughout the town centre including provision of civic meeting places, green spaces, road surface renewal and pedestrian priority improvements. The tender process for the construction contractor commenced in December 2024 and a contractor is expected to be appointed in Q1 2025.

# Building Control & Taking in Charge of Residential Estates

## Building Control

It is a requirement of the Building Control Regulations that a person who intends to carry out works or to make a material change of use as regards a building shall give notice, in the form of a Commencement Notice, to the Building Control Authority, of their intention to commence works. In 2024 there were 892 Commencement Notices received. These represented 1,526 building projects of which there were 1,306 new units. 416 of the new units were in “multi-unit” developments.

Valid Commencements Received

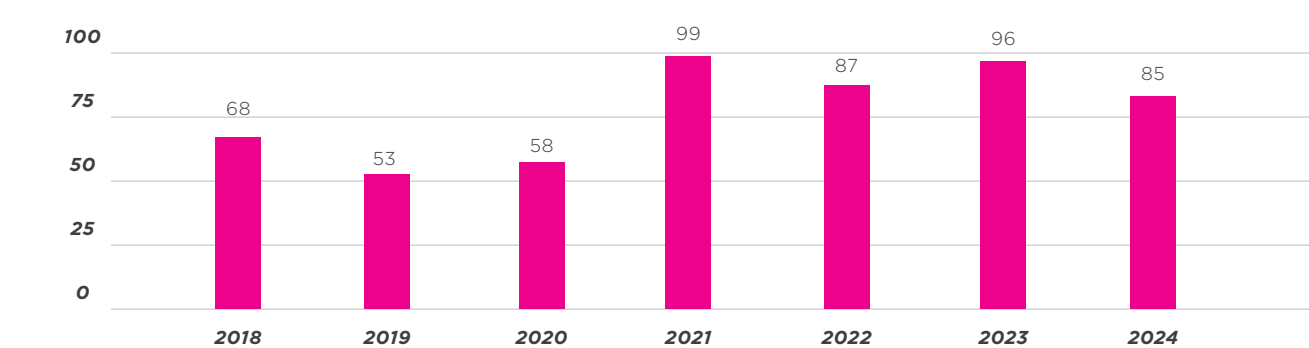


As a comparison, in 2023 there were 584 Commencement Notices received. These represented 783 building projects of which there were 616 new units. 136 of these were in “multi-unit developments.”

The Building Control Department carried out site inspections on 110 of the new buildings for the intention of monitoring and enforcing compliance with the Building Regulations. This compares with 83 new buildings inspected in 2023.

In 2024 the Building Control Department received 85 Disability Access Certificate applications. This compares with 96 applications in 2023, 87 in 2022, 99 in 2021, 58 in 2020 and 53 in 2019.

Disability Access Certificates



## Taking in Charge

The Council continued the taking in charge of residential estates throughout 2024. Consultation on Site Resolution Plans continued with Uisce Éireann with respect to a significant number of estates seeking their consent to proceed to take in charge the water services infrastructure which subsequently transfers to them. In total, a further 29 estates were considered at Municipal District meetings during 2024 with the approval of Elected Members being sought to have them taken in charge, in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning Act. This brings the number of estates taken in charge since 2019 to 157.

The Planning Authority utilised security bonds and its own resources to carry out the remedial work within these and other estates to assist in their taking in charge. Where appropriate, funding was also leveraged from Uisce Éireann for completing several site resolution plans. Throughout 2025, the planning authority will continue to maximise the number of estates taken in charge, while also aiming to deliver on the capital projects that have been allocated funding to date under the Multi-annual Developer Provided Infrastructure Resolution Programme.



# Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services

Empowering and Supporting Communities/Enabling Growth/Delivering Services

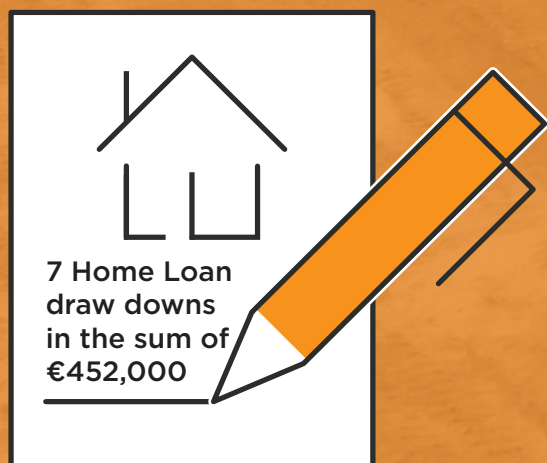


84 new high-quality, sustainable homes were completed with construction works progressing on a further 190 homes



778 housing grants paid to the value of  
**€4.4 million**  
to assist people with disabilities and older people

Over  
**€13.2 million**  
spent on maintaining, improving and upgrading our housing stock



7 Home Loan draw downs in the sum of €452,000

5,120 local authority rented units, and 170 leased units



# 2024 Highlights

## Mainstreaming Climate Action/Building Organisational Capacity



HR Department held 70 competitions attracting over 2,500 applicants

3,024 households in need of social housing



with a net need of 1,201 households



Our Customer Service Centre managed over 150,000 bilingual (Irish and English) calls and over 10,000 online interactions

51 vacant properties refurbished and 235 properties upgraded via the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme

Library Services saw a 31% increase in internet use, 23% more visitors, 12% more items borrowed and 6.8% increase in use of online resources



# Housing Services

## General Housing

The overall aim of our housing policy is to facilitate the provision of suitable, cost effective, quality accommodation and housing supports for people who need it.

The types of housing assistance provided during the year ranged from a combination of allocating tenancies under the Social Housing Programme (New Build, Turnkey, and Acquisitions), the Social Leasing Programme, and the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), transfers and approval of supports via the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP). Assistance was also provided in conjunction with Approved Housing Bodies.

The Council continued to manage and maintain tenancies and dwellings and provide support to our tenants including the refurbishment and upgrading of dwellings and estates via a range of initiatives and programmes.

Grant assistance was provided to older people and people with disabilities under the Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme, the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme and the Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme. Housing Loan options continued to be available for first time buyers under the Rebuilding Ireland Loan Scheme.

## Housing Need

The Housing Needs Assessment, undertaken at 1st November 2024, identified that there were 3,024 households approved for Social Housing Support in County Donegal. 1,823 of these were already in receipt of social housing support and were seeking transfers from existing Council houses or from HAP tenancies leaving net need in the County at 1,201.

The Council continues to strive to meet the accommodation needs of housing applicants through a combination of different means including allocating existing or new social housing stock, leased properties, accommodation acquired under RAS and HAP, as well as accommodation provided in conjunction with Approved Housing Bodies.

## Housing Stock/Tenancies

At the end of 2024, the Council had responsibility for a housing stock of 5,290 properties . In 2024, over €13.2 million was spent on maintaining and improving our stock and the upkeep of our estates during the year. In addition to routine maintenance and repairs, this expenditure involved refurbishing vacant dwellings for re-letting, as well as various planned maintenance programmes such as the external painting programme, the energy efficiency works programme, and other specific remedial and refurbishment works.

| Breakdown of Housing Stock       |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Local Authority owned units      | 5,120 |
| Long Term Leased units (Private) | 170   |
| Total                            | 5,290 |

In addition to expenditure of over €3.3 million on routine maintenance and repairs, the Council carried out improvements to the Social Housing stock under a number of programmes in 2024 as set out below:

### Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme

A newly revised Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme commenced in 2021 which requires local authorities to move to a ‘deeper retrofit’ programme. Works eligible under the Programme include attic/cavity wall insulation or external wall insulation where required, windows and doors replacement, heat pump installation, and ancillary and associated works. In 2024, 235 units were completed under this Programme at a cost of over €6.5 million.

### Returning vacant properties to productive use

The Council spent over €1.3 million returning 51 vacant properties to productive use. This included funding assistance of €561,000 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in addition to the Council’s own resources.

### *Once off adaptation works and extensions*

During the year, the Council spent over €1.9 million carrying out small scale adaptation works to 126 units and extensions to 6 units of our social housing stock. These works assisted tenants with a disability to have necessary adaptations carried out in order to make their homes more suitable for their needs.

### *Specific refurbishment/remedial works*

Over €286,000 was also spent on specific remedial/refurbishment works, in Council owned estates throughout the county.

In 2024, 183 new local authority tenancies were created during the year, bringing the total number of Council tenancies to 5,170 at year end. In addition, there were 1,671 tenancies in place under the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme by the end of the year and a further 174 households accommodated under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).

### **Estate Management**

The Council has five Housing Assessment /Tenant Liaison Officers involved in Estate Management and €52,750 was made available for estate management initiatives during the year, including the Best Kept Housing Estate.

### **Capital Assistance Scheme**

The Council continued to engage with the Approved Housing Body Sector and the Health Service Executive in providing accommodation under this programme to meet the needs of the elderly and persons with special needs. The programme is specifically targeted to provide special needs accommodation where the traditional forms of social housing supports are not suitable.

### **Social Leasing Programme**

Under the Social Leasing Programme, suitable properties can be leased to the Local Authority under a long term lease agreement. There were 170 such units under lease at the end of 2024.

The Council is also engaging with the Approved Housing Body Sector to provide leased units under the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)/Payment and Availability Agreement Scheme. At the end of 2024, the total number of leased units by the Approved Housing Body Sector in Donegal is 225.

### **Traveller Accommodation**

In terms of the Traveller Accommodation Programme, 2024 was a busy year with the implementation of targets and objectives in the final year of the programme, in tandem with the preparation of the new Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029, which the members of Donegal County Council adopted on 30th September 2024.

The Council can reflect on the implementation of a very successful programme with significant accommodation interventions and improvements, particularly on Traveller-specific sites.

A varying range of Traveller-specific accommodation projects were completed throughout 2024 and additional accommodation solutions were provided through standard lettings, HAP, halts and modular homes. Mobile home and caravan replacements were provided in specific emergency cases.

A significant suite of Traveller-specific capital projects are at varying stages of preparation for delivery in the first year of the new Traveller Accommodation Programme including dwelling rebuild, group housing refurbishment, modular home provision, refurbishment of permanent halt and a number of acquisitions are also proposed over the first two years of the new plan. It is anticipated that targets and objectives as set out in the Traveller Accommodation Programme for 2025 will again be achieved.

## Homeless supports

In 2024, Donegal County Council continued to assist households with temporary or emergency homeless accommodation at St. Colmcille Hostel in Letterkenny and through the provision of B&B vouchers.

The implementation of the National Housing First Programme continued in 2024 and provides secure accommodation to persons who have experienced long term homelessness. Under the Programme, clients are provided with intensive housing and health supports to assist them in maintaining their tenancy and their well-being.

In 2024, the Council continues with the implementation of the Northwest Regional Homeless Action Plan. This process is lead out by the Homeless Prevention Officer at a County-wide level who works closely with Municipal Districts staff to deliver the necessary supports.

A designated HAP PlaceFinder officer is also assigned to help clients at risk of homelessness to source suitable accommodation through engagement with estate agents and accommodation providers.

An interagency Homeless Action Team meets regularly to ensure that the appropriate support plans are in place for persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

## Housing Grants

Donegal County Council operates a number of grant schemes to assist people with disabilities and older people to live more comfortably or independently in their own homes. The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government fund 80% of the eligible works with the Council funding the balance of 20%. In 2024, 778 households benefited from these schemes and the total cost of the works was approx. €4.4 million.

## Housing Loans

The Council administers the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme, which assists first-time buyers who are unable to source loan funding from other financial institutions. In 2024, eight loans were approved in principle in the sum of €1,069,700. Seven loans were drawn down to the value of €452,000.

## Inspection of private rented dwellings

The standards for rental accommodation are prescribed in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 and apply to all properties let or available for letting. All landlords, have a legal obligation to ensure that their rented properties comply with the minimum standards specified in the Regulations in relation to a range of matters, such as structural repair, sanitary facilities, heating, ventilation, natural light, fire safety and the safety of oil, gas & electrical installations. Responsibility for enforcement of the Regulations rests with the Local Authority.

Donegal County Council inspectors carried out 1,637 inspections on 1,526 rented dwellings during 2024. Following completion of inspection of rental properties, a total of 1,324 Improvement letters were issued to landlords setting out specific contraventions of the Regulations & 9 Improvement Notices were served on Landlords in situations where efforts were not made to address ongoing contraventions. Solicitors for the Council are taking legal proceedings against 5 Landlords who failed to comply with an Improvement Notice.

Letters of compliance were issued to rental property owners in respect of 474 dwellings which achieved the required standard during 2024.



Phase 1 of a turnkey acquisition (11 units) completed at Convo

## Housing Capital

### Completed Projects 2024

The Council's ambitious social housing delivery programme continued at pace during 2024. 84 new high-quality, sustainable homes were completed in Ballybofey, Lifford, Buncrana, Annagry, Convo and including 2 no. single acquisitions at Convo and St. Johnston, which required significant remediation works in advance of letting.

### Construction Stage 2024

During 2024, construction works progressed on site at Killylastin, Letterkenny (9 units), Raphoe (11 units) and Bundoran (42 units). Further schemes at Buncrana (54 units), Kilcar (1 unit), Dungloe (43 units) and Oran Hill, Letterkenny (30 units) commenced on site. A total of 190 new social housing developments.

The turnkey process saw a further 130 units across 6 no. developments commence during the course of 2024. 18 units were completed by the end of 2024 with remaining units scheduled to complete in 2025 and 2026. The Council has a current county-wide turnkey acquisition process open, which will remain open until the 30th of September 2026.

Progress was also made on further in-house schemes through tendering, design, planning and approval stages by the Council's architectural team including schemes in the table to the right.

| In-house Schemes In Progress |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| St. Johnston                 | 30  |
| Glenties                     | 3   |
| Stranorlar                   | 8   |
| Laghy                        | 2   |
| Kilcar                       | 5   |
| Tamney                       | 10  |
| Newtowncunningham            | 40  |
| Dunkineely                   | 16  |
| Milford                      | 12  |
| Lifford                      | 60  |
| Creeshlough                  | 3   |
| Ballymacool                  | 170 |
| Glencolmcille                | 5   |
| Killybegs                    | 16  |
| High Road, Letterkenny       | 165 |
| Kilmacrennan                 | 20  |
| Ardara                       | 14  |
| Letterkenny                  | 18  |



Completed Scheme of 19 social housing units at Trusk Road, Ballybofey



The Design and Build model was utilised to progress schemes at Barrack Hill, Carndonagh (21 units), Malin (9 units) and Gleneely (10 units). These projects have now commenced on-site and are due and will complete in 2026. The developments will greatly assist in meeting the social housing needs across the Inishowen Municipal District. This model of delivery will now be utilised to develop additional housing schemes.

Under the Single House Acquisition programme, a further 9 social houses were acquired for social housing across the county.

Housing Capital also oversee the construction and manage the acquisition of Part V units across the county. During 2024, the contract for 8 no. Part V units was completed. Agreements for a further 22 no. units in Donegal Town and Letterkenny were agreed and will progress on-site during 2025.





Ongoing works on a turnkey development of 14 units at Ballybofey

The Council is actively pursuing the acquisition of new lands for housing purposes in towns and villages across the county where there is currently a shortfall of viable options available for housing delivery. During 2024, the Council acquired a site at Ballyhaskey, Newtowncunningham and four additional parcels of land are at conveyance stage - Gweedore, Stranorlar & Moville.

Multiple applications have been submitted to the Housing Agency for consideration to acquire additional parcels of land for new social housing developments under the Land Acquisition Fund, these sites are progressing via a two-stage approval process.



Ongoing works on a turnkey development of 35 units at Donegal Town

## Corporate Services

### Chambers Ireland Local Authority of the Year 2024



Donegal County Council won the prestigious Local Authority of the Year Award at the 2024 Chambers Ireland's Excellence in Local Government Awards in Dublin. Excellence in Local Government Awards are held annually and are hosted by Chambers Ireland. Donegal County Council also won the Supporting Sustainable Communities category for Burtonport & Arranmore - Harbour to Island Regeneration and the Health and Well Being category for the Model Beach Accessibility project.

## Contact Centre

The Customer Service Centre at Donegal County Council continues to serve as a centralised hub for customer enquiries and information access through various communication channels, including phone, email, online platforms, and also dealing with all phone payments for the council. In 2024, it remained highly active, handling more than 150,000 bilingual (Irish and English) calls and over 10,000 online interactions from our customers.

## Communications Office

### Media Relations

In 2024 there were 207 Press Releases issued by Donegal County Council. There were also more than 100 Public Service Announcements issued via Radio

### Website

The Communications Office worked closely with IS during 2024 as part of the redevelopment of the Council's website (donegalcoco.ie) to implement a platform adhering to current best practice in web design and to be fully mobile compatible. This version of the site was launched in November 2024.

### Social Media

The Council's Facebook page remains its largest social following with 37,000, while the Council Instagram grew again, surpassing 2,500.



## Human Resources

### Recruitment

The extremely tight labour market conditions in 2024, has resulted in all Local Authorities, including Donegal County Council, experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff with extensive competition taking place across the public & private sector in attracting new talent and in retaining existing skills and experience within the local authority.

To counteract this Human Resources have developed a new campaign on what it is like to work in Donegal County Council (#NotJustAJob) and the team were part of a delegation of businesses from Donegal, led by the Economic Development Section, that attended a Recruitment Fair in the London Irish Embassy, Camden on the 16th May 2024. The aim of this delegation was to illustrate the extensive range of employment opportunities available in Donegal in both the public and private sector and to work collaboratively on attracting new talent to the county by utilising our Diaspora links.

Despite the above challenges, the pipeline for new competitions continued to be busy and the Recruitment Team initiated and completed over 70 competitions from last quarter in 2023 to Dec 2024. These were widely promoted and attracted over 2,500 applicants on the island of Ireland and beyond. The recruitment competitions included a range of opportunities such as new temporary posts for specified projects and areas of activity supported by external funding; seasonal work and to fill vacant posts in the Council's management and staffing structure that arose during the year.

In the Donegal context, the new WRC agreement for Fire Services, dated August 2023, required that the local authority increase its Retained Firefighter numbers in 13 Fire Stations across the County by 25%. This campaign has been embraced by the Recruitment Team in conjunction with the Fire Services and to date nearly two thirds of these positions have been filled, this has been achieved without any additional resources being required by the team.

To ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults, in 2024, the recruitment section vetted and re-vetted 105 people consisting of both employees and external service providers e.g. workshop facilitators, this represents a 100% increase from 2023.

Donegal County Council is one of the major employers within the county and our recruitment team is always looking at new and innovative ways to encourage young people and graduates to consider a career within the Council. In 2024, the Recruitment Team facilitated 37 Transitional Year Placements and Traineeships with the ATU & ETB; employed 28 students under the Summer Student Placement Scheme for a period of 8 weeks and took on a number of Industrial Work placements including in Climate Action, Architects Office and Human Resources.

In October 2024, Donegal County Councils hosted the LGMA 26th Annual Local Government Human Resource Conference in Letterkenny. This was attended by delegates from the Department of Housing, Local

Government & Heritage, the LGMA and all Local Authorities in the Country. This provided a unique opportunity to foster learning, collaboration and innovation across the sector and also to showcase the quality of life that Donegal can offer new employees.

### Training

The Council's Training Department, in partnership with the Stranorlar Regional Training Centre, delivered a range of courses for staff in 2024 with a particular emphasis on Health and Safety, Technical skills, Communication Skills, Legislation & Regulatory Control, Health & Wellbeing and Management & Supervisory Skills. The Training Department also continued to support the rollout of the Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme in 2024, working in partnership with the Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG).

The Council's Staff Education Scheme continued to provide a mechanism for staff to undertake courses of study which can further aid and support their continued professional and personal development. In 2024, the scheme supported courses of study in a range of areas such as Cybersecurity, Environmental Management, Renewable Energy and Energy Management, Engineering, Financial Management, Business and Management, Construction Management, Library and Information Management, Occupational Health & Safety and Local Government Studies.

The Stranorlar Regional Training Centre has LASNTG, SOLAS, City & Guilds and ITSSAR accreditations to deliver training. Training has been provided to staff across a range of areas, including Health & Safety, Plant and Machinery, and specialised roads, water, and wastewater courses. New and reviewed courses continued to be rolled out and delivered during 2024 in collaboration with IT Carlow and IT Sligo.

The QQI Firefighting skills accredited programmes continues to be delivered to the new recruits of the Donegal Fire Service.

### Staff Welfare

The Staff Welfare Office continued to provide assistance to employees in 2024 with services such as the Employee Assistance Service, which is a free and confidential service available to all employees and their immediate family members. In 2024, the superannuation section of the Human Resources Department processed 73 applications for pensions including retirements, preserved pension benefits, dependent pensions, supplementary pensions, Firefighters gratuities and lump sum payments. On 31st December 2024, there were 696 persons in receipt of pension benefits from the Council. In conjunction with the Council's Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2024, the Health and Wellbeing Team continued to run various programmes and events throughout 2024, including the Employee Health Screening Programme. Our aim is to ensure that we all have an opportunity for optimal health and wellbeing so that we can participate fully in our work, family, and community life.

# Culture Division

## Creative Ireland

During 2024 Creative Ireland allocated €337,000 to the local Culture and Creativity team for the annual programme, and a Creative Communities Engagement Officer was appointed. A wide range of creative projects were supported including a collaboration on the 'Lost Stories' element of the N56 cycleway, Intercultural Projects, Creativity in Older Age, Cruinniú na nÓg and Project Awards.

## Library Service



Art of Reading event in Carndonagh

The Library Service continued to thrive during 2024 and saw increases in use when compared with the previous year: 31% in Internet use; 23% more visitors; 12% more physical items borrowed and 6.8% more use of online resources. My Open Library was launched in Buncrana Community Library offering extended opening hours, outside of staffed hours.

A symposium entitled 'Donegal Literature and Landscape' was held as part of the Ireland Reads campaign, examining how the landscape of the county featured and influenced Donegal Writers.

Funding of €30,000 was received from the Community Recognition Fund to develop a sensory garden at Bundoran Library and €13,600 was provided under the Dormant Accounts Fund to purchase height

adjustable tables for wheelchair users and others with mobility issues for the Library Service. With funding from Creative Ireland a programme of animal, music and art therapy was delivered to 15 residential care facilities. The Arts Council's Art of Reading Book Club took place featuring Laureate for Irish Fiction Colm Tóibín and Booker Prize-winning Donegal author Paul Lynch.

## Arts Service

### Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival

The 24th Festival hosted Balor Arts Centre's presentation of Shaun Byrne's new play One Night at Glenlough, with Frankie McCafferty and Aidan Moriarty, at Ballybofey, Gleann Cholm Cille and Ballyshannon.

### Arts & Cultural Diversity

Artists from Ukraine, South Africa, Togo and Somalia participated in the Artists Mentor programme. Other projects included the Roma community film Sam Roma ('We Are Roma') and the inaugural Donegal Mela.

### Culture Night

Celebrating cultural diversity, Culture Night showcased Donegal based Indian, Ukrainian and African dance and choral groups as well as spoken word performances by Irish, South African, Zimbabwean and Somalian artists.

### An Grianán Theatre

An Grianán Theatre celebrated 25 years at the heart of the community with the Story of An Grianán Exhibition and a 25th. Anniversary Gala Concert.

### 37th Earagail Arts Festival

Among the festival highlights were Muireann Bradley's three sold-out performances and Ultan Pringle's play, 'Boyfriends', at An Grianán Theatre.



Muireann Bradley performing at An Grianán Theatre as part of the Earagail Arts Festival  
Photograph: Donna El Assaad

## Regional Cultural Centre

2024 marked another vibrant and successful year for the RCC, delivering an engaging mix of festivals, concerts, exhibitions, film screenings, community arts initiatives, and artist development programmes.

The RCC hosted over 400 daytime public events in collaboration with local and intercultural community groups, underscoring the RCC's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, and welcoming an estimated 37,500 visitors. The RCC's evening programme featured 62 events, encompassing concerts and film screenings, alongside 16 exhibition openings with attendance reaching 6,375 visitors.

The RCC maintained its leadership in organising flagship festivals, including Letterkenny Trad Week, the Sound! Soundtrack Festival (nominated for an Excellence in Local Government Award), and the Culture Shocks Punk Festival. Additionally, the RCC collaborated with partners such as the Earagail Arts Festival, Wainfest, and Bealtaine, further enriching Donegal's cultural calendar.

Beyond events, the RCC continued to champion literary arts through its literary publication, expanding readership to an audience across 22 countries.



Culture Shocks Festival at the RCC.  
Photograph: John Soffe

## Donegal County Museum

The exhibition programme included An Olympic Journey, Life Through The Lens, Arch 40, Volunteering in the Community with the Donegal Volunteer Centre and Peace Heroines. The Museum coordinated the delivery of 5 projects under the Commemorations Programme 2024,

The Museum organised events during Social Inclusion week, the Bealtaine Festival, Heritage Week, Wainfest and Culture Night. The Museum also organised a series of talks throughout the County.

The Museum collaborated on projects including the 'Working Over By' Donegal/Scotland project, the An Grianan 25th anniversary exhibition, an exhibition on the centenary of Local Government in Ireland and the display of the exhibition, 'A Common Humanity Full Circle, the Ann Doherty Collection' in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland. The Museum also continued its work on the EU Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme project Digital Action on Climate Change with Heritage Environments facilitated by Kate Robb of John Cronin and Associates.

## Archives Service

During 2024, the Archives Services worked with a Donegal County Council led project team to progress the development of the Prior Endowed School Lifford into a County Archives Centre.

The Archives Service was successful in its application to the Heritage Council for a stewardship grant of over €5,000 towards upgrading oral history collections to digital format for preservation and access online. Three of its most popular collections were digitised: Donegal Folklore Ancestry Project, Seoirse Ó Dochartaigh Music Collection and Home from Home, Rabble (Hiring Out) and Islands oral history recordings made by the late RTE radio producer Mary Phelan (SoundWoman Productions.) An informational booklet on oral history in County Donegal will accompany the recordings.

The Archive Service also worked with the Heritage Office and the Museum Service on developing the Donegal Emigrant Working Lives in Scotland exhibition, including attending a series of events in Scotland. The exhibition will be launched in 2025.

## Heritage Service

The new strategic County Donegal Heritage Plan was launched in May. Our award-winning Thatch Repair Grant Scheme supported 30 small-scale thatch repairs. Funding of €20,000 was secured from The Heritage Council for the appointment of a part-time Community Archaeologist. Funding of €350,000 was secured from The Heritage Council for the Glenties Historic Towns Initiative that included conservation works to The Laurels and Glenties Courthouse in partnership with The Brian Friel Trust CLG.

County Heritage Plan implementation included preparation of an exhibition and publication on the work experiences of Donegal people in Scotland between 1940 and 1990, and information gathering events in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Other Heritage Plan actions included piloting and filming thatch growing initiatives, support for a new Donegal Thatching School, wildlife and pollinator workshops, and support for Local Authority Pollinator Awards. Heritage Week in County Donegal was a tremendous success with over 120 events taking place and recognition at the National Heritage Week Awards.



Members of the County Donegal Heritage Forum pictured at the launch of the County Donegal Heritage Plan in Lough Eske Castle in May

## Biodiversity Office

The Biodiversity Office delivered a programme of events during Biodiversity Week from 17th to 26th of May. The programme had the aim of connecting people with nature. Events included a dawn chorus, woodland walks, citizen science programmes and 'Explore Your Shore' at Fanad Lighthouse and Tory.

Donegal County Council began preparing its first County Biodiversity Action Plan during the year. Views were sought from members of the public, stakeholders and community groups via drop-in Biodiversity Clinics and an online questionnaire to help identify the key issues facing biodiversity in the county and to establish priorities for action. A plan will be drafted and further developed for approval during 2025.

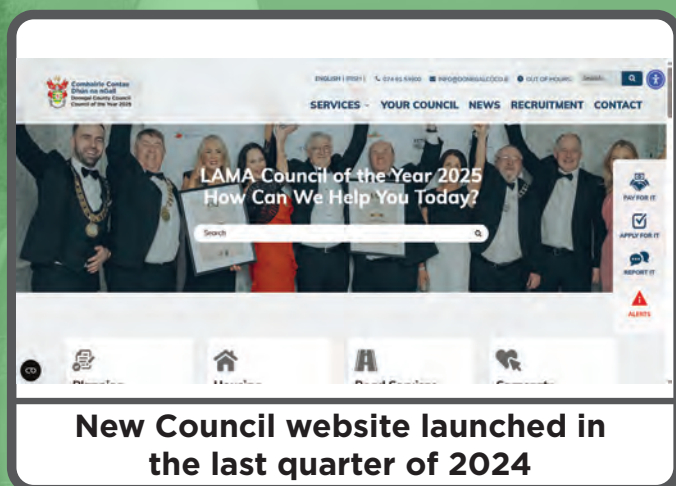
The above programmes were supported through successful applications to the Heritage Council for almost €120,000. The funding was also used to deliver Local Biodiversity projects such as a species audit and Putting Donegal Biodiversity on the Map.



Clannad receiving the Honorary Freedom of the County  
Photo Clive Wasson

# Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services

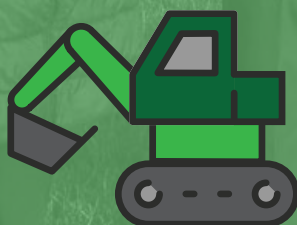
Empowering and Supporting Communities/Enabling Growth/Delivering Services



**New Council website launched in the last quarter of 2024**

LEO provided business mentoring to 420 clients with 1618 clients taking part in training, seminars, management development programmes and networking events

**Enabling works commenced on 30-acre Multi-Use Park in Lifford**



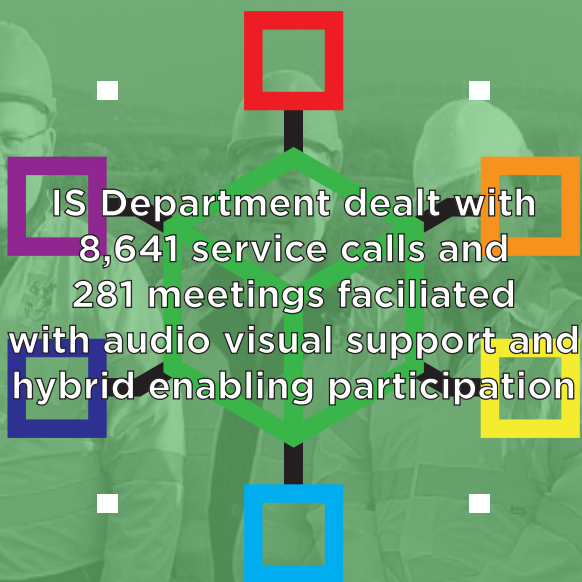
**Fire Service Budget increase to €9,229,352m**



**Donegal Tourism to host TBEX Europe in September 2025**

# 2024 Highlights

## Mainstreaming Climate Action/Building Organisational Capacity



39 projects received funding, with a total community allocation of €235,096 and a Council allocation of €264m

Civil Defence provided 1240 volunteer manhours supporting communities at 39 non-emergency events



Public Consultation Platform [consult.donegal.ie](https://consult.donegal.ie) facilitated 45 consultations and 6 surveys



#CeanningDúnnanGall & #BuyDonegal 2024 reached a global audience of 58.9m featuring 400 businesses since its launch



# Economic Development

## Economic Development Unit



Sod turning at Lifford Lands

### Lifford Lands

Planning permission for the land at Lifford Common was granted in 2024, with enabling works beginning in December 2024 and an expected completion in Q2/Q3 2025. These works will create a 30-acre Multi-Use Park, which will include social housing, community health services, business sites, and recreational facilities. The development aims to support business growth and job creation in Lifford and its surroundings.

### Donegal 2040 Strategic Development DAC

Donegal 2040 has been established by the Council to oversee the development and management of several key strategic economic development initiatives. The Board of Directors of the Company comprises five elected members, two Council Directors of Services, and seven Directors from academia and private enterprise backgrounds, providing a range of skills and expertise. During 2024, the company continued to progress initiatives including:

#### *Business and Innovation Quarter in Letterkenny*

The Quarter comprises the proposed Alpha Innovation Centre, a 7-storey innovation centre with a 23,500 sq./ft floor area, and the Beta Business Centre, an 8-storey business and enterprise building with a 49,000 sq./ft floor area. Each building will provide state-of-the-art workspace facilities for a range of knowledge-based businesses in the region. Site clearance and enabling works were completed on-site during 2024.

#### *Island House, Killybegs*

As part of the overall Killybegs Town Centre Regeneration Project, co-funded under the RRDF, construction works on the €2.3m Island House Building in Killybegs progressed to substantial completion in 2024. Upon completion, this building will be managed by Donegal 2040 and will accommodate a visitor facility as well as enterprise space.

#### *Burtonport Enterprise Building*

As part of the Burtonport Harbour Redevelopment Project, co-funded by the RRDF, construction of the Burtonport Enterprise Building began in Q4 2024. This project aims to create modern enterprise space to support local businesses and stimulate economic growth in the region.

#### *The Ritz Building, Ballybofey*

As part of the Ballybofey Regeneration project, co-funded under the RRDF, detailed designs for the Ritz building were completed in 2024. The redevelopment aims to provide enterprise space to support local economic development and attract new businesses.

## ALPHA Innovation

### Startup Bootcamp

The Startup Bootcamp experienced a 420% increase in 2024, offering intensive training and support for early-stage startups through workshops, mentoring, and networking.

### Disrupt By the Sea

The Disrupt by The Sea event attracted US venture capitalists with a €100,000 cash-for-equity investment, connecting startups with investors through pitch sessions, panel discussions, and networking opportunities.

### Innovation Campfire

This monthly online series features global companies sharing insights to foster innovation. It includes presentations and Q&A sessions, with 20 companies highlighted across 13 episodes, such as Ford, Stripe, McDonald's, and 3M.

### TechIreland's National AI Challenge

Donegal shone in TechIreland's National AI Challenge, with Bias Busters named national winner. This challenge promotes innovative AI solutions through workshops and mentoring, successfully raising the region's profile and attracting investment.

### Pathfinder Programme

The Pathfinder Programme helps Innovative Development Enterprises (IDEs) explore export opportunities. Five leaders from NW City Region IDEs visited the Cambridge Innovation Centre in Boston for insights from US sector leaders, supported by ALPHA Innovation and LEO to maximize market opportunities.

## Northwest City Region

### National Planning Framework - First Revision

Donegal County Council and Derry City & Strabane District Council submitted a joint submission to the National Planning Framework's (NPF) first revision in September 2024. The submission prioritizes the North West City Region's needs and infrastructure development, aiming to support sustainable growth. Key recommendations included recognizing the region in the NPF hierarchy and prioritizing infrastructure development, housing, and economic growth. However, these were not addressed in the 'Updated Draft Revised NPF' published in November 2024.

### RegTech Supercluster

The RegTech Supercluster was established in partnership with Derry City & Strabane District Council, ATU, Ulster University, and ALPHA Innovation. This initiative aims to establish the region as a leader in regulatory technology, fostering innovation and new business opportunities. The supercluster includes workshops, mentoring, and networking events, supporting the development of RegTech solutions and promoting collaboration within the community.





## Campaigns and Initiatives

### #CeannaighDúnnanGall #BuyDonegal 2024

The #CeannaighDúnnanGall & #BuyDonegal 2024 campaign reached a global audience of 58.9 million, promoting local businesses and encouraging support for Donegal-based products and services. Since its launch, it has featured over 400 businesses.

### Donegal Tech Advocates

The Donegal Tech Advocates initiative promotes the region's tech sector through networking events that connect professionals, facilitate collaboration, and share knowledge.

The group focuses on three strategic pillars:

- o Enhancing technical skills
- o Attracting top-tier talent to the region
- o Leveraging Donegal's unique environment for a balanced lifestyle

### #LoveDonegal 2024

The #LoveDonegal 2024 campaign reached 197.5 million people, promoting Donegal as a premier tourist destination, and achieving significant results in community engagement, while garnering global participation. The campaign included various activities, such as social media promotions, events, and partnerships with local businesses.

### Caravan, Camping and Campervan Initiative

Implementation of KPMG Study recommendations for the Caravan, Camping, and Campervan Sector included:

€180,000 for the CCCMF Grant Scheme (3 completed in 2024, 2 in 2025), a dedicated webpage on Govisitdonegal.com, trial signage for waste disposal, and a social media marketing campaign.

