



CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

DECEMBER ISSUE



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- A list of Orders made in the last month will be available in the Corporate Department for inspection by the Elected Members.

DATES FOR DIARY

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ROADS

MAJOR PROJECTS

N24 Waterford to Cahir Scheme

Publication of the Option Selection Report is due by the end of Q4 2024.

MINOR PROJECTS

N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee

Construction of the scheme commenced on Tuesday 6th February, 2024 with an expected 12 month time frame. Works are progressing well and are on schedule.



N24 Carrick Road

Kilkenny County Council has received formal notification that An Bord Pleanála has approved the 177AE Planning Application subject to conditions and has confirmed the CPO without modifications as of the 20th March, 2024. An application for a Judicial Review of the decision by An Bord Pleanála was lodged with the High Court by 3 applicants in May 2024. Based on current information available the timeline for the Judicial Review process will extend into 2025.

PAVEMENT SCHEMES

N76 Callan Bypass Pavement Scheme and associated works

Currently finalising the design and working on tender documents.

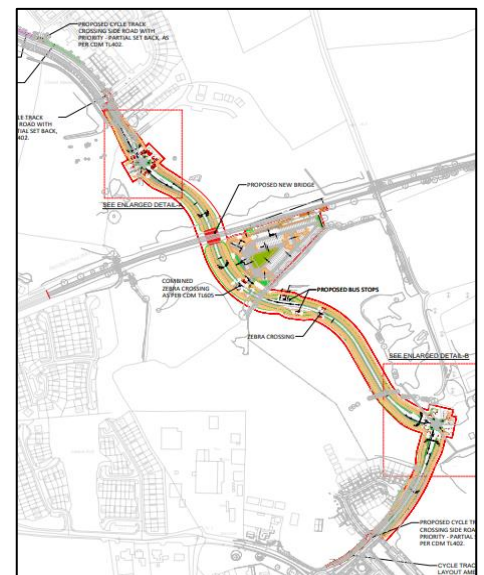
Capital and URDF Projects

South North Access Road - Ferrybank

The closing date for submissions on the Part 8 Application was the 24th October. The Part 8 Report is on the Agenda for the December Council meeting.

The scheme is c.940m in length with:

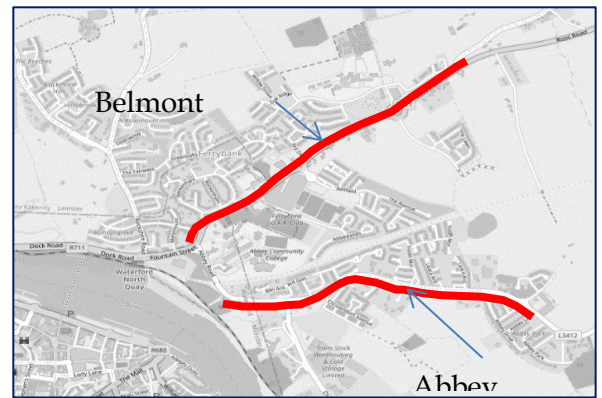
- Two signalised Crossroad Junctions,
- Segregated Pedestrian/Cycle Facilities,
- Two Zebra Crossings
- Off-line Bus Stops
- Greenway Car Park (c.172 parking bays);
- Link to Greenway; and
- Accommodation Works.



Sustainable Links -Ferrybank

Consultants are appointed for the sustainable links, Ferrybank Scheme for all stages of works (*Design, Part 8, tendering for construction, Resident Engineer and handover*).

The works will include traffic calming and active travel measures over c.3km of road on Belmont Road and Abbey Road.



N29 Belview Port Road

Consultants are appointed for the N29 Belview Port Scheme for Design, Part 8 and tendering for construction.

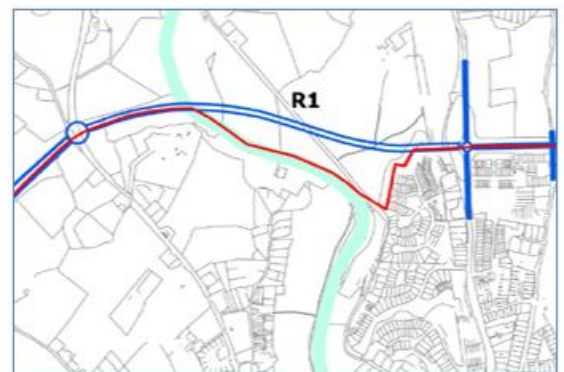
This includes Traffic calming measures along c.900m of the N29 and junction improvements from the L3412 junction to the IDA Business Park South to the port access. It is intended that this will allow the reduction of the speed limit to permit access for developments onto the N29.