### Concierge Service

The Business Concierge Service continued to provide support and direct queries to relevant Council services in 2024.

### Property Solutions

Several businesses seeking property solutions using Council owned land or property were supported to achieve their aim of starting up, relocation or expansion.



### European Projects- Green Hydra

The Interreg Europe Green Hydra project launched in June 2024 with the first stakeholder meeting held in Ravenna Italy in September 2024. The project will run until 2028 and is aimed at improving local, regional and national policies in all ten partner regions through the EU.



Recipients of the Tip O'Neill Awards

### Donegal Diaspora Activity

Packie Bonner & Shay Given at the London Irish Centre Donegal Diaspora team hosted 'fireside chat' event in partnership with the London Irish Centre to promote Donegal as a tourism destination and a hotspot for relocation.

Over 170 people attended the Tip O'Neill Irish Diaspora Awards in September in Buncrana to acknowledge the 2024 recipients of the award; Caroleann Gallagher, David McCourt & Billy Higgins.

In partnership with the Irish Consulate in Edinburgh the Donegal Diaspora team hosted a panel discussion at Dovecot Studios promoting the collaboration between the Donegal Tweed Association and Harris Tweed Authority.



Shay Given & Packie Bonner Fireside Chat

## Tourism Unit

### Marketing Events 2024

Donegal was represented at the Holiday World Show 2024 in Dublin alongside sixteen businesses and a further fifteen businesses promoted Donegal at the Balmoral Show in Northern Ireland.

### Donegal Tourism Seminar 2024 - Crafting a Greener Future for Donegal

The seminar on March 6 at Harvey's Point Hotel attracted around 140 attendees. Expert speakers provided insights and guidance to support new opportunities in tourism.

### Beyond the Stage

On January 24, 2024, Donegal Tourism hosted the "Beyond the Stage" event at the Silver Tassie Hotel. It focused on promoting and managing events, advice on funding applications, and networking opportunities with industry experts and funders.

### Go Visit Donegal Shoulder Season Campaign

Launched on October 20, the 'It's Ours' campaign showcased Donegal as one of Ireland's best-kept secrets, encouraging potential visitors across various channels.

### Night-Time Economy (NTE) Buncrana

The 'Buncrana by Night' programme in October saw twenty-six grants issued, supporting events like heritage walks, comedy nights, and Halloween activities. A public survey garnered over 360 responses, informing the NTE Action Plan for Buncrana, with a Steering Group set to be established in January.

### Golf

In 2024, Donegal Tourism held a successful golf networking event, engaging ten clubs and fifteen hotels to explore partnerships. A promotional assets library for golf clubs has been established, along with a collaboration on the "Best of the North West" video and brochure. Donegal Tourism engaged over forty tour operators at the International Golf Travel Market (IGTM) in Lisbon and plans to launch a new golf brochure in early 2025.

### TBEX

Donegal Tourism will host TBEX Europe in September 2025, welcoming about 500 content creators for four days of meetings and networking. The announcement was made at a previous event in San Sebastián, Spain.



Donegal Tourism at TBEX



### World Travel Market

At the World Travel Market in London, Donegal Tourism connected with key partners like Lonely Planet and Tourism Ireland to discuss partnership opportunities leading up to TBEX Donegal 2025.

### Northwest City Region

A new golf video and brochure were created with Derry/Strabane District Council to promote the North West City Region. <https://www.bestofnorthwestireland.com/golf/>

### Donegal Tourism Brochure 2024

An A4 and A5 brochure is being developed, including categories like Distilleries, with a print run of 10,000 for key partners and trade.

### 2024 Minor Tourism

Thirty-nine projects received funding, with a total community allocation of €235,096 and a Council allocation of €264,904. To date, 186 projects have

## Strategic Funding Unit

The work of the Strategic Funding Unit continued in 2024 as follows:

- o Sharing EU project opportunities.
- o Advising Council teams on EU projects.
- o Leading the Intelligent Cities Challenge project.
- o Participating in the CPMR and AER networks.

secured €2 million since 2021.

### 2024 Festival and Event Funding

Under the Fáilte Ireland regional festival funding scheme, 37 festivals/events were awarded a total of €49,750 in 2024.

### European Projects 2024 - TOURBO and SUB

#### TOURBO

This project aims to enhance the transition to “Industry 4.0” for tourism SMEs and began on March 1, 2023, with a budget of €2 million, including Donegal’s share of €213,000.

#### Sustainable Arctic & Peripheral Biking Tourism Project (SUB)

Launched on June 1, 2023, the SUB project, with a budget of €428,000, focuses on developing sustainable biking tourism models, involving local businesses across

## Local Enterprise Office

The Local Enterprise Office Donegal is the 'First Stop Shop' for people seeking advice, information and support when starting or growing a micro and small business. Services provided include business advice and mentoring, training, financial supports, enterprise promotion, networking opportunities, management programmes, supports aligned to sectors and economic challenges.

### Key Achievements 2024

- o The 2024 Annual Employment Survey of LEO clients show positive job creation with 1,713 employed in the 272 client businesses grant aided by the LEO. A total of 243 new jobs were created in 2024. When job losses are accounted for this results in a net employment gain of 129 in the year.
- o A total of 48 LEO Measure 1 grants (9 Feasibility, 5 Business Priming (Start-Up), 17 Business Expansion, 1 Over 10, 1 Research & Development) were approved to Donegal based manufacturing or international service businesses to the value of €1,171,762.30 . In addition, 15 Export Marketing grants were supported to the value of €23,602.42 to help local businesses explore and grow international markets.
- o 72 Trading Online Vouchers were approved to the value of €156,303 to help local businesses across all key sectors to expand and improve their online trading presence.
- o 420 clients received business mentoring through one-to-one engagements.
- o 1618 clients took part in training, seminars, management development programmes and networking events.
- o 23 clients completed a Lean for Micro Project which is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisations to increase competitiveness.
- o Kira McLaughlin a student from Scoil Mhuire Buncrana was awarded first prize in the Folens Smart Business Award Category at this year's National Student Enterprise Programme Finals. Supported by Local Enterprise Office Donegal. Other Donegal finalists on the day were Dylan Doherty of Rosses Community School for his business Doherty Harvesting and Hailey O'Neill of Rosses Community School for her business Errigal View Lavender
- o LEO Donegal increased the focus on supporting small businesses prepare for the low carbon, resource efficient economy of the future with 48 Green applications approved. In addition, €150,000 in financial support was awarded to 17 businesses to support the purchase of Energy Efficient equipment.
- o 13 clients were supported on their digital transition journey.
- o Through our referral process with Micro Finance Ireland, 13 client loan applications were processed for approval.
- o Local Enterprise Week 2024 with a theme of "Be Brave" was held in March with 19 events for new and existing entrepreneurs taking place.



- o AMBITION, the award-winning Pre-Accelerator to inspire more Female Entrepreneurs to start a business continued with 12 Female led Teams participating in the 12-week online Programme.
- o Over 90 female entrepreneurs participated in a National Women's Enterprise Day event in Donegal town in October
- o The 2024 Donegal Enterprise Awards took place on Friday December 1st in Rockhill House Estate, Letterkenny, where 7 businesses received awards across a range of categories. Seabound Engineering was the overall winner and will now represent Donegal at the National Enterprise Awards in May 2025. At the 2024 National Enterprise Awards, the Donegal representative Living Green was a national winner, securing the Green award.
- o LEO Donegal has successfully supported the transition of Food Coast Donegal to an industry led network with a new CLG being formed in 2024. A wide range of Food events were organised including a Food Producer Showcase in March.
- o The Engineering Network continues to meet monthly for peer-to-peer learning with invited expert guests and industry visits.
- o LEO Donegal is the lead partner for the Local Enterprise Office Network in the Enterprise Europe Network project. The Enterprise Europe Network provides support for Small and Medium-sized enterprises with international ambitions. The Network's aim is to help businesses innovate and grow internationally. The Network is active in more than 60 countries worldwide. A range of businesses were supported to attend international events in England, Paris and New York.
- o Kevin Lowery Art, and, I am Self Care attended SHOWCASE 2024 in January and Balcrete represented Donegal at the National Ploughing Championship in September.
- o The Local Enterprise Office supported the Red Cross with the scheme to provide Emergency Humanitarian Support to Small Businesses affected by the Flooding in Killybegs.
- o 3 Donegal businesses were supported to participate in the North West City Region Pathfinder Go to Market Lab at Cambridge Innovation Centre, Boston, This is an initiative jointly led by Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council.
- o LEO Donegal continues to support Donegal Tweed Association to secure PGI status for Donegal Tweed. An application for EU funding with a range of other partners including University of Helsinki was successful with funding to advance PGI products in the Northern Periphery region.
- o On behalf of the 31 Local Enterprise Offices in Ireland, LEO Donegal is the LEO partner with a budget of €1.24m in the Enterprise Europe Network project. A wide range of businesses were supported to advance international markets with events in a range of locations including Liverpool, Bristol, Brussels, Paris and New York.



# Information Systems

Donegal County Council's Information & Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure is a key foundational asset for the organisation enabling service delivery, enhancing public engagement, supporting data-driven decision making, and ensuring security and compliance. It covers 106 physical locations across the county as one of the largest local authority networks in the country.

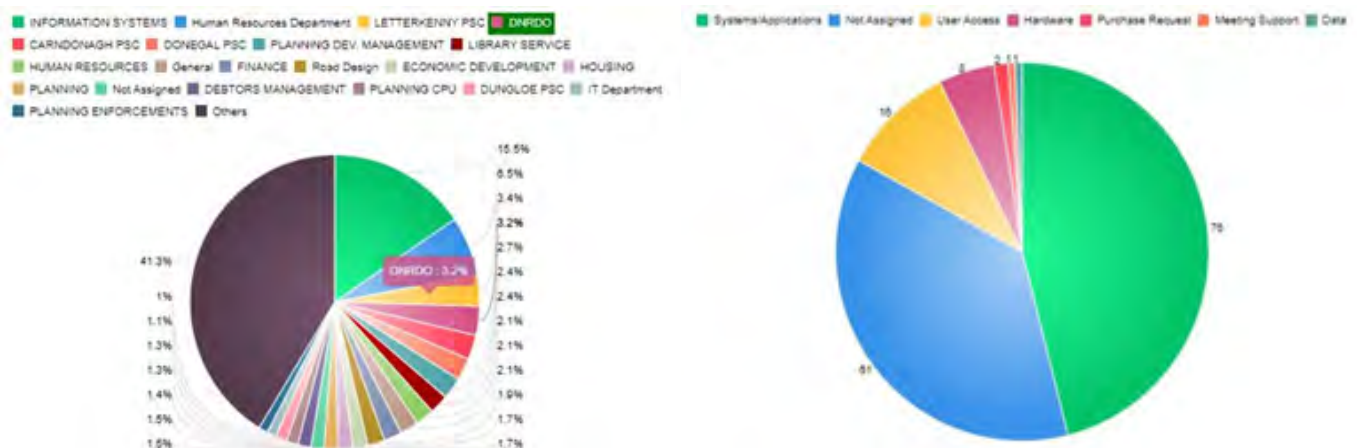
The infrastructure comprises of:

- o 84 Servers
- o 1,687 Desktop & Notebook Computers
- o 352 Printers/Scanners/Plotters
- o 29 Print Management Multi-Function Devices (managed solely by Information Systems)
- o 85 Other Multi-Function Devices
- o 380 Tablets
- o 700 Mobile Phones
- o 200 Other data devices
- o 275 IP Telephone Handsets

## Operational Planning

The Annual Information Systems Operational Plan for 2024 was formulated across the following key areas:

1. Operations & End User Support (Networks/Systems/Telephony)
2. Core Infrastructure & Networks Corporate Data & ICT Security
3. Capital Investment Programme
4. Geographic Information Systems & Spatial Data
5. Corporate Systems & Applications
6. Website Design & Development
7. Information Society & ERNACT Initiatives
8. Broadband, Telecommunications & Donegal Digital
9. Management & Administration



## Operations & End User Support

Facilitation of hybrid meetings and remote working continued via 2024. This year saw the implementation of the Council's blended working policy. Blended working is enabled via provision of base infrastructure, ongoing technical support, and cyber security. An internal authorization app facilitates annual review. The notable increase in user support associated with implementation is anticipated to continue for some time with the shift towards laptops and other portable devices. Over the course of the year, there were 8,641 service calls and 281 meetings facilitated with audio visual support, the majority of which were hybrid enabling participation.

## Core Infrastructure and the Capital Investment Programme

A multi-annual capital re-investment programme in core ICT infrastructure (networks, data storage, telephony, software licensing, information & cyber security, and the upgrading of systems) under the 3-Year Capital Plan 2024 – 2026 progressed.

A key deliverable during 2024, which was the culmination of several years' preparatory work, saw the implementation of a Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure solution enabling High Availability (HA) and Disaster Recovery (DR) for the organization. An associated positive outcome arises with estimated energy savings due to the energy efficiency ratings of the new devices.

Investment in infrastructure enables the Council to make the most of digital advances while addressing cyber and data security as an ongoing concern.

## Geographic Information Systems

Spatial analysis and mapping played a key role in delivering on the following plans and policy development processes: County Development Plan 2024-2030; Residential Zoned Land Tax Mapping.

Strategic dashboards continued to be developed as an effective mechanism for providing location-based infographics on Council services and supports e.g. Winter Maintenance programme, Weekly Planning lists, Election 2024, Various funding stream allocations & DCB related Planning Applications.



## Corporate Systems & Applications

Information Systems met a range of business needs via procurement, design, development, implementation, and support of a significant range of software applications and solutions across all functions. Examples include facilitation of public facing grant application processes, making it easier for community groups and businesses to access supports and reducing the administrative burden internally for quicker turnaround times.

## Website Design & Development

A new Council website launched in the last quarter of 2024 will see increased capacity for updating and expanding our range of easy to access online services, designed around the needs of people and businesses. This is complemented by a new Donegal Culture website which now centralises all cultural services on a single platform and will increase customer engagement and awareness.

The new national strategy Digital Local Government: Working for Everyone was launched midyear and will set the agenda for improved digital services offerings until 2030.

## Public Consultation Platform

Online engagement with our public consultation platform continues to grow as 45 consultations and 6 surveys were carried out on [consult.donegal.ie](https://consult.donegal.ie) in 2024. This growing engagement is demonstrated by 243 submissions received on the consultation 'Draft Scheme for the establishment and operation of Strategic Policy Committees in Donegal County Council for the period 2024 to 2029' and 291 submissions received on the 'Affordable Housing Survey 2024'.

## Support for Democratic Processes and Elected Members

Information Systems provides ongoing support and assistance with the Electoral Register and to the County Registrar as and when needed. In 2024, this support extended into supporting the count centres for both referendums and the local and national elections. For the local elections, Information Systems was involved in establishing an informative dashboard with details of candidates seeking election by area.

Ongoing support was provided to Elected Members through the provision of equipment and software solutions including some tailored to their needs around progressing of questions and motions as well as representations.

## Broadband, Telecommunications & Donegal Digital

The Information Systems Department continued to work with relevant government departments and telecommunications companies to assist the rollout of high-speed broadband throughout the County, including the National Broadband Plan. Noteworthy progress of the rollout was achieved, completing fibre networks in 7 Deployment Areas, progressing network build in another 5 DA's and completing network surveying in the remaining 5 DA's. The rollout is now 48% complete as of the end of 2024.

Information Systems continued development and implementation of the inter-agency Donegal Digital Project linked to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and Digital Local Government: Working for Everyone digital community objectives.

The Broadband Office continued to facilitate and support activities that contribute to an improved digital infrastructure, technologies to improve quality of life, co-working hubs, and support for technological innovation.

The Council, through the ERNACT network, maximises project funding opportunities in ICT and Digital technologies. Information Systems is involved in the following projects:

- o INNOCAP - Capacity building on Internet of Things networks and Virtual & Augmented Reality, funded through the Northern Periphery and Arctic (2021 - 2027).
- o ENABLER - Capacity building on Artificial Intelligence in the public sector, funded through Interreg Europe (2021 - 2027).
- o COPOWER - Using technology to link renewable energy systems and operate them in coordination like a utility-scale power station to balance energy demand and production, funded by Northern Periphery and Arctic (2021 - 2027). Work is underway to implement a pilot virtual power plant for Donegal County Council.
- o CIVITECH - The CIVITECH project aims to make democracy more participatory, inclusive, and responsive by enhancing citizen involvement through new digital tools and processes. Funded by Interreg Europe (2021-2027).

## Management & Administration

This includes Expenditure Forecasting, Monitoring and Control, support for EU Projects delivery and management of contracts and frameworks. Purchasing activity alone in 2024 was in the order of €3.5M.

The successful implementation of European projects is supported by careful management of allocated budget in compliance with the funding programme guidelines and timely submission of associated recoupment claims. These projects ensure that the Council can participate in funded research and development opportunities that build capacity for the future.

Given the significant remit of the Council's business, Information Systems continued in 2024 to assist the organisation in the provision of a wide range of supporting software tools and technology. This required ongoing management and administration of a large number of contracts and frameworks, ensuring adherence to Council and national policies on procurement and achieving value for money.



# Emergency Services

## Fire Service

Donegal County Council as the Fire Authority for the County continues to discharge its operational and fire safety functions. The operational service is provided by 15 Retained Fire Brigades, by voluntary units on Aran Mór Island and on Toraigh Island and by Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) which provides the operational service to defined parts of the County, primarily in the vicinity of Bridgend and Lifford. Donegal County Council Fire Service (the Fire Service) also provides the operational service to parts of counties Leitrim and Sligo.

### Incidents

Donegal Fire Brigades and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) responded to 829 incidents in 2024 as against 827 incidents in 2023, an increase of 0.25%.

These incidents covered a spectrum of activities that include fires, road traffic collisions, flooding, and other special services. In 2024 Donegal brigades mobilised on 936 occasions while NIFRS mobilised into Donegal on 67 occasions. Data for 2024 is provisional.

### Fire Service Budget Increase

The increase in the Fire Service Budgets driven primarily by the 2023 WRC Retained Firefighters Agreement is set out in the table below. It is anticipated that the need for further budget increases will be required beyond 2024.

| Year | Adopted Budget | % Increase       | Comment                                |
|------|----------------|------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 2022 | 6,966,142.00   | (2022 Base Year) | Pre-Agreement                          |
| 2023 | 7,414,925.63   | 6.4              | Agreement Effective from 1st July 2023 |
| 2024 | 9,229,352.00   | 32.5             | Implementation of Agreement            |





## Training

Training courses are provided for Fire Service personnel having regard to their roles and functions within the Service. Some courses are cyclic in nature and courses provided vary in duration from one day to 15 days. Provisional data indicates that €811,638.44 was spent on fire brigade training in 2024 which is exclusive of the cost of the twice monthly four-hour drills that each retained brigade now do. The sum of €811,638.44 involves an increase in training costs of the order of 47% which is driven primarily by the 2023 WRC Retained Firefighters Agreement.

The twice monthly drills covered a spectrum of activities which, in conjunction with other training, provided the necessary skill sets required to deliver statutory operational functions.

## New Vehicles and Appliances

In 2024 the Fire Service took delivery of 2 No. vans and 1 No. 4 x 4 jeep which were fully funded by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) in the sum of €186,881 and also received NDFEM approval to purchase an additional 2 No. vans at a cost of €155,171.

## New Equipment

The Fire Service also took delivery of the equipment listed below which was fully funded by the NDFEM in the sum of €95,179 and which will enhance the operational response to incidents.

- o ELSI (Extending Line System Improvement which is fitted with 10 5.5m ladders to ease the extending process).
- o Fog Spike Kits.
- o Milwaukee Drill Sets.
- o Glass Cutting Equipment.

## Fire Prevention

186 Fire Safety Certificate applications were received in 2024 which represented a decrease of 18.8% as against 229 applications received in 2023. There was an increase of 30.9% in the number of applications received in 2023 as against 2022. 192 decisions (152 granted, 36 invalidated and 4 refused) were made which represented a decrease of 19.6% as against 2023. (2023 had an increase of 91.2% in the number of decisions made as against 2022). 149 inspections of 140 premises were carried out under the annual licensing programme.

## Primary School Programme

As part of its community fire safety programme Donegal Fire Service delivers the Primary Schools Programme (PSP) each year to 3rd year classes in the County's primary schools. The PSP was delivered to 80 schools during the 2023 / 2024 academic year.

## Major Emergency Management

Donegal County Council continues to work with its partner Principal Response Agencies and with other statutory and voluntary agencies, in major emergency related activities through the North West Regional Working and Steering Groups for Major Emergency Management.

## Civil Defence

Donegal Civil Defence, a volunteer-based organisation, continues to support the Principal Response Agencies while also assisting where feasible, the local communities in non-emergency activities. The operational services, delivered through the Civil Defence Officer (CDO) of the Donegal Local Authority was provided by 55 volunteers.

| Community Engagements                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No. of Tasking's                                                           | Volunteer Man Hours |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Assistance provided to the Irish Blood Transfusion Services with administration and social spacing at the blood donor clinics in Killybegs, Ballyshannon, Dungloe, Ballybofey, Buncrana, Donegal Town and Letterkenny | <b>20</b>                                                                  | <b>486</b>          |
| Provision of transport for patients to GP appointments                                                                                                                                                                | <b>1</b>                                                                   | <b>7</b>            |
| Patient Transfers to Sligo, and Galway Hospitals - Cardiology interventions                                                                                                                                           | <b>3</b>                                                                   | <b>32</b>           |
| Supported Agencies                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Health Service Executive, Irish Blood Transfusion Board, MS Society, ALONE |                     |



### Major Emergency Management

As part of the MEM structure, Civil Defence continues to support the Principal Response Agencies (PRAs) when the need arises. The Civil Defence Officer is a member of the SWAT team. During 2024 the Civil Defence Auxiliary Fire Services Crews and Flood Response units assisted the Donegal Fire Service with the filling and deployment of sandbags along residential and business premises in Donegal Town, Lifford and Stranorlar in advance of Storms Emma, Isha, Jocyln, Bert, and Darragh.

2024 provided an opportunity for Donegal Local Authority to test the capabilities of their services, should a Major Emergency occur. Civil Defence participated in Exercise Kestrel alongside the PRA's of HSE, LA and An Garda Siochana which was held in Jacksons Hotel, Ballybofey on 24 September.

### Missing Person Searches:

Throughout 2024, Civil Defence assisted An Garda Siochana with 3 missing person searches;

- o Civil Defence Kayak Unit, Boat Unit, Drone Team, Land Search team and Communications support were deployed to assist across these search events. Civil Defence work closely with organizations including Irish Coastguard, An Garda Siochana and Donegal Mountain Rescue during these incident responses.

### Avian Influenza Training

The Department of Agriculture held its annual Avian Influenza workshops in Sligo on Monday 2nd December. Donegal Civil Defence water rescue unit were in attendance and made themselves available to assist the Department of Agriculture personnel in the event of an Avian Influenza outbreak in their own county.

## Non-Emergency Community Support

- o Civil Defence assisted local communities with ambulance and medical cover at 39 non-emergency events including numerous sporting events, festivals, the 550th Donegal Town Celebrations, St. Bernadette Relics Visitation to Letterkenny and the Black Preceptory Parade in Raphoe. Over the course of these events, volunteers provided 1240 volunteer manhours supporting their communities.
- o Civil Defence in partnership with the FAI Donegal Soccer League, delivered their Cardiac First Responder (CFR) and Defibrillator Programme to 4 football clubs, to have them in a state of preparedness to use their Defibrillators in the various clubhouses around the district, should the need arise. CPR Training was also delivered to members of Naomh Colmcille, Sean MacCumhaills and Convoy GAA Clubs as part of the Irish Heart Foundation, Save a Life campaign, which raises awareness of the importance of good CPR in the chain of survival for persons suffering a heart attack in the community.

## Civil Defence Officers Association Conference

The 3-day National Civil Defence Officers Association Conference was held in the Kilkenny Hotel, Kilkenny City on 6th, 7th and 8th November. In attendance was, 226 delegates, including senior instructors from Donegal Civil Defence who heard presentations delivered by Mr. James McConnell, about the “Effects of Dementia on all ages”. Mr. David Dunne, Irish Rail spoke on the Safety at Unattended Level Crossings”, Ms. Margo Noonan, spoke on Closing the Loop: A structured pathway supporting front line staff in receipt of disclosures of sexual violence”, Mr. Steve Wood, Managing Director, 3S Group Limited delivered an excellent presentation on “Search systems evolution and into the future” as did Ms. Marguerite Ryan who spoke on Addressing Assumptions in Search “A Parents Perspective of Neurodiversity”. Over the course of the event, 33 traders exhibited their latest equipment.

## Additional Staff

Departmental sanction was approved by the LGMA on 17th February 2021 to approve the appointment of assistant Civil Defence Officers to counties that required same. The Local Authority made application to the Department of Defence for funding of the position on a 70/30 basis and to the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage for approval to fill such a post. The vacant Assistant Civil Defence Officer position was filled on 25th November 2024.



Donegal Civil Defence Volunteers

## Civil Defence Training

| Training Activities                                                                                                                                   | No. of Tasking's |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Weekly Auxiliary Fire Fighting (Flood Response and Wild Land Fire training)                                                                           | <b>16</b>        |
| Emergency First Responder Medical (EFR) Training                                                                                                      | <b>7</b>         |
| Refresher Emergency First Responder Training continued monthly for certified EFR's.                                                                   | <b>16</b>        |
| Swift Water and Life Jacket Competency refresher training was delivered                                                                               | <b>8</b>         |
| Induction training was delivered to 2 new recruits                                                                                                    | <b>6</b>         |
| Food Safety & You Instructor                                                                                                                          | <b>2</b>         |
| Missing Person Search Instructor                                                                                                                      | <b>2</b>         |
| Emergency services open days (Dungloe, Letterkenny, Buncrana)                                                                                         | <b>8</b>         |
| Radio Communications L1, Introductory Training and L2 - Network Operator                                                                              | <b>6</b>         |
| Fire Marshalling                                                                                                                                      | <b>13</b>        |
| Manual Handling                                                                                                                                       | <b>18</b>        |
| Risk Assessment Training                                                                                                                              | <b>25</b>        |
| Sexual Assault Awareness                                                                                                                              | <b>16</b>        |
| Safetalk – Suicide Awareness                                                                                                                          | <b>18</b>        |
| Driving Assessments                                                                                                                                   | <b>14</b>        |
| The Civil Defence Officer and Assistant Civil Defence Officer attended the Civil Defence College, Civil Defence Branch, Roscrea and received training |                  |
| Funding                                                                                                                                               | Amount           |
| An operational grant of €98,251 as provided by the Department of Defence for the overall running costs of Civil Defence for 2024.                     | <b>€98,251</b>   |
| The Civil Defence Branch secured funding under the Dormant Accounts Fund to purchase a replacement Zodiac Boat complete with engine and trailer.      | <b>€32,450</b>   |
| Income from Non-Community Support Charges                                                                                                             | <b>€3,750</b>    |
| Donations from Community                                                                                                                              | <b>€1,100</b>    |
| Income from sale of disused Civil Defence minibus                                                                                                     | <b>€6,100</b>    |

# Finance

Empowering and Supporting Communities/Enabling Growth/Delivering Services

Annual Revenue Budget  
of over

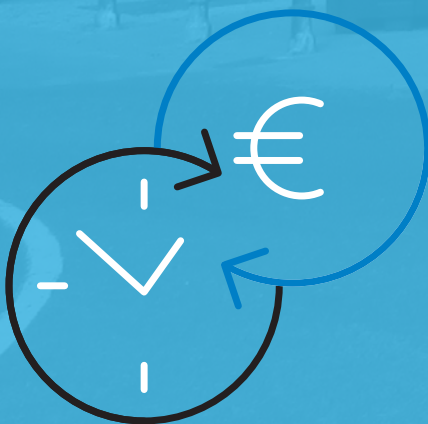


**€185 million**

Over €34m collected in  
commercial rates receipts –  
highest value ever collected



**181 Tender requests on  
eTenders**



**Processing payroll and  
pension for 1,900 staff  
past and present**

**3-year Capital Budget  
2023-2025 of more than**



**€1  
billion**

# 2024 Highlights

## Mainstreaming Climate Action/Building Organisational Capacity

**5,607 commercial rates bills totalling over €38m issued to businesses**



**with a collection rate of 80%**



**€1.6m collected from 328 borrowers repaying Council loans**

**New Property Management Section for centralised recording and mapping of all Council land and properties**



**€14.9m collected from 5,540 rent accounts**



**a collection rate of 85%**



**Over €293m payments processed through the Council's Accounts Payable and Central Invoice Matching Sections**

# Finance

## Donegal County Council Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

### Introduction

I, John G. McLaughlin, Chief Executive (CE) of Donegal County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Director of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended).

I certify that the unaudited financial statements of Donegal County Council for the year ended 31 December 2024, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents fairly the financial position of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The key sources of income for Donegal County Council are as follows:

|                                            | 2024<br>€  | 2023<br>€  |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Goods & Services                           | 51,537,986 | 54,494,313 |
| Grants & Subsidies                         | 96,833,538 | 72,362,986 |
| Contributions from other Local Authorities | 420,470    | 402,347    |
| Rates                                      | 38,554,490 | 38,413,966 |
| Local Property Tax                         | 27,977,270 | 26,379,846 |

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2024 is as follows:

|                                   | 2024<br>€   | 2023<br>€   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Income                            | 215,323,754 | 192,053,458 |
| Expenditure                       | 201,204,534 | 182,207,493 |
| Net Transfers to Capital/Reserves | 12,919,221  | 8,693,966   |
| Exceptional Item                  | -           | -           |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for Year        | 1,199,999   | 1,151,999   |
| Prior Year Adjustment             | -           | -           |
| Opening Revenue Reserve/(Deficit) | (3,743,530) | (4,895,529) |
| Closing Revenue Reserve/(Deficit) | (2,543,531) | (3,743,530) |

The year-on-year increase in income from 2023 to 2024 is €23,270,296. Income from Grants & Subsidies increased by €24,470,552. The increase primarily related to funding from the Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment for Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grants and Power-Up Grants (PUG) paid to Donegal businesses in 2024, as well as additional funding for the Roads and Housing work programmes, and direct funding for Central Management Charges (CMC) from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (income formerly received from Uisce Éireann).

Income from Goods & Services reduced marginally by €2,956,327, reflecting the net effect of additional income from Housing Rents, reduced income from Uisce Éireann, increased employee pension contributions, reduced income from NPPR, and other miscellaneous headings.

The surplus in the draft unaudited accounts for 2024 is €1,199,999. The surplus has the effect of reducing the carried forward revenue deficit to (€2,543,531).

The Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) represents the closing financial position of the council at year-end together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- o Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets
- o Work in progress and preliminary schemes – mainly roads and housing
- o Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- o Current Assets – including Stock, Debtors, Cash at Bank
- o Current and long-term liabilities – mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- o Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets of Donegal County Council, at the end of 2024 total €3,621,074,299 and are as follows:

|                                         | 2024<br>€     | 2023<br>€     |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Fixed Assets                            | 3,481,999,685 | 3,477,946,361 |
| Works in Progress                       | 165,647,367   | 133,829,135   |
| Long Term debtors                       | 40,127,353    | 43,128,540    |
| Current Assets                          | 113,359,852   | 102,127,264   |
| Current Liabilities                     | 68,411,228    | 69,612,081    |
| Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)       | 44,948,624    | 32,515,183    |
| Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year) | 111,648,730   | 112,068,734   |
| Net Assets/(Liabilities)                | 3,621,074,299 | 3,575,350,485 |

A Statement of Funds Flow was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

### System of Internal Financial Controls

As Chief Executive of Donegal County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Donegal County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Donegal County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

### Financial Control environment

As Chief Executive of Donegal County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- o Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability
- o Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned
- o Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action
- o There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system
- o Procedures for key business processes have been documented
- o There are systems in place to safeguard the assets

### Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As Chief Executive of Donegal County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- o Procedures for key business processes have been documented
- o There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- o There are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority, and
- o There are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

### Procurement Compliance

Donegal County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

## Internal Audit and Audit Committee

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Donegal County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Donegal County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Donegal County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- I. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- II. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- III. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- IV. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- V. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local

authority. I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Donegal County Council.

## Risk and Control Framework

Donegal County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks, and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2024.

Signed



**John G. McLaughlin**  
Chief Executive  
Dated: 29th May 2025

# Governance Statement 2024

## Purpose

The purpose of this governance statement is to provide relevant information on the governance structures and governance arrangements within the local authority including on council, committees, senior management and related areas. It demonstrates our commitment to effective governance, recognises key legislative and good governance requirements and affirms the Council's compliance with the Local Government Code of Governance obligations.

## Good Governance

Fundamentally, good governance in the local government sector and wider public sector is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and government policy obligations. Governance refers to the framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes by which the local authority is directed, controlled and held to account and whereby authority within an organisation is exercised and maintained. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship and leadership, direction and control.

## Good Governance Principles

**CORE PRINCIPLE 1** - Good governance means focusing on the purpose of the authority, on outcomes that deliver sustainable economic, community and wider societal benefits and on implementing a vision for the local authority.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 2** - Good governance means promoting and demonstrating public service values through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 3** - Good governance means members and officials working together to achieve a common purpose within a framework of clearly defined functions and roles.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 4** - Good governance means developing the organisational capacity and the leadership capability and competencies of members and officials to operate effectively and fulfil the purpose of the organization.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 5** - Good governance means taking well-informed and transparent decisions and managing risks and performance.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 6** - Good governance means engaging openly and comprehensively with local people, citizens and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

**CORE PRINCIPLE 7** - Good governance means actively contributing to the furtherance and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by delivering on the priorities and actions within the Climate Action Plan and the provisions of the Climate Act.

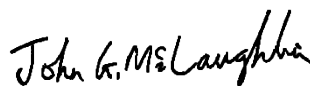


**ClIr Niamh Kennedy**  
Cathaoirleach  
Dated: 29th May 2025

## Our Commitment to Good Governance

As the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive of the council, and on behalf of the elected members, management and staff we confirm that;

1. We have adopted the governance principles as the fundamental bedrock and philosophy on how we operate as a governing body and as an executive.
2. The Local Government Code of Governance has been adopted and the extent to which the Council is in compliance with the Code has been reviewed and assessed.
3. The Statement of Internal Financial Control is submitted by the Chief Executive to the Elected Members and to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee reviews the SIFC and provides an assurance on an annual basis to the Elected Members. Mechanisms are available to the Audit Committee to notify the Elected Members of any issues that arise outside of the normal annual reporting.
4. Compliance with legal and regulatory obligations are acknowledged and adhered to.
5. There is clarity of roles and responsibilities based on the reserved and executive functions and based on committee terms of reference.
6. Codes of Conduct and ethics declarations for members and employees are in place.
7. Procedures are in place for the making of protected disclosures in accordance with section 21(1) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and confirmation that the annual report required under section 22(1) of the Act has been published.
8. The Council and Committees review their own performance on a periodic basis.
9. We have instituted appropriate governance oversight arrangements in respect of subsidiary, associated and related companies.
10. As part of our commitment to effective oversight and accountability, we have developed and continue to enhance our overall assurance framework utilising external and internal assurance sources to ensure good performance as part of our governance culture.



**John G. McLaughlin**  
Chief Executive  
Dated: 29th May 2025

## Management Accounts Division

The Management Accounts Division has primary responsibility for the preparation, management and oversight of the Annual Revenue Budget and the rolling three-year Capital Budget.

The 2024 Revenue Budget was adopted by the Elected Members on the 6th of December 2023, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) and within the period prescribed by the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

The 2024 – 2026 Capital Budget was prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) and was considered by the Elected Members at the Council Meeting held on 6th of December 2023.

The Management Accounts Division is also responsible for preparing and submitting quarterly EU/IMF Financial Returns and other statutory returns on a periodic basis. The Management Accounts Section coordinated Donegal County Council's submission under the Public Spend Code, which was completed by the deadline of 31st May 2024 and is published online.

Amongst other things, the Management Accounts Section also manages the Council's Insurance Book, Loan Book, Procurement Office, recoupment of costs under the terms of the Service Support Agreement with Uisce Éireann, and the many ongoing day-to-day budgetary matters affecting the organisation at large.