Kilkenny City North Transport Project

A full package of Gateway 1 appraisal documents was submitted to the Department of Transport at the beginning of August 2024. This was submitted following consultation with the Department on the necessary documents for the submission.

A breakdown of project costs for years 2024-2027 was submitted to the department for the required funding allocation to progress the project.

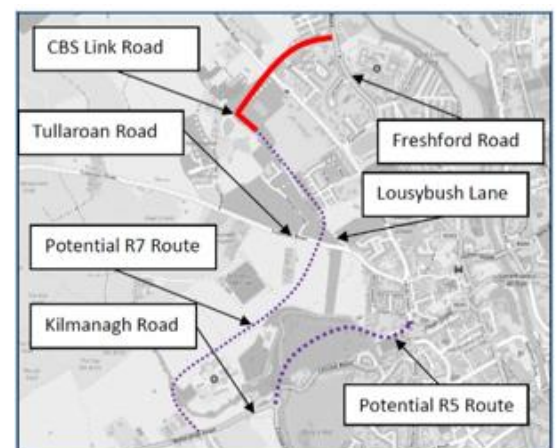


R7 & R5 Traffic Modelling

The Department of Transport provided a specific improvement grant in 2024 for Kilkenny City Traffic Analysis (*Butts Green Junctions*).

The grant was used to appoint Consultants to conduct traffic modeling assessment of the R7 (*Kilmanagh Road to CBS School*) and the R5 (*Kilmanagh Road to Dean Street*).

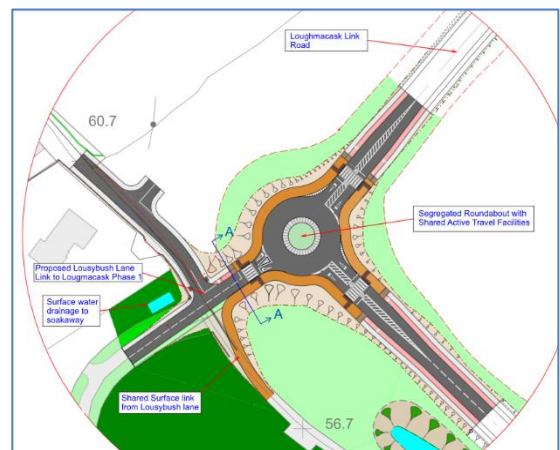
Kilkenny County Council has sought funding from the Department to proceed with appointing Consultants in 2025.



Lousybush Lane link to CBS

Consultants are appointed for the Part 8 Lousybush Access Road Scheme for Detail Design and tendering for construction.

These works will link the houses to the Northern extents of Lousybush Lane to the CBS Link Road which will in turn allow the existing Lousybush lane to be repurposed as a shared use facility for cyclists and pedestrians as per the Loughmacask Masterplan.



PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Planning Summary	Total November 2023	Total November 2024
Planning Applications Received	801	737
Planning Applications Granted	576	602
Planning Applications Refused	109	52
Complaints Received	84	125
Warning Letters Issued	83	74
Enforcements Notices Issued	38	31
Cases Closed	119	54

FORWARD PLANNING

Variation 3 to the City & County Development Plan 2021

This Variation seeks to rezone a small portion of green space in Loughboy to residential, for the purpose of a small number of Age Friendly and Disability Accessible houses. Work on this variation has commenced with the necessary environmental bodies, adjoining Local Authorities and the OPR being notified of this proposed Variation. The Variation along with associated environmental documents will be placed on public display for a 6 week period commencing Friday 6th December until Friday 17th January, 2025.

MASTERPLANS

Ballyragget/Paulstown/Kilmacow

All 3 Masterplans are now approved by the relevant Municipal Districts. In 2023 a masterplan was also completed for Urlingford. Work has commenced to give formal recognition to the Masterplans in the City and County Development Plan through the variation process. Appropriate objectives from all masterplan Plans will be identified and suitable recognition of the role of the Masterplans in the Development Management process will be incorporated into the City & County Development Plan.

LOCAL AREA PLANS

Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan

The draft plan preparation continues. Significant issues relating to the role of Ferrybank as the second largest urban area in the County, its role as part of the wider Metropolitan Area and its role in contributing to the development of Waterford as envisaged under the National Planning Framework are being addressed as part of the Plan preparation. It is anticipated that a draft Plan will be available in Q1 of 2025.

Castlecomer Plan Review Process

The Plan preparation process continues, with ongoing collaboration between the Community and Planning sections. The Director's Report on the pre-draft consultation stage has been published on the consult.kilkenny website. This outlines the engagement to date on the Plan. The Draft Settlement Plan will be accompanied by various assessments, including an Infrastructural assessment and environmental assessments. Public display of the Plan will take place in Q1 2025.

Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for County Kilkenny

Consultants, Place +Urbanism Ltd. were appointed in February to carry out Cluster Housing Design Guidelines for County Kilkenny. The process initially involved several weeks of gathering data, site inspection and review and a pre-draft document presented to the Planners and Road Engineers for discussion with an associated Workshop held in September. Further work is required following initial concepts on addressing the challenges facing all settlements within the County. A further Workshop is scheduled in mid-December with the Consultants, Planners, staff from the Council's Roads Section, Area Engineers and Environment Section to further discuss the document and its concepts, with a view to progressing to a draft document for discussion in Q1 2025.

Taking in Charge

The road at Danville, Kilkenny was initiated for taking in charge. The Orchard Close Housing Estate, New Orchard, Kilkenny was taken in charge by the Local Authority during November 2024.

Active Land Management

There are 18 Vacant Sites on the Vacant Sites Register, and the number of cancelled entries due to site activation or improvement is 29. The Vacant Site levy (VSL) will be replaced by the RZLT from 2025, but any outstanding VSL's will remain due to the Council. For 2024 to date, a total of €142,200 has been received in levies, bringing the total income from developers to €667,200.

The Final 2025 Map of lands in scope for the new Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) is being prepared and will be published on the 31st January 2025. This will form the basis for the levying of the tax by Revenue. The settlements currently liable are Kilkenny City, Rosbercon, Callan and Thomastown. The Draft Annual 2026 Map is also being prepared, and submissions will be invited on this map from 1st February 2025. The recent Budget announced a further opportunity for farmers to seek to have their land rezoned.

Conservation

The Conservation Office manages all protected structures in Kilkenny County and City. These structures are recognised for the following special interest: Architectural, Historical, Archaeological, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical, Social. An advisory service on conservation matters is provided to the public and colleagues, while the conservation grants and funding applications are also delivered.

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025: Thirty-seven BHIS applications have been received by the Conservation Office. These applications will now be assessed, with applicants being notified of decisions in early December 2024.

Historic Structures Fund and the Historic Thatch Building funding has been launched for 2025. The closing dates for applications is the 17th January, 2025.

Conservation Grants 2024

Successful 2024 Conservation Grant funded projects are now complete. Fifteen projects, over three Conservation Grants: Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Thatched Buildings, and, the Historic Structures Fund are complete. These grants supported masonry, window, ironwork, and joinery repairs, re-thatching, lime plastering and re-pointing of Kilkenny’s architectural heritage structures, culminating in a total project spend over the three schemes of €673,105.49.

These projects provided 1,345 employment days for local crafts people and conservation professionals. The projects highlight the circular economy approach involved in conservation works, while they also have a local economic benefit by supporting local craft professionals and conserving Kilkenny’s architectural heritage. The grants, and their management, are essential for keeping historic buildings of architectural significance in use. Further information is presented in the Table below.

Grant	Department Funding	Privately Leveraged	Total Project Costs	Number of Projects	Employment Days
Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)	€151,471.45	€211,589.65	€363,061.10	11	800
Historic Thatched Buildings (HTB)	€10,957.23	€17,307.23	€28,264.46	2	93
Historic Structures Fund (HSF)	€196,918.12	€84,861.81	€281,779.93	2	452
Total	€359,346.80	€313,758.6	€673,105.49	15	1345

For the month of November, the Conservation Officer has completed reports on the following:

Planning Referrals.....	6
Further Information requests	1
Clarification of Further Information requests.....	0
Section 57 Declarations.....	1
Post planning	1
Part VIII	1

Building Control

Valid Commencement Notices Received:

November 2024	338
November 2023	288
November 2022	318
November 2021	421

Disability Access Applications Received:

November 2024	55
November 2023	65
November 2022	68
November 2021	50

TOWN REGENERATION OFFICE

Town Centre First

The Draft Healthcheck report was presented to the Castlecomer Town Team on 7th November and the design is now being finalised.

The Town Regeneration Office met with Callan Town Team on 25th November to commence Healthcheck process for Callan and surveys are being progressed for Mooncoin to gather information for a draft Healthcheck which will be presented to the Town Team in January, 2025.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

The following are the full statistics up to end of November, 2024:

Number of Applications Submitted to date.....	242
Number of Approvals / Approvals in Principle to date.....	162
Grant Drawdown to date.....	13
Number of Queries during the month of October	67

Derelict Sites

The Town Regeneration Office has 2 CPO's in progress.

The following is the up to date position:

- *Fr. Hayden Road, Kilkenny* – The owner of the property has taken a judicial review case against the decision of An Bord Pleanála.
- *Canal Road, Johnstown (Site A)* – Vesting Order period up to 16th December, 2024
- Valuations have been carried out on an additional 8 properties on the Derelict Sites Register for the purpose of applying the levy from 2025. Owners have the right to appeal the valuations within 28 days from issue of the notice.

THRIVE

The Kilkenny Municipal District Members approved the draft John's Quay/John Street Urban Design Strategy at their meeting held on 8th November. The Strategy has been submitted to the Southern Regional Assembly for approval. The next step, following approval, will be the progression of a Part 8 application for Carnegie.

Butts Regeneration

A drop-in public meeting was held in St. Canice's Neighbourhood Hall on 6th November, from 3.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. with approximately 70 people attending. The Consultants displayed results of surveys carried out to date together with large layout visuals of the area. A questionnaire was also circulated on the night and there will be a further meeting in January 2025 to review findings.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE ACTION

Monitoring and Reporting on Climate and Energy Performance

The Climate Action Office submitted the annual statutory public sector Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) data to the SEAI. A huge range of data is collated and submitted, including on the Council's energy use, energy projects, business travel, vehicle inventory, vehicle procurement, public lighting and Building Stock Register. This enables the SEAI to track each public sector Organisation's progress towards Energy and Climate Policy Targets. The SEAI will publish the results in the coming months which will show how the Council's energy and emissions changed over the period 2023. The previous report shows that the Local Authority sector as a whole saved 41% of energy, equivalent to €360M.

Snapshot of Climate Actions across Kilkenny County Council

Below is a round-up of some of the actions that Sections across the Council are taking on climate action, highlighting that climate action is an all-of Council initiative.

Climate Training

The Human Resources Department is currently rolling out online climate training to all new staff, in partnership with the Local Authority Services National Training Group.

Electric Vehicles

Kilkenny Civil Defence has added one new EV to their fleet; and the Machinery Yard has added 2 new Electric Vans to their fleet. Reducing our reliance on fossil fuels in the Council's fleet is a high priority to enable us to meet our emissions targets. EV's are part of the Council's "Kilkenny Going Green" drive.



One of the 2 new Electric Van's purchased by the Machinery Yard, with the Kilkenny Going Green branding.

Green Team

A new Green Team, coordinated by the Environmental Awareness Officer, has been set up to support the Council's efforts to promote sustainable action in the workplace. This is part of the EPA's Green Teams National Programme, and includes training for the team. The Green Team will report into the Climate Action Steering Committee.

Christmas Tree with a Message

Staff from the Community and Culture Team (*Creative Kilkenny*) have created a stunning Christmas Tree, in collaboration with the Climate Action and Biodiversity Offices, for the [St. Canice's Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival 2024](#) (5th-9th December), part of [Yulefest Kilkenny 2024](#). The exhibit includes advice on how to support climate and biodiversity action in the County. For more information scan this QR code. Don't miss it!



Spotlight on Community Climate Action

The Community Climate Action Officer is continuing to support the Community Groups who received grant funding under the Community Climate Action Programme. Here's a snapshot of four communities, in Lisdowney, Graiguenamanagh, Inistioge and Kilmacow, as they start work on their projects. To find out about all 22 communities who are taking climate action, click <https://www.storymaps.com/stories>



Lisdowney Community Centre & GAA Club are making the Community Hall more energy efficient by upgrading the lighting and replacing the doors and windows, installing a water refill station and a bike rack to encourage people to be more sustainable and planting pollinator friendly plants.



The **Graiguenamanagh Abbey Hall** Committee are taking climate action by introducing renewable sources of energy to the hall, including installing solar panels and an electric car charging point. This will reduce their electricity bills and reliance on fossil fuels, and support the use of electric vehicles in the community.



Inistioge Tidy Towns have installed a water refill station in the village to discourage people from using single use plastic bottles and thereby reduce litter and lead to a cleaner environment. The water station is located in the village and is close to the sports pitch and popular walking routes and is available for everyone to use.



Kilmacow Community Centre Committee are making the Centre more energy efficient and comfortable by installing solar panels and upgrading the heating system to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Tidy Towns Forum

A Tidy Towns Forum meeting was held on the 14th November in the Rivercourt Hotel. Speaker on the night was Eileen O'Leary, Clean Technology Centre at Munster Technological University.

The talk outlined what elements of the UN Sustainable Development Goals might be relevant to the work of TidyTowns and other community groups. Practical examples were given, linking the SDGs to examples of some local projects and activities happening within Kilkenny communities.