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Annual Revenue Budget 2024          | €185,577,941   |
| Three-Year Capital Budget 2023-2025 | €1,022,406,467 |

## Procurement Section

The Procurement Section continues to provide support, training, and guidance to all staff who are involved in the procurement of goods, services, and works across all divisions of the Council. The Procurement Section also plays a key role in the development of procurement solutions that support value for money purchasing. Areas of note in 2024 included: Procurement Office, recoupment of costs under the terms of the Service Support Agreement with Uisce Éireann, and the many ongoing day-to-day budgetary matters affecting the organisation at large.

- o The conclusion of formal staff training and ongoing support to all staff in relation to the new eTenders platform [electronic tendering platform administered by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP)] introduced in May 2023.
- o The rollout of externally-sourced procurement training delivered over four half-day sessions to approximately 40 DCC staff involved in procurement, for the first time since prior to the Covid pandemic.
- o The ongoing administration and support to staff using centralised purchasing systems SupplyGov and Buyerzone.
- o The publication of 181 tender requests by Council staff on eTenders.
- o The publication of 392 Request for Tender (RFT) mini-competitions and Requests for Quotations (RFQ) by Council staff on the SupplyGov portal for Plant Hire and Minor Building & Civil Works categories.
- o The publication of 10 tender requests in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) for high-value procurements.
- o Updating of the Council's Green Public Procurement Strategy and ongoing support to staff in line with new compliance guidelines and updated criteria with support from the OGP and EPA.
- o The completion of the Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Report.

Ongoing maintenance and updating of Donegal County Council Procurement Policy and Procedures to ensure that, irrespective of purchase method, the Council achieves value for money.

## Financial Accounting Division

### Payroll and Timesheet Processing

The Payroll Section and Timesheet Processing Team are responsible for processing payroll and pensions payments to approximately 1,900 staff past and present. This amounted to gross payments of over €87.6m in 2024, with all the associated deductions, both statutory and voluntary.

Donegal County Council's Payroll Section continues to work with 'MyPay' shared services to manage ongoing payroll processes, as well as deal with national issues common to the sector.

During the year the Revenue Commissioners introduced Enhanced Revenue Reporting. A specific project was undertaken by the Payroll Section to prepare for the new reporting requirements.

### Accounts Payable and Central Invoice Matching

The Accounts Payable (AP) and Central Invoice Matching (CIM) sections were responsible for the processing of payments totalling over €293m in 2024, accounting for approximately 71,000 individual transactions. The AP & CIM sections also manage all the indirect taxes: Vat, Intra-Community Acquisitions, Relevant Contracts Tax, Professional Services Withholding Tax, and Income Tax, together with all the associated regulatory and compliance requirements.

The section processes Defective Concrete Blocks Grant payments. These payment runs are increasing substantially, both in number and value as the work area expands.

As part of the Revenues commitment to eServices, further reporting requirements were digitised. This required substantial technical and process adjustments.

### Financial Accounting

Financial Accounting has primary responsibility for the following:

- o Producing the Annual Financial Statements
- o Managing the annual audit process
- o Reporting on General Government Balances (GGB) and submitting quarterly department returns
- o Tax returns
- o Providing financial/systems guidance to other Council sections
- o Accounting changes (introducing new procedures in response to accounting changes)

### Financial Management Systems

The FMS Section is responsible for:

- o Financial Management System maintenance (technical upgrades)
- o Ongoing interface maintenance (Giant Leap, DCB, AnPost Dog Licencing, etc.)
- o Providing advice to other sections in respect of accounting and system requirements relating to new IT Systems
- o During the year, the Section helped with the implementation of:
  - ePlan in collaboration with the Planning Section
  - ICOB & Power-Up Grants in collaboration with Income Collection
  - Rates Revaluation in collaboration with Income Collection
  - Commenced planning for the introduction of online payments
  - Non-Resident Landlord Withholding Tax in collaboration with AP
  - Commenced work on the Business Continuity Plan
  - Upgraded all the Credit card machines

### Bank & Treasury Management

The Financial Accounts section manages the Council's bank accounts, cash-flow, and investments with a view to ensuring ongoing and adequate financial resources are available for the Council's activities. During the year, the section carried out ongoing reviews of investment options and has successfully allocated its resources to achieve the highest rate of return possible, while simultaneously ensuring that the Council's assets are prudently safeguarded in recognition of, amongst other things, the Bank Resolution and Recovery Directive.

## Income Collection Unit

### Commercial Rates

In 2024, 5,607 Commercial Rates bills totalling €38,554,490 issued to businesses in County Donegal. Bills which issued in 2024 were based on new valuation figures as updated by Tailte Éireann under The National Revaluation Programme.

The percentage collection rates for Commercial Rates in 2024 was 80%, a two-percentage point increase on 2023. While inflation has levelled off in recent years, businesses still face significant challenges, most notably labour challenges (both in terms of increased cost and a challenging jobs' market), increased energy costs, uncertainties in the global economy, and the challenges of operating geographically in a border county.

Despite these challenges, €34,656,183 was collected from business customers in 2024. This collection figure is the highest value of Commercial Rates receipts ever achieved in County Donegal.

#### *Small Business Grant (Early Payment Incentive Credit)*

In 2015, the Elected Members adopted a Small Business Grant (Early Payment Incentive Credit) which provides a grant, subject to certain terms and conditions, to customers who discharge their Commercial Rates liability in full and have no arrears on their Commercial Rates account on the 31st of October. The scheme has been repeated each year since 2015.

The grant is applied by means of a credit to the customer's account to help offset the following year's bill. In 2024, the scheme provided a grant at a rate of 7.5% of the 2024 Commercial Rates bill, subject to a maximum grant of €375, to customers who had no arrears on their account on the 31st of October 2024. 2,167 customers (approximately half of all customers) availed of the Scheme in 2024, at a total cost to the Council of approximately €466k.

#### *Increased Cost of Business/Power Up Grants 2024*

As a direct response to challenging economic conditions for businesses, the Department of Trade, Enterprise & Employment introduced the Increased Cost of Business Grant in early 2024. This was subsequently followed up by the Power-Up Grant scheme. These grant schemes provided valuable financial support and were targeted towards small to medium size rateable businesses. Both schemes were administered on a national basis by local authorities. Donegal County Council paid a total of €13.1m in these grants to 4,048 businesses in the County.

### Housing Rents

€14.9m was collected from approximately 5,540 rent accounts in 2024. This represents a collection performance rate of 85%.

### Housing Loans

€1.6m was collected in 2024 from 328 borrowers who are repaying Council loans. Several options are available to borrowers who are experiencing financial difficulties in maintaining their loan repayments, and in this regard the Council is guided by the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP).

The Council continues to support home ownership by facilitating mortgage loans for tenants purchasing council houses and those seeking to purchase homes on the open market. The Local Authority Home Loan is a government-backed mortgage facility, targeted specifically at first time buyers, which can be used to purchase a new or second-hand property or for self-build.

The Council also continues to progress the Shared Ownership Restructuring Scheme, which allows borrowers to restructure their existing Shared Ownership Loans.

### Non-Principal Private Residence (NPPR) Charge

€251k was collected in 2024 from property owners who were liable for arrears of the Non-Principal Private Residence (NPPR) charge. While this charge ceased in 2013, there remained an obligation to discharge any outstanding arrears and penalties prior to the liable property being sold or transferred. A certificate of discharge or exemption was required to complete the sale or transfer of relevant property. The NPPR Section continued to be a busy section of the Income Collection Unit during 2024. The phased expiry of the NPPR charge commenced in June 2021. Liability to the charge expires in full after 31st March 2025.

## The Property Management Section

The Property Management Department was set up with a remit to include the centralised recording and mapping of all Council land and properties. An IT system was introduced by the Department to record all land and properties in the ownership of Donegal County Council. This includes the recording of leases, licences, short-term lettings, rights-of-way, wayleaves, etc.

Significant progress has been achieved in this project to date although a considerable volume of historical assets remaining to be recorded. As this programme of work progresses, the proficiency of the system will improve and increasingly comprehensive reports and detailed maps of Council owned land and properties in the County will become available.

The Property Management Team has responsibility for:

- o Provision of guidance and support with respect to property disposals and acquisition, advice with respect to the proactive prevention of claims for adverse possession, and so on.
- o Long-term leases of property, licence agreements, 11-month agistment leases and short-term letting agreements.
- o Ongoing liaison with the Property Registration Authority, Council Solicitors, and third-party legal representatives
- o Maintaining the property management database

# Roads & Transportation

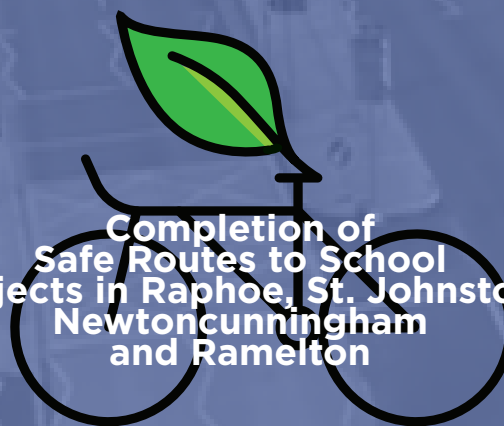
Empowering and Supporting Communities/Enabling Growth/Delivering Services

**€1.3m**  
invested in the rehabilitation,  
strengthening and replacement  
works on 22 bridges on  
Regional and Local roads

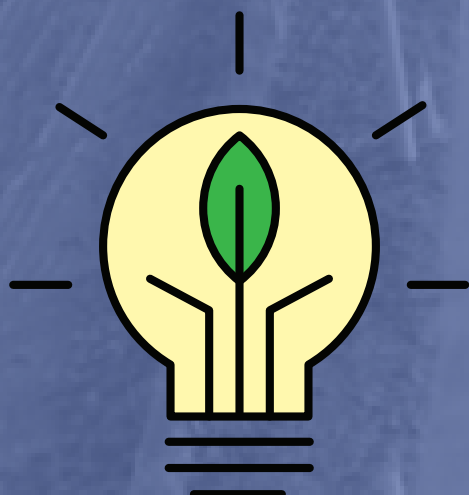


and works on Coyle's Bridge  
and Harry Blaney Bridge

Completion of  
Safe Routes to School  
Projects in Raphoe, St. Johnston,  
Newtoncunningham  
and Ramelton

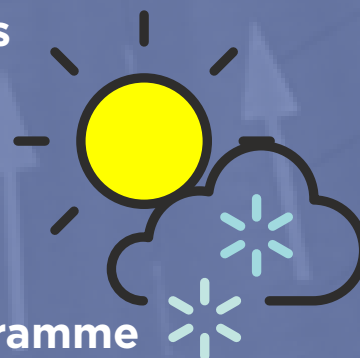


Official opening of the An Clochan Liath  
to Glenties Project which saw €100M  
invested over 10 years



At year end 83% of the  
council's 19,700 public  
lights have been upgraded  
to LEDs realising a further  
saving of 8% in energy  
usage

11,580 tonnes  
of salt used  
in the  
treatment of  
roads as part  
of our winter  
service programme



# 2024 Highlights

## Mainstreaming Climate Action/Building Organisational Capacity



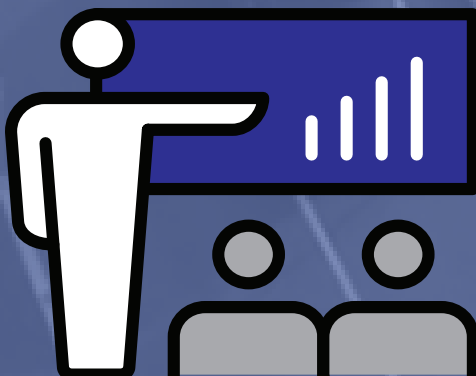
**Completion of the Northwest Greenway Network representing an investment of over €16M**

**Official opening of the €25m Greencastle Harbour Breakwater Project**



**386km of our Regional and Local road network improved under our Restoration Improvement and Maintenance programmes**

**2,475 second-level students attended the 2024 Road Safety Road Show bringing the total attendance since its inception in 2007 to over 50,000**



**Government approval of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project Donegal Preliminary Business Case**

# Roads Services

## Donegal National Roads Office

### TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project Donegal (PRIPD)

Donegal County Council achieved government approval in July 2024 for the TEN-T PRIPD Preliminary Business Case. In order to achieve this milestone the project was the first road project in the country to successfully advance through new structured review process completed by the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform and the Department of Transport. All three sections of the project, the N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Bypass, the N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham, including the Swilly Bridge, Project, and the N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 Link Project, will now advance together through the planning consent stage which will see the publication of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Compulsory Purchase Order, currently programmed for Quarter 2 2025.

### N56 An Clochan Liath to Glenties Project

Minister Jack Chambers TD along with the Leas-Cathaoirleach Cllr. Gerry McMonagle performed the official opening of the N56 An Clochan Liath to Glenties project in April 2024. The project represented an investment of €100M delivered in phases over 10 years and provided a significantly improved road over the 26km between the towns as well as a new combined cycleway and footway along the route. The final section of the project between Glenties and Kilraine Junction commenced on site in 2024.



Opening of the N56 An Clochan Liath to Glenties Project

### N15 McGrory's Brae Road Improvement Scheme

The N15 McGrory's Brae Road Improvement Scheme was completed in 2024. The project provided improved alignment and the addition of hard shoulders and widened verges. It will improve the function and operation of the road for all road users, in particular vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.



N15 McGrory's Brae Road Improvement Scheme

## Bridge Maintenance Program 2024

During 2024 the Donegal NRO Regional Bridges Team managed the inspection and completion of routine maintenance works to all National Road bridges in the county.

The contract also allowed for undertaking reactive maintenance works such as repairs following vehicle impact damage to parapet walls, expansion joint replacement and repairs following flood events.



## Central Technical Services Division

### Regional and Local Road Bridge Maintenance

In 2024, Donegal County Council secured €911,138 for the rehabilitation and strengthening/replacement works on 22 bridges as well as funding allocations for the assessment and/or design of 6 composite or large-scale structures.

€388,500 specific grant funding was expended on construction work at Coyle's/Beggars Bridge and for the structural assessment of Harry Blaney Bridge.

### Road Safety

The Road Safety team completed the assessment and design of many low-cost accident schemes to improve road safety through engineering measures. The works, funded by the Department of Transport, were completed by either specialist contractor or by the Roads Area teams.

Amended Speed Limit Bye-Law were approved at the Plenary Council Meeting in September 2024. These changes, which will be implemented in 2025, will see the default speed limit on the majority of rural local roads reduce to 60km/h, confirm a speed limit of 30km/h in housing estates taken in charge since 2017 and amend the speed limit at three national route locations. Work also commenced on the drafting of urban speed limit bye-laws and these will be progressed to public consultation in 2025.

The Road Safety team continues to provide support on behalf of the Council to the Donegal Road Safety Working Group (DRSWG). The Road Safe Road Show was held in October 2024 and was well received by the 2,475 students who attended over the 2 shows. This brings the total number of students who have attended this award-winning show since its inception in 2007 to 50,475.



Road Safe Road Show 2024



### Safe Routes to School Projects

2024 saw the completion of four Safe Routes to School Projects at St. Eunan's NS in Raphoe, St. Baithin's NS in St. Johnston, Scoil Mhuire in Ramelton and Scoil Colmcille in Newtoncunningham. In order for these projects to be delivered successfully they require close collaboration between An Taisce's Green Schools team, the National Transport Authority, the Council's Active Travel team and the respective school communities. Design work progressed on a number of other projects in Creeslough, Carndonagh and Donegal Town.



## SEUPB Northwest Greenway

Minister Jack Chambers attended the official opening of the Lifford to Castlefinn and Muff to Three Trees sections of the Northwest Greenway Network in 2024. These sections in addition to the previously completed Muff Greenway saw the investment of over €16M in these greenways in the county. This project will act as a catalyst for other greenways projects that are being developed by the Council using Transport Infrastructure Ireland funding.



Opening of Muff to Three Trees Greenway

## Active Travel

The Donegal Town One-Way system was completed in 2024 which saw the delivery of much improved active travel infrastructure in the town. The Roads Area team and Active Travel team collaborated on the delivery of the Convent Road Active Travel project in Letterkenny that saw the improvement of walking and cycling infrastructure adjacent to a number of schools in the area, augmenting previous improvements delivered as part of the Cathedral One-Way system. Further large-scale active travel projects were developed in 2024 in the town in line with the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan adopted in 2024. These will be further progressed through planning and implementation in 2025.

## Public Lighting

By year-end the Council's Public Lighting inventory had increased to 19,700 lights overall (263 new lights incorporated into the Council's stock since December 2023). Of these 16,398 are LED lights, representing 83.2% of the total inventory. Despite the increasing public lighting stock, the Council's LED upgrade programme has delivered a further reduction in its annual energy usage of 360,286kWh, equating to approximately 8% reduction in energy use for public lighting in 2024.

## Piers and Harbours

The Brexit Adjustment Local Authority Marine Infrastructure (BALAMI) funded piers and harbours programme commenced in Q1 2022 with 25 projects completed by the end of 2024 through a combination of BALAMI, Department for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Donegal County Council funding. Minister Charlie McConalogue officially opened the Greencastle Harbour Breakwater project in May 2024 which was the largest project delivered under the BALAMI programme in the country.



Opening of Greencastle Breakwater

## General Stores and Salt Management

The Stores team played its role in the procurement and management of stock for council use including storage and delivery of 5.05 million litres of bitumen in support of the road surfacing programme. 11,580 tonne of salt was used in the Council's 2023/2024 winter service. This salt stock was managed by the Machinery Yard team including collating usage/need data through the TII National Salt Management System and arranging necessary salt collection and distribution to the depots to meet the demand.

## Roads Area Services

### Municipal District Road Works Programme

Our Surface Dressing programme resurfaced 219km of local and regional roads in 2024 with the help of a Restoration Maintenance grant of €5.04M from the Department of Transport. An additional 167km of local and regional roads were strengthened and resurfaced utilising €21.5M in funding from the Department of Transport under the Restoration Improvement programme.

Grant funding of €1.2M was provided by the Department of Transport in 2024 for works to alleviate road drainage problems either through new or remedial works, enabling 19 separate drainage improvement projects across the county to be carried out.

Works to improve the climate resilience of our road network were completed in 14 locations to the value of €930k. This included embankment stabilisation in Glentogher and the installation of rock armour as coastal protection along the Regional road at Craigmaddyroe.