Showing how your TidyTowns work is fulfilling the SDGs

Eileen O'Leary



Tullahought TidyTowns:

"The work that is evident throughout the village on **nature and biodiversity** and as outlined so comprehensively in your entry form is an example to all. The range, scale and nature of the projects is quite impressive for a small village and the recent purchase of **46 bird and bat recycled plastic boxes** again will contribute greatly to the biodiversity in the area. In particular the donation of ten of these boxes to the school is not just a practical measure but does a lot to ensure the **awareness of nature and biodiversity** continues through the next generation."



SDG 15	SDG 12	SDG 4	SDG 17
LIFE ON LAND	RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	QUALITY EDUCATION	PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
			
Bird & bat boxes for biodiversity	Recycled boxes	Practical school awareness of biodiversity	Donation of boxes to the school
"restoration ... of ecosystems" – Target 15.1	"Reduce waste generation through ... recycling and reuse" – Target 12.5	"Knowledge to promote sustainable development" Target 4.7	"Civil society partnerships" – Target 17.17

2024 TidyTowns Report

Solid Fuels Campaign- Responsible Coal & Firewood Purchasing



Following ongoing engagement with the Solid Fuel Merchants of Ireland and Marble City Fuels, Kilkenny County Council in conjunction with the EPA has commenced a robust awareness campaign around the Solid Fuel Regulations 2022 and responsible purchasing of coal and firewood.

This legislation aims to improve air quality, enhance public health, and protect the environment by regulating the sale of solid fuels.

As residents prepare for the colder months, it is essential to buy coal from registered merchants who adhere to stringent quality and environmental standards. Only these registered suppliers can guarantee compliance with local and national regulations designed to ensure cleaner burning solid fuels. By purchasing from authorized vendors, consumers can significantly reduce harmful emissions, contribute to improved air quality, and support a sustainable environment for future generations.

Asbestos- What You Need to Know!

Proper Disposal
Asbestos must only be disposed of at licensed waste facilities. Please do not dispose of asbestos in regular household waste. Improper disposal can pose serious health risks to the community and the environment.

The National Waste Collection Permit Office (NWCPPO) is designated as the National Competent Authority for the processing of all new and review Waste Collection Permits (WCP) applications for Ireland. Details of Waste Collectors with a valid WCP to collect asbestos waste are available on <http://www.nwcpo.ie/permitssearch.aspx>

The HSA have overall responsibility for the administration and enforcement of asbestos of Health and Safety at work including relating to asbestos.

Check out the HSA web page on www.hsa.ie Reporting Concerns and/or Find a Registered Contractor

If you have any concerns about asbestos in your home or public areas, please contact the Kilkenny County Council Environment Department at environment@kilkennyco.ie or call 056-7794470

Contact the National Waste Collection Permit Office to get a registered contractor at contactus@nwcpo.ie or call 057-9373710 from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday excluding Public Holidays.

Where asbestos can be found

Asbestos is a hazardous material that was commonly used in building materials until the late 20th century. Exposure to asbestos fibres can lead to serious health issues, including lung cancer, asbestosis, and mesothelioma. It is crucial to manage and dispose of asbestos safely and in accordance with legislation.

Legislation
In Ireland, the management and disposal of asbestos are governed by the following regulations:

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Exposure to Asbestos) Regulations 2006. These regulations set out the requirements for the safe handling of asbestos in workplaces and specify actions that must be taken to protect workers and the public from exposure.
- Waste Management Acts 1996 to 2020. Under these acts, asbestos waste must be disposed of at a designated facility that adheres to strict environmental and health standards.
- Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014. These regulations require that any work involving asbestos must be carried out by a competent person.

Who can Asbestos be found?
Asbestos can be found in any industrial, commercial, public or residential building built or refurbished before the year 2000. Asbestos was widely used in a large variety of construction materials for a number of purposes e.g. flooring, walls, ceiling, roof, heating systems (lagging) & detailed survey will be required to identify where asbestos is present in your building. An asbestos survey must be carried out by a competent person.

Who is likely to be exposed to Asbestos?

- Demolition Contractors
- Electricians
- Telecommunication Engineers
- Roofing Contractors
- Gas Fitters
- Painters, Decorators & Plasterers
- Fire and Burglar Alarm Installers
- Construction Contractors
- Building Surveyors
- Joiners
- General Maintenance
- Heating & Ventilation Engineers
- Builders & Plumbers
- Computer Installers
- Scaff Fitters

Safety Precautions for the Public
If you suspect you have asbestos in your property, please follow these crucial safety precautions:

The six main types of asbestos:

- Crocidolite
- Tremolite
- Amosite
- Anthophyllite
- Chrysotile
- Actinolite

Asbestos is a hazardous material that was commonly used in building materials until the late 20th century. Exposure to asbestos fibres can lead to serious health issues, including lung cancer, asbestosis, and mesothelioma. It is crucial to manage and dispose of asbestos safely and in accordance with legislation.

The above information leaflet has been developed to support the enforcement team within the Environmental Section and provide clarity for the wider public and construction sector around this issue.

Kilkenny County Council Green Team

This is an action identified within the Climate Action Plan to be coordinated by the Environmental Awareness Officer. We had 8 staff members participate in the programme from across the organisation which ran over a 6-week period through online sessions.

The Green Team has been created and we will be commencing our action plan in January 2025. The Green Team will sit as subgroup to the Climate Action Steering Committee and report on a quarterly basis.

The programme itself seeks to:

- To provide recognition for green team members and environmental champions.
- To provide green team members/champions with an understanding of the requirements of the role.
- To promote an understanding of the key concepts involved in environmental engagement / awareness and hence to help champions perform their role in an informed manner.
- To provide champions with the means to implement simple and more advanced measures to reduce their organisation's environmental impacts.
- To equip participants with the necessary skills to lead change in their work areas.



WASTE

Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 47 Bring Centers across the City and County. A total of **1703 tonnes** of recyclables were collected from our Bring Centers to date in 2024. This represents a 1% decrease from the same period in 2023. Aldi - Kilkenny City (15 tonnes collected), Loughboy Shopping Centre (11 tonnes collected) Lidl - Johnswell, Kilkenny City (10 tonnes collected) and are the busiest locations in the City. Aldi - Ferrybank (11 tonnes collected), Lidl - Thomastown (7 tonnes collected) and Graigueamanagh (6 tonnes collected) are the busiest outside of the City. Environment staff are continuing to work very closely with our service providers to ensure the collection service is in keeping with demand, especially around long weekends and holiday periods.

Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

After Five years the bikes to Africa project came to an end in November 2024. This project was run by Rotary Kilkenny and facilitated by Dunmore through the use of the facility as a drop off and storage point. Bikes were then transported from Dunmore to Loghan House prison and Shelton Abbey prison for repair before being shipped to The Gambia in West

Africa for reuse in communities there. Dunmore and Kilkenny County Council would like to thank Rotary Kilkenny for including us in an amazing and successful project.

The month of November also saw 120 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste, 102 tonnes of Municipal Dry Waste and 39 tonnes of Green Garden Waste.



The various other recycling streams deposited at the Dunmore facility during the month of November and their respective tonnages can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Recycling Stream	Quantity (Tonnes)
Cardboard	5.8
Plastic	4.2
Paper	6.8
Green Waste.....	39
Food Waste.....	1.2
Mattresses.....	4.4
Metal	10.2
Timber.....	11.6
Textiles.....	1.2
Tetra-pac.....	0.4
Waste Oil	0.0
WEEE	12.3

As part of the Landfill Aftercare the landfill gas flare continues to run 24 hours per day seven days per week extracting and burning approximately 35m³ of landfill gas per hour.

AIR NOISE WATER

Water Quality - Farm Inspections

Farm inspections are still ongoing and are on track to exceed our target of 241.

Septic Tank Inspections

The Environment office has completed 61 inspections which is 10 more than the target of 51. We will be also closing out the remaining historical open advisory notices dating back to 2013 and this process is already in motion with people contacting us hoping to have them closed out after contact was made with letters.

Septic tank grant approvals are currently ongoing. Upgrade works and work approvals are being carried out with various applicants who are applying for the grant.

The Environment Office are still dealing with a large volume of queries in relation to the criteria for eligibility for the grant.

Section 4 Discharge Licenses

The list of discharge licenses has been reviewed and confirmed with 19 discharge licenses within the County. Samples have been taken from 17 systems with 2 proving difficult to retrieve samples from. Attempts will be made to collect the final samples prior to Christmas break.

Misconnections

The Council is currently in the process of investigating a serious misconnection in Thomastown. What was thought to be a misconnection has been found to be an illegal dumping activity. Investigation has been completed through review of cameras at local businesses. Review identified a truck pouring waste water into a manhole which is discharging into a river. The license plate of the truck has not yet been identified and more investigation will be required. Samples were taken and tested from the river showing very poor results.