Surface Dressing in Trentagh, Letterkenny

### Community Improvement Schemes

Introduced to provide more flexibility in delivering road improvements and enabling the local Community to contribute, this enabled the local Communities to assist with the improvement of 23 road schemes together with the Donegal County Council to the value of €891,000.



Community Improvement Scheme

## Winter Service

Expenditure in 2024 on Winter Maintenance was of the order of €1.4m, straddling the end of the 23/24 season and the start of the 24/25 season. Significant cold snaps in November and December ensured that the service was tested to its limits.

## Parks and Biodiversity

In 2024 the Council spent €1.03m maintaining public parks and open spaces in the county, in Letterkenny and Buncrana as well as Moville Green, Barrack Hill in Carndonagh, and the Bundoran Shorefront.

Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed along public roads continues to present an issue, and over 1000 individual roadside infestations of knotweed are being treated annually.

Area Teams also delivered a number of biodiversity projects across the county in consultation with local communities and the Council's Biodiversity Officer.

## Severe Weather Response

The Area Roads teams assisted with the response to a number of severe weather events during 2024. Storm Isha and Storm Jocelyn brought Red and Orange level winds in January which saw widespread disruption to the road network with fallen trees as did Storm Darragh in December. Storm Bert saw a number of flooding incidents across the county including a significant flood event in Killybegs where the Roads Service assisted the Emergency Services in responding to the impacts of the event.

The Council continues to use MapAlerter to inform the public of a wide range of relevant updates including winter service notifications, travel disruption due to road works, traffic incidents or storm events. This platform provides free text and email alerts to the public and is proving to be very popular with an increasing number of subscribers.

## Pay and Display Car Parking

The Council operates a Pay & Display Car Parking services in a number of towns in the county. The income from this service helped fund staffing and other fixed costs associated with the pay parking operation and also helped fund other works within the towns in which the monies were collected.

## Local Improvement Schemes

In 2024 Donegal County Council received €1.6m from The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), enabling the improvement of 50 private roads which service the local community. The programme remains a popular programme within the Municipal Districts and with the public.

## Road Management Office

Donegal County Council, in conjunction with Cork County Council, are responsible for managing the Road Management Office (RMO). The office is now in operation for 10 years and provides local authorities with cost effective and high quality services that support government strategy and policy goals, their objectives and obligations through constant development and implementation of knowledge based systems and procedures. The office has recently received approval for its Statement of Strategy 2025-2030. This recognises the successful delivery of roads asset management and licensing services it provides and sets out a strategy for it to further develop as a high performing enabler of both asset management and the licensing of roadworks.

During 2024 the office provided system and support to over 3000 users as they completed works authorised by circa 45,000 road opening licences. It provided support to all local authorities, TII and NTA as they undertake over 7,500 pavement projects, 40,000km of surveys and other road infrastructure works.

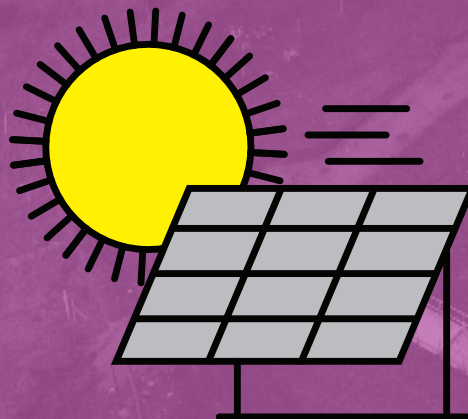
# Water & Environment Services

Empowering and Supporting Communities/Enabling Growth/Delivering Services

**450 Bring Banks at 73 sites for glass and cans collection**



**and extended services at 6 Council-owned recycling centres**



**40Kwh and 20Kwh Solar PV systems installed at Public Service Centres**



**€101,503 secured under the Anti Dumping Initiative**



**6,000 National Food Waste starter packs, 11 tonnes of compost and 400 kitchen caddies distributed.**



**Retained 12 Blue Flag and 2 Marina Blue Flag awards. 15 wheelchair-accessible beaches, including Ireland's first 'Age Friendly Beach'**

# 2024 Highlights

## Mainstreaming Climate Action/Building Organisational Capacity



800 community clean-ups supported. 2,000 copies of the household recycling pocket guide distributed

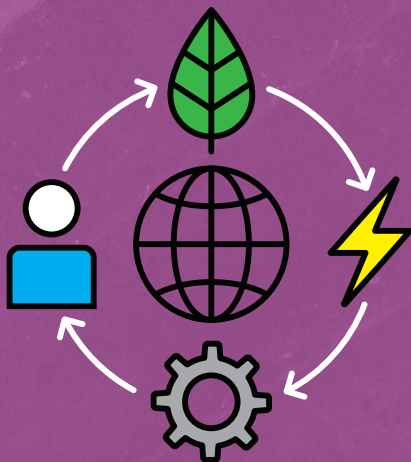


Over €1m awarded to community groups

### 3 National Awards for Strategic Accessibility Initiatives



Over 15 tonnes of bulky goods and 258 mattresses collected. 1,296 tonnes of farm plastic film



39 tonnes of paint collected, with 1 tonne reused in community projects



1,352 environmental complaints investigated

# Water Services

## Rural Water

Donegal County Council oversees Group Water Schemes (GWS) and Private Water Supplies, reporting compliance to the EPA. In 2024, they monitored 110 samples across 56 supplies. The DHLGH funds rural water projects, with Donegal receiving €6.1m for 12 projects in 2024. The Council also manages subsidy schemes for GWSs, Well Grants, lead pipe remediation, and wastewater treatment grants. In 2024, Donegal County Council paid 36 GWSs subsidies and 31 Well Grants. The Rural Water team increased the number of taken-in-charge GWSs to 50 since 2019.



## Pollution Control

The Council's Central Laboratory undertakes a range of monitoring programmes aimed at environmental protection and pollution control in the areas of Water, Air, and Noise, including:

- o 51 trade effluent samples to sewers and 31 inspections of licensed discharges to waters.
- o 828 river and lake samples collected and 62 for Water Framework Directive investigations.
- o 77 septic tank inspections and 30 follow-up verifications.
- o Bathing water monitoring at Blue Flag and Green Coast beaches.
- o 94 farm inspections under the National Agricultural Inspection Plan.
- o Enforcement of air pollution regulations.
- o Investigated 1,352 environmental complaints, including 24 samples.

Public engagement activities included:

- o Knowledge transfer meetings with farmers.
- o Training for sheep farmers.
- o Hosting visits and meetings with students and state agencies.
- o Assisting Young Scientist student groups.
- o Science week presentations to primary schools.

Donegal County Council technical staff have also taken part in a national working group looking at the disposal of spent sheep dip.





## Wastewater Schemes

Donegal County Council operates most wastewater treatment plants under the Master Cooperation Agreement with Uisce Éireann, collecting and testing 788 wastewater samples and 695 ambient samples in 2024.

## Air Quality Management

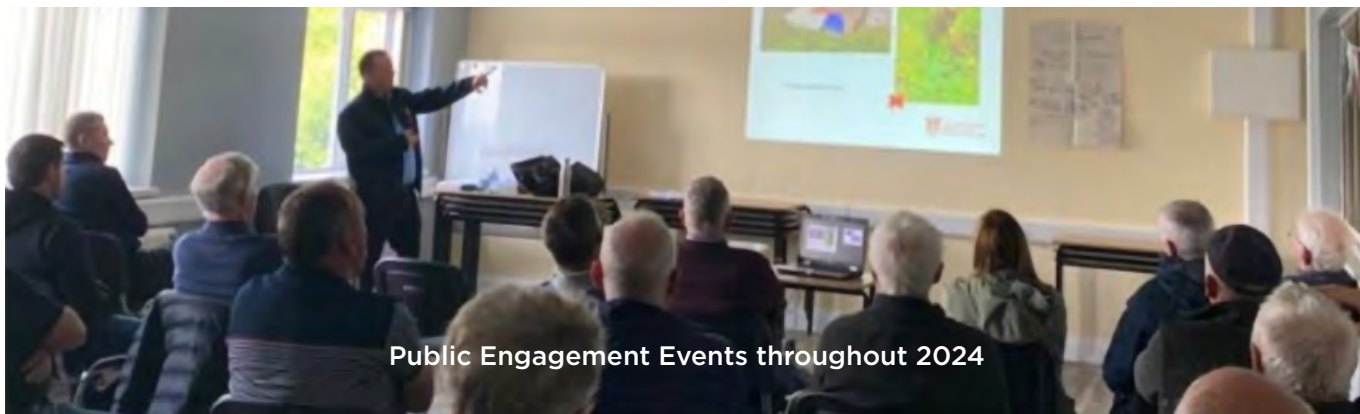
Donegal County Council also monitors air quality, focusing on solid fuel regulations, with air quality monitors in Letterkenny and Buncrana showing varying results for PM10 and PM2.5. The Department of Environment, Climate and Communications tested coal products, finding many exceeded sulfur limits. Donegal County Council installed Clarity Air Quality Sensors to identify non-compliant fuel burning areas.

## Drinking Water Quality

For drinking water, the EPA supervises public supplies, while the Council oversees private supplies, reporting compliance annually. In 2024, 110 samples were taken across 56 supplies. The EPA instructed local authorities to identify additional small private supplies in 2025.

## Landfills

The Council has remediated all six licensed landfill facilities and continues to maintain pollution control infrastructure. Funding is sought for an Integrated Constructed Wetland at Ballynacarrick Landfill Site. Historic landfill sites are progressing through the Environmental Risk Assessment and Certification Process, with three applications submitted to the EPA for Carrick, Dunkineely, and Dungloe.



# Environment Services

## Big Donegal Clean Up 2024

Environment staff collaborate with Tidy Towns and Community Groups to prevent litter and coordinate clean-ups. Over 5,600 volunteers help protect the environment, boosting tourism and economic development. Donegal County Council supported over 800 community clean-ups in 2024.



Launch of the Big Donegal Clean Up 2024

## Anti-Dumping Initiative

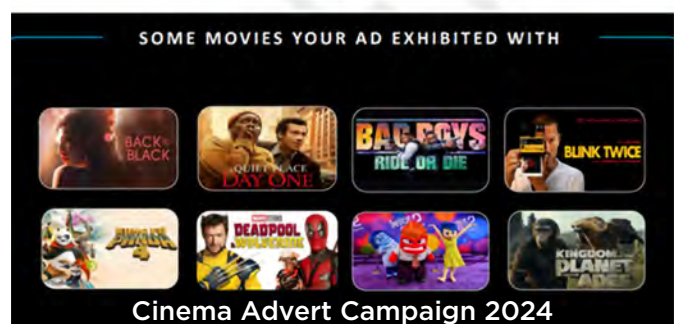
In 2024, the Donegal County Council Environment section secured over €100,000 under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI) for various projects across Donegal. These projects included reduced-price bulky waste recycling events, support for a social enterprise furniture reuse scheme, resources for community groups, a cinema advert campaign, and clean-ups throughout the county. The Environment team collaborated closely with individuals and groups to ensure the successful delivery of these ADI projects, making 2024 another highly successful year for environmental initiatives in Donegal.

## Cinema Advert Campaign

In 2024, Donegal's Environment team ran a countywide cinema campaign to promote responsible waste disposal, supported by the Council's communications team.

## Food Waste Recycling Week

During Food Waste Recycling Week in June 2024, Donegal County Council distributed 400 kitchen caddy starter packs and 11 tonnes of compost.



Recycling Events during 2024



Environment personnel participating in Multi Agency Vehicle Check points in Donegal.

### Multi Agency Work

In 2024, Waste Enforcement personnel collaborated with An Garda Síochána and other agencies during inspections and checkpoints, strengthening inter-agency relations and tackling illegal activity.

### Irish Farm Film Producers Group (IFFPG) Farm Plastic Collection days

In 2024, Donegal County Council, in collaboration with IFFPG, collected 1,296 tonnes of farm plastic in Donegal, including silage wrap, fertiliser bags, drums, netting, and twine, marking a 130-tonne increase.

### Donegal County Council (Presentation of Kerbside for Collection) Bye-laws

Donegal County Council's new kerbside waste presentation bye-laws, which came into effect on the 31st December, 2024. Key provisions include:

1. Applicable to household and commercial waste.
2. Waste producers must:
  - o Use a waste collection service,
  - o Share bins, or
  - o Bring waste to an authorized facility.
3. Waste must be segregated and bins should not obstruct roads or footpaths.
4. Landlords of short-term rentals must ensure proper waste collection.
5. Apartments and multi-user dwellings must have adequate waste segregation and storage arrangements.



IFFPG collection day in Ballyshannon

### Recycling

Donegal has six recycling centres operated by Bryson Recycling Ltd, located in Carndonagh, Dungloe, Milford, Laghey, Letterkenny, and Stranorlar. These centres accept various waste items, including household waste, paper, cardboard, plastics, garden waste, tyres, and paint. In 2024, a half-price bulky goods project funded by the Anti-Dumping Initiative collected 258 mattresses and other bulky items. There are also over 450 Bring Banks at 73 sites for glass and cans collection, and textile collection points provided by Donegal County Council.

## Paint Reuse/Recycling

The Paint Reuse service that was originally piloted at one recycling centre in 2022 has been rolled out to all six recycling centres, with 39 tonnes of paint collected in 2024 sent to Enva for recycling, and one tonne of paint made available to community groups for local projects

## Household Recycling Pocket Guide/Doorstep work

In 2024, Donegal County Council reprinted 2,000 copies of their household recycling pocket guide to promote sustainable waste management. In September, Environment staff distributed guides to over 240 households, engaging with the public to provide information and gather feedback. The guide includes details on waste segregation, recycling, food waste receptacles, waste prevention, kerbside collection, bring banks, recycling centres, WEEE disposal, home composting, end-of-life vehicle disposal, and reporting illegal waste activities. It also provides links to useful websites like mywaste.ie, repairmystuff.ie, and stopfoodwaste.ie.



## Environmental Education and Awareness

Donegal County Council ran a comprehensive awareness programme targeting schools, households, businesses, and community groups through radio, digital ads, social media, press releases, and interviews. They supported national campaigns like 'Stop Food Waste' and WEEE Ireland collection days, organizing four collection events in Buncrana, Killybegs, Falcarragh, and Carrigart.

## EPA National Report on Enforcement Performance by Local Authorities

In 2024, the EPA's Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Performance Report rated Donegal County Council's waste enforcement performance for 2023 as "Strong," based on the National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) framework.

## Flood Relief Schemes

The Donegal County Council Flood Relief Schemes (FRS) Unit are project managing the development of schemes in 9 locations: Burnfoot, Castlefinn, Glenties, Na Dúnaibh, Ballybofey and Stranorlar, Buncrana and Luddan, Ramelton, Donegal Town and Letterkenny.

### Donegal Bundle 1 FRS

The Engineering and Environmental Consultants with responsibility for Burnfoot, Castlefinn, Glenties and Na Dúnaibh, completed Stage I on both Burnfoot and Castlefinn during 2024 and have substantially completed Stage I for Na Dúnaibh. A pilot study was sanctioned for Glenties with the intention of exploring Nature-based Solutions in the upstream catchment. A workshop on the proposals was held in March and received very positive engagement from a wide range of State and semi-State bodies including, LAWPRO, Coillte, Department of Agriculture, National Parks and Wildlife Service, EPA and more, as well as internal Donegal County Council stakeholders. Land discussions required in advance of planning submissions for both Castlefinn and Burnfoot were ongoing through 2024 with drawings and documents issued to relevant landowners. It is expected that planning submissions will be made for Burnfoot and Castlefinn in the spring 2025 and that Na Dúnaibh will follow later in the year.



### *Donegal Bundle 2 FRS*

The schemes in the Donegal bundle 2 include Buncrana, Ballybofey and Stranorlar, and Ramelton. Intricacies associated with hydraulic modelling have required more time than expected on both Buncrana and Ballybofey and Stranorlar schemes but the hydraulic modelling stage of all three schemes was substantially completed in 2024. Damages assessment for areas at risk of flooding commenced in Ramelton and will commence for Ballybofey/Stranorlar and Buncrana in 2025. The options appraisal for all scheme in the bundle will be progressed to identify the preferred flood relief measures for each town in 2025.

The FRS Unit continued to support the OPW on their delivery of Lifford and Kerrykeel FRS during 2024. The Unit has led liaison efforts between adjacent projects such as the Riverine Community Park and Ten-T within Donegal County Council and also driven coordination with colleagues across the border working on the A5 Western Transport Corridor to ensure joined up delivery on all projects. A public consultation event was held for the Lifford FRS in late 2024.

In May 2023, Minister with responsibility for the Office of Public Works, Patrick O'Donovan TD, launched new FRSs for Letterkenny and Donegal Town. The piloting of a new model for data gathering and project scoping commenced on these schemes in 2024.

Following heavy rainfall on top of existing snowfall, Bridge Street in Killybegs suffered damaging floods on 23rd November 2024. In response to this event, OPW and Donegal County Council are proposing advanced works under a pilot scheme to mitigate potential impacts of such an event in the future should it occur prior to implementation of the full flood relief scheme for the town. This work will involve short and medium term measures subject to confirmation that they will not have a detrimental impact elsewhere.

### **Leisure Centres**

Donegal County Council progressed various projects at its four leisure centres and the Buncrana site in 2024. Key updates include:

- o Buncrana Leisure Centre: Planning approved, preliminary design complete, detailed design 50% complete, funding applications ongoing.
- o Ballyshannon Leisure Centre: Energy efficiency measures nearly complete, 30% energy savings expected, additional grant for Hydro Pool.
- o Waterworld: Planning approved for refurbishment, tender issued, air handling unit replacement needed.
- o Aura Leisure Centre, Letterkenny: LED lighting and barriers funded, biomass burner project in progress.
- o Finn Valley Leisure Centre, Stranorlar: Energy efficiency funding received, further measures planned.

Capital maintenance and energy efficiency programs are being developed, requiring significant investment to maintain and improve facilities.