Environment Complaints

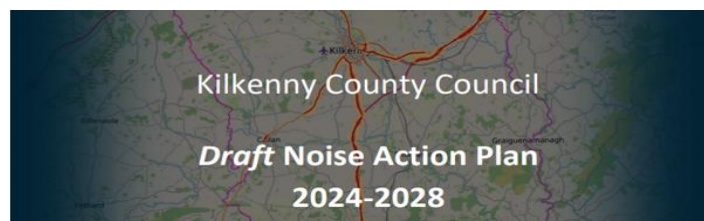
All Environmental complaints received are logged on the CRM (*Customer Relations Management*) System. The number of complaints that have been received and logged for November 2024 is 55 compared to 66 complaints received in November 2023. The number of complaints received in the eleven months to the end of November 2024 (*922 complaints*) is up 6% when compared to the same eleven-month period in 2023 (*868 complaints*). The nature of these complaints included littering, illegal dumping, burning of waste and abandoned cars. The majority continue to be related to littering and illegal dumping. Whilst every effort is made to bring unacceptable environmental practice into compliance, Environment Enforcement staff continue to manage significant enforcement cases progressing through prosecution cases.

Noise

Kilkenny County Council with support of Noise Consultants Limited have completed the draft Noise Action Plan 2024-2028. The *draft* Noise Action Plan is aimed at strategic long-term management of environmental noise from major roads. It does not apply to noise from domestic activities, neighbourhood noise, noise at workplaces or noise inside means of transport or due to military activities in military areas.

The plan was out for public consultation between 30th October and 11th November 2024 with submissions being accepted until 25th November 2024. There were 4 submissions from the public consultation. Two were from members of the public and related to general noise complaints - not in relation to noise as defined by the regulations. TII also made a submission regarding some figures shown in the plan - these are being revised as part of the final plan. The Department of Rural and Community Development made a submission in relation to the wording surrounding noise guidelines. The final plan is on target to be submitted to the EPA in December 2024.

The Noise Action Plan has also been presented to the SPC on 05/12/2024.



Air

Kilkenny County Council have completed over 100 inspections in relation to solid fuels. Two inspection reports will be presented to our legal team to determine if prosecution action can be taken.

Over 30 inspections have taken place in relation to stage 1B Petroleum Vapours with follow-up letters to be sent to petrol stations prior to the Christmas Break.

Inspections have commenced in decorative paints and solvents and again follow-up letters will be sent out to operators prior to the Christmas Break.

Kilkenny now has 3 air monitors back up and running. Air monitors are in Thomastown, Castlecomer and on the Callan Road. The Castlecomer monitor had been offline for some time and so it has been replaced by a new monitor. Two new monitors have been purchased. One will be placed in The Butts and the other in the City Centre.

PARKS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

South East Greenway

Mainline Works Contract - Ferrybank to Curraghmore

- Glas Civil Engineering Ltd., commenced works in November last on Lot 5A of the greenway, a 5.5km section, from Ferrybank to Curraghmore. Over the past few months there was a big push to carryout pavement surfacing works and this work, including the tie-in at Drumdowney and the level crossing at Rathpatrick, is now complete;
- Fencing works along the greenway continues and the installation of the timber screen fencing along Lot 2, Ferrybank, is nearing completion.
- Works are also nearing completion at all segregated and non-segregated agricultural crossings;
- The public lighting has been installed on-line at two separate locations, Rosbercon to Raheen, along the opened section greenway, and Ferrybank to Kilmurry. Connection applications to activate the lighting were previously submitted to the ESB and we await a connection date;
- The installation of the public lighting and safety fence in the permanent greenway carpark at Ballyverneen, Glenmore, is ongoing. Once both of these work items are completed a road safety audit will be undertaken prior to the full opening of the 39-bay carpark;
- The programme remains of track for Lot 5A will be substantially completed by the end of the year. Thereafter, this section of greenway will be subject to a safety audit and minor finishing out works to facilitate the opening of same to the public in Qtr.1 2025.



Final Pavement Overlay

Remaining Section - Design & Tender Documents

- Fehily Timoney and Company Ltd., the multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy team engaged in May this year, continue to advance the detail design on the remaining sections of the Greenway;
- Detail design works has commenced on Lot 4a Redbridge & Mountelliott, Lot 5b Curraghmore to Aylwardstown, Lot 6 Ballyverneen, Lot 7 Aylwardstown and Lot 8a Rosbercon trailhead carpark.

South East Greenway - Related Schemes

Greenway Connectivity Link to Glenmore: In May, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced that our funding application under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) to progress this project was successful. This project also incorporates the provision of a new Pink Rock Cycle Loop which will offer greenway users, travelling from the New Ross end, the option of cycling back along an alternative route beside the scenic River Barrow. Tender documentation is currently being prepared to engage the services of a multi-disciplinary engineer led design team to advance this project through detail design, tender award and construction stage.