## Beaches

### *Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards*

In 2024, Donegal retained all 12 Blue Flag Awards for beaches and 2 Marina Blue Flags, recognising excellent water quality and environmental management. The awarded beaches include Culdaff, Bundoran, Carrickfinn, Downings, Fintra, Killahoey, Marble Hill, Murvagh, Narin, Portsalon, Rossnowlagh, and Shroove. Greencastle and Rathmullan received Marina Blue Flags. Additionally, Dooey, Magheroarty, Drumnatinney, and Ballyheirnan beaches received Green Coast awards.

### *Smart Ringbuoy Monitoring*

As a pilot project 20 locations were chosen to trial this new technology. When a ringbuoy has been taken out of its housing we are notified through an app on the computer and phone, so we can replace it immediately. The smart ringbuoy units have been in place since June of 2024 and since then we have had no ringbuoys taken or used.

### *Culdaff Boardwalk*

The boardwalk was badly damaged during one of the recent winter storms. Culdaff is a very popular Blue Flag beach and replacing both boardwalks completely to allow access was greatly welcomed by locals and visitors.

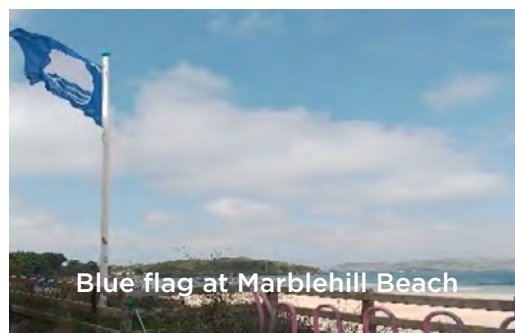
### *Blue Flag Beach Restrictions for Dog Owners*

In 2024 the rules restricting access for dogs, other than assistance dogs, to blue-flag beaches or in the blue-flag area if it is part of a larger beach continued. The rule applies during the Bathing Season (1st June to 15th of Sept) only and is intended to maintain Health and Safety for beach goers and bathers alike. Site specific signage was installed outlining the new byelaw at all the beaches included in the byelaws. When the Lifeguards were on duty they advised dog owners of the new byelaws. To date there has been a welcomed adherence to the new byelaws.

### *Water Safety*

Beach Lifeguards were in place from 1st June 2024 on Bundoran and Rossnowlagh beaches between 11am and 7pm. Lifeguards were in place at weekends in June and for all of July and August on beaches at Murvagh, Fintra, Portnoo/Narin, Carrickfinn, Killahoey, Marblehill, Downings, Portsalon, Rathmullan, Culdaff and Stroove. Lifeguards were on duty on these beaches from 12 noon to 6:30pm.

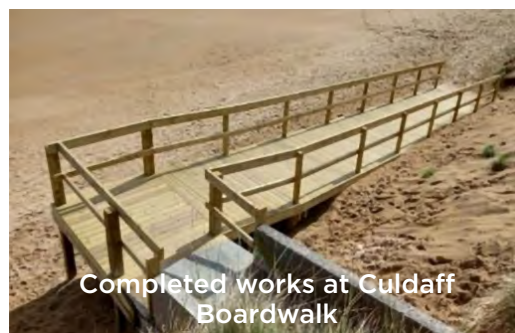
The total number of accidents/incidents reports recorded for the 2024 season was 56, well down from last season. The total number of rescue reports received was 5, half of that for last season. Just 1 missing child situation was reported this season, again well down from last season. This can be accredited to the lifeguards taking a proactive role in their duties.



Blue flag at Marblehill Beach



Sensor fitted inside the ringbuoy housing



Completed works at Culdaff Boardwalk



Lifeguards practicing CPR



Raising awareness of Water Safety

### Defibrillators

2024 saw all lifeguard stations being fitted out with a defibrillator meaning that lifeguards were more prepared to deal with all scenarios that may arise during their working day. In the past lifeguards would have had to be aware of the nearest one located to them or wait for emergency services to arrive which greatly reduces the chances of survival for any casualty where a defibrillator is required.

### Water Safety Talks

This year the Beach Lifeguard Supervisor was invited to present public water safety talks to raise awareness of staying safe at the beach and coastal areas and what to do in an emergency situation.

### Beach Wheelchairs

The beach wheelchair was launched at Murvagh beach in June 2024. There is now a total of 15 wheelchair accessible beaches in Donegal including all 12 Blue Flag Beaches. This work is carried out in close collaboration with our Countywide Community Partners.



Raising awareness of Water Safety

### Donegal County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

Donegal County Council adopted its first Climate Action Plan (2024-2029) in February 2024, coordinated by the Climate Action Unit. The plan includes 139 actions under six themes, aiming to enhance climate resilience, energy efficiency, and reduce emissions.

### Decarbonising Zones

Two Decarbonising Zones (DZs) in Carndonagh and An Falcarragh/Gortahork serve as testbeds for innovative projects.

### Community Climate Action Fund

The Community Climate Action Fund awarded €1,069,000 to local projects, supporting low carbon communities and cross-border initiatives.



Launch of Donegal County Council's Inaugural Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029

### Strand 1: Building Low Carbon Communities

20 projects were awarded funding under Strand 1 amounting to €699,000.

### Strand 1a: Shared Island Community Climate Action

5 projects were awarded funding under Strand 1a, amounting to €370,833.00.



Launch of the Community Climate Action Fund



Murvagh: Launch of Beach wheelchair with 'Friends of Murvagh' - May 2024

**Accessibility**

*Accessibility Awards*

Donegal County Council were presented with an award from Age Friendly Ireland in 2024. The award recognised the work carried out by Donegal County Council to insure access to Narin beach for all ages and abilities. It also recognised Donegal County Council's ongoing work to ensure all beaches in the county are accessible to all ages and abilities.

*Accessibility Audits*

Ongoing work identified in Accessibility audits of five blue flag beaches, funded by Donegal County Council's Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme, has been a significant part of the strategy to improve accessibility. They provide a roadmap for short, medium, and long-term actions. These audits serve as a template for identifying and addressing accessibility barriers across all beaches in the county.



LAMA - All Ireland Community and Council Awards  
Most Inclusive Project



#### *Winner of 3 National Awards for Strategic Accessibility Initiatives*

The recognition of this work, acknowledged by three national awards highlights the strategic approach to accessibility championed by Donegal County Council. Funded by the Environment Section, Sláintecare Healthy Communities and Minor Tourism, these initiatives demonstrate the powerful impact of community involvement, resource allocation, and infrastructure improvements in promoting inclusivity. By creating replicable models aligned with county-wide strategies, Donegal County Council demonstrates its commitment to improving accessibility and advancing broader strategic goals for a more inclusive community.

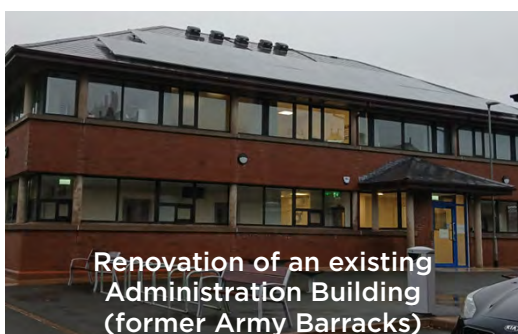
The 3 national awards were:

- o LAMA - All Ireland Community and Council Awards Most Inclusive Project
- o Chambers Ireland – Excellence in Local Government Awards - Health and Wellbeing
- o National Age Friendly Awards - Age Friendly Environment Award





The North West Energy Agency team and colleagues at the EU LIFE Programme's 'LEAP Project' launch, 15/02/2024



Renovation of an existing Administration Building (former Army Barracks)

## A Regional Energy Agency for the North West

The North-West City Region, comprising Donegal County Council (Donegal County Council) and Derry City & Strabane District Council (DCSDC), aims for net zero energy emissions by 2045. The North West Energy Agency (NWEA) was established in 2022, supported by the EU LIFE Programme and the LEAP Project. The NWEA focuses on retrofitting buildings, renewable heating systems, and solar PV. It provides independent information and support for energy efficiency improvements. Funding has been secured from various sources, including the Shared Island Fund and EU City Facility. The NWEA plans to expand its activities, requiring additional staff and resources.



Installation of 40Kwh Solar PV system at Donegal Town Public Services Centre.

## Facilities Management

Donegal County Council's Facilities Management Section oversees the operational, maintenance, and management services of the Council's buildings. They ensure value for money and quality services through procurement and have implemented an ISO 50001 certified energy management system.

### 2024 Highlights:

- o Renovated an Administration Building to achieve a BER B2 rating.
- o Completed Portable Appliance Testing training for Building Supervisors.
- o Focused on energy efficiency monitoring and management.
- o Implemented projects to reduce energy consumption, including LED lighting upgrades and solar PV installations.
- o Installed 40Kwh and 20KWh Solar PV systems at Donegal Town and Dungloe Public Services Centres, respectively.
- o Added nine Electric Vehicle Dual Socket EV Chargers.
- o Purchased Clonleigh House for office space.
- o Continued regular Health & Safety Inspections.



Clonleigh House, Lifford

## Enhanced Defective Concrete Block Grant Scheme

Donegal County Council is one of five Designated Local Authorities tasked with the Administration of the Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Under the provisions of the Enhanced Scheme, the technical assessment of valid applications is the responsibility of the Housing Agency. The Defective Concrete Block Grant Office actively engages with homeowners across the full scope of the Enhanced Scheme. This includes Validation of Enhanced Scheme Applications, Notification of Decisions, Validation of Payment Claims, Processing Payments, Ancillary Grant Applications, Change of Competent Building Professional and all other general queries.

Over the course of 2024, the Council received 446 new applications to the Enhanced Scheme, bringing the total number of applications received to date to 1,902. 755 applicants received notification of their Approved Remediation Option Grant in 2024 bringing the total number of approved applicants to 1,013 applicants. Over 300 homeowners commenced their Remediation Works on site during the year.

The Council continues to support applicants, their Competent Building Professionals and Contractors by facilitating timely payments to ensure continued remediation works.

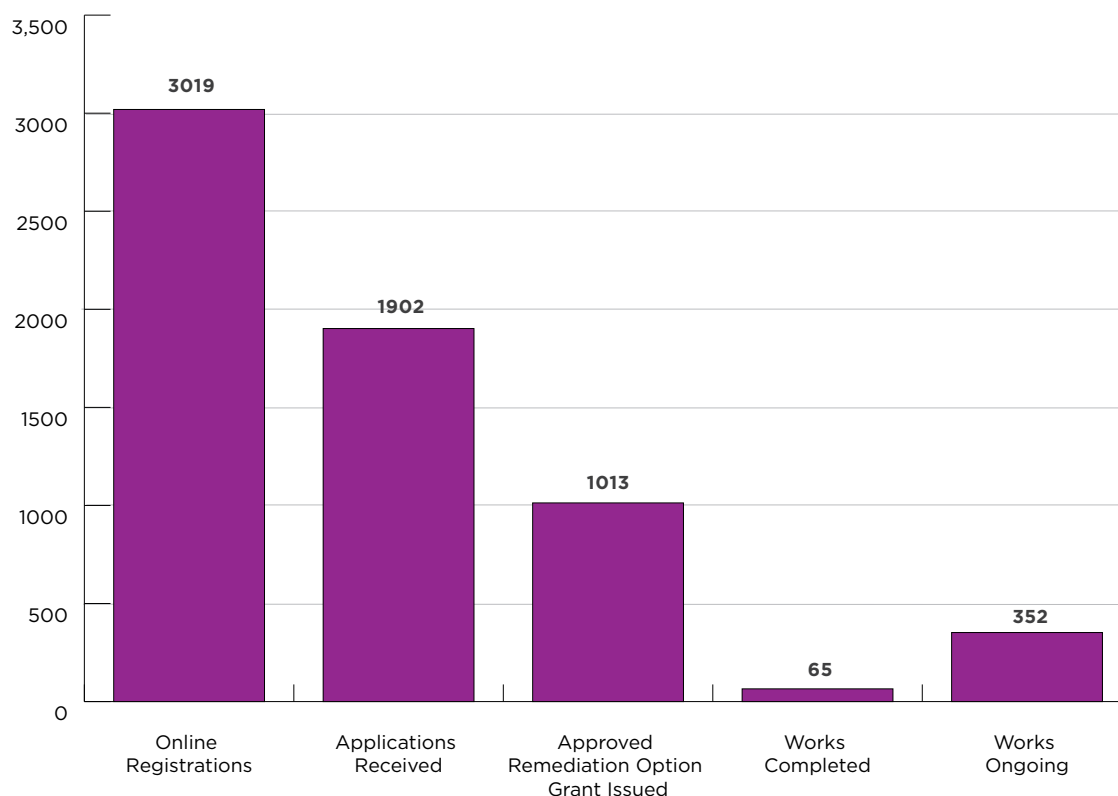
In 2024, the Council issued Payments totalling €47.7M to applicants for Remediation Works, Ancillary Grants, Engineers Fees and other Professional Fees.

To date, 65 homeowners have completed their Remediation Works.

Two additional Community Facilitators were appointed by IDP & DLDC in 2024. This brings a total of four Community Facilitators available throughout the county to support and guide homeowners through the process.

The Council continues to engage monthly with the Community Facilitators to discuss emerging issues and trends.

### ***Defective Concrete Block - Enhanced Scheme Overview***



# Appendices

## Council Membership of Committees & Other Bodies

### Corporate Policy Group

Cllr. Liam Blaney  
Cllr. Noel Andrew Jordan  
Cllr. Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr. Michael McClafferty  
Cllr. Pauric McGarvey  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle  
Cathaoirleach of the Day

### Planning SPC

Cllr. Gerry McMonagle, Chairperson  
Members To Be Confirmed January 2025

### Planning SPC - Sectoral Reps

Sectoral Reps To Be Confirmed January 2025

### Roads & Transportation SPC

Cllr. Noel Andrew Jordan, Chairperson  
Members To Be Confirmed, January 2025

### Roads & Transportation SPC - Sectoral Reps

Sectoral Reps To Be Confirmed January 2025

### Housing & Corporate SPC

Cllr. Liam Blaney, Chairperson  
Members To Be Confirmed, January 2025

### Housing & Corporate SPC - Sectoral Reps

Sectoral Reps To Be Confirmed January 2025

### Community Social & Cultural SPC

Cllr. Donal Mandy Kelly, Chairperson  
Members To Be Confirmed, January 2025

### Community Social & Cultural SPC - Sectoral Reps

Sectoral Reps To Be Confirmed January 2025

### Climate Action & Environment SPC

Cllr. Michael McClafferty, Chairperson  
Members To Be Confirmed, January 2025

### Climate Action & Environment SPC - Sectoral Reps

Sectoral Reps To Be Confirmed January 2025

### Economic Development, Enterprise & Emergency SPC

Cllr. Pauric McGarvey, Chairperson  
Members To Be Confirmed, January 2025

### Economic Development, Enterprise & Emergency SPC - Sectoral Reps

Sectoral Reps To Be Confirmed January 2025

### Emergency Response Committee

Cllr Gary Doherty  
Cllr Noel Jordan  
Cllr Gerry Mc Monagle  
Cllr Jack Murray  
Cllr John Sheamais Ó Fearraigh

### Coiste na Gaeilge

Cllr Donal Coyle  
Cllr Terry Crossan  
Cllr Albert Doherty  
Cllr Micheál C Mac Giolla Easbuig  
Cllr Denis Mc Gee  
Cllr Declan Meehan  
Cllr Anthony Molloy  
Cllr Dakota Nic Mheanman  
Cllr John Sheamais Ó Fearraigh  
Cllr Martin Scanlon  
Vacancy Donegal MD  
Vacancy Donegal MD

### Defective Concrete Blocks Committee

Cllr. Joy Beard  
Cllr. Liam Blaney  
Cllr. Paul Canning  
Cllr. Brian Carr  
Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Albert Doherty  
Cllr. Ali Farren  
Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh  
Cllr. Michael McBride  
Cllr. Martin McDermott  
Cllr. Pauric McGarvey  
Cllr. Denis McGee  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle  
Cllr. Declan Meehan  
Cllr. Martin Scanlon

### Fisheries Committee

Cllr. Manus Boyle  
Cllr. Jimmy Brogan  
Cllr. Terry Crossan  
Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Martin Farren  
Cllr. Noel Andrew Jordan  
Cllr. Niamh Kennedy  
Cllr. Martin McDermott  
Cllr. Denis McGee  
Cllr. Anthony Molloy  
Cllr. Michéal Naughton  
Cllr. John Seamais Ó Fearraigh

### Fisheries Committee - Sectoral Reps

John Menarry/Kevin Byrne - NIFA & NIFO  
Dominic Rihan/Edward Farrell - Killybegs  
Fishermen's Organisation  
Jerry Earley/Seamus Bonner - Islands Rep  
Kenny Ward - Fish Processors Rep  
John O'Brien - National Salmon Commission  
Milton Matthews/Frances O'Donnell - Inland  
Fisheries Ireland  
Catherine McManus - Salmon Farming Rep  
Ciarán McGonigle/Sarah McLean - Loughs  
Agency  
Garry Kennedy

### Donegal Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

Cllr. Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr. Paul Canning  
Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Martin Harley  
Cllr. Micheál Choilm Mac Giolla Easbuig  
Cllr. Michael McMahon

### Traveller Reps

Hugh Friel  
Anna Scully  
Michael Mongan

### Agriculture Committee

Cllr. Liam Blaney  
Cllr. Jimmy Brogan  
Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr. Michael McClafferty  
Cllr. Michael McMahon  
Cllr. Michéal Naughton  
Cllr. Dakota Nic Nic Mheanman  
Cllr. Martin Scanlon

### Agriculture Committee - Sectoral Reps

Joe Sweeney - IFA  
Pheilim Molloy - INHFA  
Eoghan Cross - IFI  
Sean Gallanagh - IFI  
Kelsie Geddis - IFI  
Harry Mallon - ICMSA  
Gary Fisher - Teagasc  
Barry Caslin - Teagasc  
Maureen Mc Laughlin - ICSA  
Aidan O' Donnell - Dept. of Agriculture  
Brian Dolan AC  
Eoin Gallagher AC

### Audit Committee

Cllr Martin Mc Dermott  
Cllr Noel Jordan

### Audit Committee - Sectoral Reps

Henry Mc Garvey  
Micheál Mac Giolla Easbuig  
Paul Carr

### Islands Committee

Members of Glenties MD and the Milford  
Electoral Area

### Islands Committee - Sectoral Reps

Owey - William Boyle  
Iniscaorach - Hughie Gallagher  
Island Roy - Maire Ui Dochartaigh  
Inishinney - Seamus Rodgers  
Inishboffin - John O' Brien  
Tory - Marjorie Carol  
Aranmore - John Mc Cafferty  
Aranmore - Nóirín Ui Mhaoldomhnaigh  
Gola - Eamonn Seosamh Mac Aoidh  
Inis Mhic a Doirn - Rosaleen Mc Shane  
Inis Oirthir - Pádraig Mac Garbheith  
Inishmeane - Charlie O' Domhnaill  
Rutland - Laird Dinsmore  
Comharchumann na nOileán Beag - Mairín Ui  
Fhearraigh

### Donegal County Council Value for Money Committee

Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Martin Harley  
Cllr. Noel Andrew Jordan  
Cllr. Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr. Michael McBride  
Cllr. Patrick McGowan  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle  
Vacancy  
Cathaoirleach of the Day

### Donegal Local and Community Development Committee

Cllr. Brian Carr  
Cllr. Niamh Kennedy  
Cllr. Martin McDermott

### Donegal Local and Community Development Committee - Sectoral Reps

Micheál Mac Giolla Easbuig – Údarás na Gaeltachta  
Anne Mc Ateer – Health Service Executive  
Anne Mc Hugh – Education & Training Board  
Eve Anne Mc Carron – Atlantic Technological University  
Andrew Ward – Inishowen Development Partnership  
Padraic Fingleton – Donegal Local Development Company  
Charlene Logue – PPN Rep  
Joe Boland – PPN Rep  
Siobhan Mc Laughlin – PPN Rep  
Aengus Kennedy – PPN Rep  
Vacancy PPN Social Inclusion  
Liam Mc Elhinney – ICTU  
James O’ Donnell – Farmers Rep ICMSA  
Maire Uí Mhaoláin – Comhar na nOileáin Teo

### Disability Strategy Committee

Cllr. Donal Coyle  
Cllr. Noel Andrew Jordan  
Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh  
Cllr. Micheál Choilm Mac Giolla Easbuig  
Cllr. Denis McGee  
Cllr. Michael McMahon  
Cllr. Anthony Molloy  
Vacancy

### Donegal Youth Council Expert Advisory Committee

Cllr. Fionán Bradley  
Cllr. Dakota Nic Nic Mheanman

### Donegal Youth Council Expert Advisory Committee - Sectoral Reps

Bridget Molloy - HSE  
Dara Mc Daid - HSE  
Lisa O’ Hagan - HSE –  
Patrick Mc Glynn - An Garda Síochána  
Sean Groarty - Donegal ETB  
Paddy Muldoon - Donegal ETB  
Sean Mc Groarty - Donegal ETB  
Claire Gavigan - Foróige  
Kevin Mc Mahon - Foróige  
Maura Gallagher - Foróige  
Michael Mc Devitt - Foróige  
Susan Mc Loughlin - Foróige  
Lorraine Thompson - Donegal Youth Service  
Martin Mongan - Involve Youthproject  
Damien Coyle - Jigsaw  
Myles Sweeney - Active Donegal  
Helen Nolan - Spraoi agus Sport  
Fatima Byrne - Donegal Intercultural Platform Rep  
Karen Sheehy - Donegal County Library  
Rosita Mahony

### Working Group on Local Government & Constitutional Change

Cllr. Fionán Bradley  
Cllr. Jimmy Brogan  
Cllr. Paul Canning  
Cllr. Terry Crossan  
Cllr. Albert Doherty  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle  
Cllr. Declan Meehan  
Vacancy  
Vacancy  
Vacancy

### Donegal Heritage Forum

Cllr. Albert Doherty  
Cllr. Donal Coyle  
Cllr. Michael Mc Mahon  
Cllr. Gary Doherty  
Cllr. John S O Fearraigh  
Chair of the Planning SPC

### Donegal Heritage Forum - Sectoral Reps

Padraic Fingleton - Leader Rep  
To be confirmed - Coillte  
Paddy O’ Donovan- National Monuments Service  
Ger O’ Donnell - National Parks & Wildlife  
Joan Crawford - Fáilte Ireland  
Carolyn Patterson - Teagasc  
Séamas Ó Gallchoir - Údarás na Gaeltachta  
Marie Kelly - Atlantic Technological University  
Michael Chance - Irish Farmers Association  
Michael Mullen - PPN Heritage Linkage Group  
Molly Reynolds - PPN Heritage Linkage Group  
Ethna Diver - An Taisce  
Ralph Sheppard - Donegal Heritage Network  
Niall Mc Caughan - Donegal Heritage Network  
Lochlann Mc Gill - Donegal Historical Society  
To be confirmed - Ulster Architectural Heritage Society

### PEACEPLUS Partnership

Cllr. Manus Boyle  
Cllr. Paul Canning  
Cllr. Michael McClafferty  
Cllr. Patrick McGowan  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle

### Working Group – Creeslough

Cllr. Liam Blaney as Cathaoirleach’s nominee  
Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh  
Cllr. Michael McClafferty  
Cllr. Denis McGee  
Cllr. Anthony Molloy  
Cllr. John Sheámais Ó Fearraigh

### Board of Donegal 2040 Strategic Development Company

Cllr. Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr. Paul Canning  
Cllr. Gary Doherty  
Cllr. Niamh Kennedy  
Cllr. Michael McClafferty

### Board of Donegal 2040 Strategic Development Company - Sectoral Reps

Sally Anne Sherry  
Caroline Mc Groary  
Fiona Doohan  
Aisling Mc Devitt  
Ian Ireland  
Michael Heaney  
Paul Doyle

### Donegal Tourism Associate Members Committee

Cllr. Brian Carr  
Cllr. Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr. Martin Mc Dermott  
Cllr. Michéal Naughton  
Cllr. Martin Harley  
Cathaoirleach of the Day

### Donegal Tourism Associate Members Committee - Sectoral Reps

Niall Coffey - Hotel Industry  
Joleene Mc Dermott - Hotel Industry  
Martina Rafferty - Hotel Industry  
Toni Forrester - Culture & Education  
Mary Cassidy - Culture & Education  
Thomas Costello - Community  
Rosemary ward - Community  
Mary Mc Gettigan - Community  
Elaine McInaw - Community  
David Fisher - Community  
Sinead Smyth - Community  
John Mc Ginley - Tourism  
John Mc Groary - Adventure Tourism  
Ciaran Mc Hugh - Camping & Caravan  
Joan Crawford - Fáilte Ireland  
Margaret Cunningham - Gaeltacht  
Pauline Sweeney - Donegal Airport  
Martin Harley - Restaurant & Vintners  
Cynthia Furey - Golf  
John O’ Connell - B&B – Self Catering

### Board of Donegal Tourism

Cathaoirleach of the Day  
John Mc Laughlin  
Michael Heaney  
Terry Mc Eniff  
Johnny Mc Guinness  
Ciaran Brogan  
Martina Rafferty  
Elaine McInaw  
Marion Callaghan  
Nicola Dunnion  
John Casey  
Thomas Costello  
Micheál MacGiolla Easbuig

# Representation on External Bodies 2024

## County Donegal Education and Training Board

Cllr. Fionán Bradley  
Cllr. Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr. Brian Carr  
Cllr. Donal Coyle  
Cllr. Terry Crossan  
Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Albert Doherty  
Cllr. Martin Farren  
Cllr. Martin Harley  
Cllr. Michael McBride  
Cllr. Pauric McGarvey  
Cllr. Declan Meehan

## Regional Health Forum West

Cllr. Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr. Gary Doherty  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle  
Cllr. Declan Meehan  
Cllr. Michéal Naughton

## Northern & Western Regional Assembly

Cllr. Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr. Niamh Kennedy  
Cllr. Jack Murray

## County Enterprise Fund

Cllr. Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle

## Association of Irish and Local Government

Cllr. Michael McClafferty  
Cllr. Patrick McGowan  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle

## Local Authority Members Association

Cllr. Liam Blaney

## Inishowen Development Partnership

Cllr. Joy Beard  
Cllr. Albert Doherty  
Cllr. Ali Farren  
Cllr. Jack Murray

## Donegal Local Development Company Ltd

Cllr. Patrick McGowan  
Cllr. Michael McMahon  
Cllr. Declan Meehan

## ERNACT EEIG

Cllr. Fionán Bradley  
Cllr. Jack Murray

## Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances

Cllr. Dakota Nic Nic Mheanman

## North West Regional Development Group

Cllr. Joy Beard  
Cllr. Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr. Paul Canning  
Cllr. Albert Doherty  
Cllr. Martin Farren resigned  
Cllr. Gerry McMonagle

## ICBAN

Cllr. Manus Boyle  
Cllr. Michael McBride  
Cllr. Dakota Nic Mheanman  
Cllr. Anthony Molloy

## Donegal Sports Partnership

Cllr. Donal Coyle  
Cllr. Michael McMahon

## Conference Peripheral Maritime Regions

Cllr. Jack Murray

## LATCH

Cllr. Gary Doherty  
Cllr. Martin Harley  
Cllr. Martin Scanlon

## EU CERV Programme

Cllr. Martin Harley

## Colmcille Heritage Trust

Cllr. Donal Coyle  
Cllr. Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh  
Cllr. Michael Mc Bride  
Cllr. Declan Meehan

## Erne Enterprise Development Company

Cllr Michael Mc Mahon  
Cllr Micheál Naughton

## Board of Fort Dunree Military Museum

Cllr. Joy Beard  
Cllr. Fionán Bradley

## Earagail Arts Festival

Cllr. Donal Coyle  
Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Gary Doherty

## Letterkenny Theatre Management Company

Cllr. Donal Coyle  
Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Jimmy Kavanagh  
Cllr. Gerry Mc Monagle

## Management Committee Ballyshannon Leisure Centre

Cllr. Manus Boyle  
Cllr. Noel Jordan  
Cllr. Michael Mc Mahon

## Board of Bundoran Waterworld

Cllr. Michael Mc Mahon  
Cllr. Michéal Naughton  
Mr Barry Sweeny  
Vacancy Donegal MD

## Letterkenny Sports Complex Development Ltd

Cllr Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr Jimmy Kavanagh  
Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Michael Mc Bride  
Cllr Gerry Mc Monagle

## Strengthening Families Advisory Board – NW Alcohol Forum

Cllr. Donal Mandy Kelly

## Finn Valley Leisure Centre

Cllr. Martin Harley  
Cllr. Patrick Mc Gowan  
Cllr. Dakota Nic Mheanman  
Cllr. Martin Scanlon

## Údarás na Gaeltachta

Cllr Anthony Molloy

## Comhar na nOileán Teoranta

Cllr Anthony Molloy

## A5-N2 Cross Border Committee

Cllr. Paul Canning  
Cllr. Gary Doherty  
Cllr. Martin Harley  
Cllr. Martin Scanlon

## Cross Border Working Group - Donegal County Council & Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

Members of Donegal MD  
Members of Lifford/Stranorlar MD

## Western Inter-County Rail Committee

Cllr. Fionán Bradley  
Cllr. Tomás Seán Devine  
Cllr. Niamh Kennedy  
Cllr. Patrick Mc Gowan  
Vacancy Glenties MD

## North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Taskforce

Cllr. Gerry McMonagle

## North West Regional Energy Agency CLG

Cllr. Gary Doherty  
Cllr. Patrick McGowan

# Attendance of Members at Conferences & Other Events Paid in 2024

## Training

### LAMA (Donegal) 19-20th January

Cllr Nicholas Crossan  
Cllr Niamh Kennedy  
Cllr Barry Sweeney  
Cllr Tom Conaghan  
Cllr Jimmy Kavanagh  
Cllr Kevin Bradley  
Cllr Johnny McGuinness  
Cllr Martin Harley

### AILG Module 1 (Fairways hotel Dundalk) 25/01/2024

Cllr Gerry Crawford  
Cllr Martin Harley  
Cllr Patrick McGowan  
Cllr Gerry McMonagle

### AILG Module 1 (Greenhills Hotel, Limerick) 27/01/2024 Out of Region

Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Nicholas Crossan  
Cllr Kevin Bradley  
Cllr Johnny McGuinness

### Regions in Focus - Limerick 7&8th Feb 2024

Cllr Gerry Crawford  
Cllr Nicholas Crossan  
Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Gerry McMonagle  
Cllr Johnny McGuinness

### AILG Annual Training conference (Arklow Bay Hotel) 14+15th February 2024

Cllr Kevin Bradley  
Cllr Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr Gerry Crawford  
Cllr Nicholas Crossan  
Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Michael McClafferty  
Cllr Patrick McGowan  
Cllr Johnny McGuinness  
Cllr Gerry McMonagle

### AILG Module 2 (Hodson Bay, Athlone) 23rd March 2024

Cllr Kevin Bradley  
Cllr Gerry Crawford  
Cllr Nicholas Crossan  
Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Michael McClafferty  
Cllr Johnny McGuinness

### AILG Module 3 (Mullingar Park Hotel) 11th July 2024

Cllr Donal Coyle  
Cllr Martin Harley  
Cllr Patrick McGowan  
Cllr Gerry McMonagle  
Cllr Declan Meehan  
Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Dakota Nic Mheanman  
Cllr Martin Scanlon

### AILG Autumn Training Seminar (Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan) 11th & 12th Sept 2024

Cllr Martin McDermott  
Cllr Martin Scanlon  
Cllr Ciaran Brogan  
Cllr Gary Doherty  
Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Michael McClafferty

### AILG/OPR - (The Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore) 28th September 2024

Cllr Donal Coyle  
Cllr Gary Doherty  
Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Michael McClafferty  
Cllr Martin Scanlon  
Cllr Gerry McMonagle

### LAMA Autumn Conference (New Grange Hotel, Navan) 17th & 18th October 2024

Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Michael McClafferty  
Cllr Donal Coyle  
Cllr Martin Scanlon  
Cllr Patrick McGowan  
Cllr Gary Doherty  
Cllr Liam Blaney

### AILG Module 5 (Radisson Blu, Limerick) 2nd November 2024

Cllr Martin Scanlon  
Cllr Donal Mandy Kelly  
Cllr Gary Doherty  
Cllr Michael McClafferty  
Cllr Donal Coyle

### AILG Module 6 (Claregalway hotel) 16th November 2024

Cllr Michael McClafferty  
Cllr Martin Scanlon

### TII delegation meeting (Dublin) 22/11/24

Cllr Gary Doherty  
Cllr John Sheamus O'Fearraigh  
Cllr Martin Scanlon  
Cllr Tomás Seán Devine

### TII delegation meeting (Dublin) 22/11/24

Cllr Gary Doherty  
Cllr John Sheamus O'Fearraigh  
Cllr Martin Scanlon  
Cllr Tomás Seán Devine

### ICBAN (Carrick-on-Shannon) 18th July 2024

Michael McBride  
Manus Boyle  
Anthony Molloy

### ICBAN (Cavan) 16th Oct 2024

Michael McBride  
Anthony Molloy

### ICBAN (Dungannon) 20th Nov 2024

Michael McBride  
Manus Boyle

### InterCounty railway committee AGM (Athenry, Co. Galway) 26th Oct 2024

Patrick McGowan

### A5/N2/T Ten Committee Meeting (Aughnacloy, Co. Tyrone) 12th Aug 2024

Gary Doherty  
Martin Scanlon  
Paul Canning

### DCB Delegation meeting (Dublin) 05th Dec 2024

Pauric McGarvey  
Tomás Sean Devine  
Denis McGee  
Michael McBride  
Niamh Kennedy  
Gerry McMonagle  
Martin McDermott

### Suck Valley Way - 13th & 14th March (Roscommon)

Michael McClafferty  
Donal Mandy Kelly

### Town Centre First - Adara, Co. Limerick (27th & 28th February 2024)

Liam Blaney  
Pauric McGarvey

## Foreign Travel 2024

YOUth & Democracy – Empowering Europe’s Next Generation (Santa Comba, Spain) 1st – 4th Feb 2024

Cllr Martin Harley

London - 8th Feb 2024

Cllr Martin Harley

CPMR Political Bureau Meeting - PATRAS Greece 21st – 23rd March 2024

Cllr John S O’Fearraigh

St. Patrick’s Day events in the USA – Philadelphia, New York & Boston

Cllr Martin Harley

St. Patrick’s Day events in Germany – Rudolstadt

Cllr Paucic McGarvey  
Cllr Kevin Bradley

Irish Consulate, Edinburgh – Diaspora Event 25th April 2024

Cllr Martin Harley

CPMR General Assembly of the Atlantic Arc Commission – Sines Portugal – 9th -10th April 2024

Cllr John S O’Fearraigh

London Irish Vintage Club – Diaspora Event, London – 8th Sept 2024

Cllr Niamh Kennedy

EU Cerv Project YOUth & Democracy – Empowering Europe’s Next Generation – Sofia, Bulgaria 9th – 12th Sept 2024

Cllr Martin Harley

CPMR General Assembly Meeting – Gozo, Malta – 2nd -4th October 2024

Cllr Jack Murray

Duiche Workshop “Capitalising on Culture, Competing the Difference” Leuven, Belgium – 14th -18th October 2024

Cllr Niamh Kennedy

US Trade Mission & Golden Bridges Event, Boston – 11th -14th November 2024

Cllr Niamh Kennedy

| Members and Related Expenses 2024                    |                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Entertainment Expenses                               | €3,310.82            |
| Security Allowance                                   | €2,500.00            |
| Annual Allowance                                     | €213,840.07          |
| Local Representation Allowance                       | €102,851.35          |
| Representational Payment                             | €1,092,662.40        |
| Cathaoirleach’s Allowance                            | €28,286.61           |
| Leas-Chathaoirleach’s Allowance                      | €5,657.26            |
| Insurance                                            | €7,436.27            |
| Gratuity Scheme                                      | €391,453.09          |
| Chairs Strategic Policy Committees                   | €33,943.62           |
| Municipal District Chairs Allowance                  | €33,184.71           |
| Expenses of Non - Councillors on Committees          | €864.42              |
| Conference Attendance (Home) Travel & Subsistence    | €1,581.47            |
| Attendance at Training Events                        | €24,057.54           |
| Other Travel                                         | €3,371.76            |
| Conference & Training Fees                           | €10,555.00           |
| Foreign Travel                                       | €13,751.15           |
| Contribution to Member’s Representative Associations | €24,500.00           |
| <b>Total</b>                                         | <b>€1,993,807.54</b> |