Greenway Link to Slieverue: The Route Selection & Design Options Report to provide a connectivity link between Slieverue village and South East Greenway was completed in 2023. During this process 5 route options were considered and it was concluded that a looped route formed by a combination of two separate links, the Kilmurry Lane route (the Southern Connectivity Link) and the Luffany route (the Northern Connectivity Link) were the preferred options. This overall looped route would best accommodate active travel by locals using the greenway and would provide the best facility to attract tourists to the village and tourism related activities in and around the locality.

A planning application under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations was advertised in September for the Southern Connectivity Link. The public consultation process has concluded and the final date for submissions was the 25th October. It is expected that a Planning Report & Recommendation will go before Council at the January Council Meeting.

Lacken Boardwalk Enhancement Scheme

Works to replace the narrow 1.2m wide timber boardwalk at Lacken, with a new composite structure, remains on schedule for opening before the Christmas break. The cross-section width of the new boardwalk will extend to 3.6m, a threefold increase on the original. The new boardwalk will be more accessible to wheelchair users, those with reduced mobility, people with prams or buggies and dog walkers. A significant planting programme will follow early in the new year when the weather permits. This project is being delivered under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Measure 3, and the Council's own funds and sees an investment of c.€800,000 in to what we know will be a much-used amenity.



Sports Capital and Equipment Programme

Initially under the above Programme, two out of our four funding applications were successful. However, on foot of an appeal to the Department it can now be confirmed that all 4 applications will receive funding. Works on the projects listed below will progress in 2025:

- Garringreen Recreational Amenity Area Refurbishment -The upgrade of the existing Multi-use Games Area along with enhancements to the grass soccer pitch;
- Kilkenny Countryside Park - Provision of spectator fencing around the ball wall area. The development of a compound area to store maintenance equipment for the upkeep of the Park;
- Ballyragget Recreational Amenity Area - The Green - Construction of a 1.8m wide unbound pathway around the perimeter of the playing pitch along with goal mouth improvements;
- Waterbarracks Basketball area, Kilkenny City - Upgrade of basketball court and introduction of Boules court.

Playgrounds

The importance and value of playgrounds to communities across the City and County cannot be underestimated, so it was with delight this year that an additional budget could be provided to the Parks Department to allow the roll-out of a significant enhancement programme. This budget, amounting to just over €200,000, was collected over the years through specific planning contributions for playground use. Through this programme, which is over and above our general maintenance regime, a significant replacement and repair programme of high value play components was undertaken in playgrounds in Castlecomer, Coon, Ferrybank, Thomastown, and Graiguenamanagh. In addition to this work, the budget allowed for 12 of our 35 playgrounds to be painted.



New Multi-use Play-Tower in Castlecomer

Tree Planting Initiatives: +Tree Surgery

A significant tree planting initiative is scheduled for the upcoming months in several parks across the County. In Slieverue Linear Park, moisture-tolerant trees suited to the park's wet soil will be planted. In Ferrybank, ornamental trees will be added to enhance both the park's beauty and biodiversity. Additional tree planting is also planned for the Kilkenny Countryside Park, which will strengthen the biodiversity richness of the park adding to the planting which has already taken place.

Roundabout Landscape Enhancement Initiative

We are delighted to announce that the council recently entered into sponsorship agreements with local companies in the south of the County to roll-out a significant landscape enhancement and maintenance programme. The agreements focus on three prominent roundabouts in the Ferrybank and Newrath area. The agreement is for a 3-year period with the option to extend for a further two years.

The roundabouts, range in size from 0.65 to 1.1 acres and the planting proposal, in general, consists of three planting zones, working from the centre out, Zone 1) a micro forest of native tree species, Zone 2) a native long flowering meadow and Zone 3) mowed grass (weed control and grass cutting on approaches and deflection islands is also included). The ethos of the planting and maintenance regime is to protect and enhance biodiversity and raise awareness of the importance of same. This aspiration was fully endorsed and welcomed by our three sponsors, details of same provided hereunder:

- R448 Newrath Roundabout – Sponsor: Dawn Meats;
- N29 Slieverue Roundabout – Sponsor: The Port of Waterford;
- R711 Belmont Roundabout – Sponsor: Medite – Smartply.

Tenders are currently being prepared and it is anticipated that works will commence in Q1 next year.

Woodstock

In the gardens at Woodstock, our winter works programme is well underway. This includes, in the Wall Garden, the pruning of espalier fruit trees and the rejuvenation of fruit bushes. Other works include the planting of winter bedding along the Terrace Garden and in the Winter Garden yew replacement planting within the knot garden panels. Garden staff have also been busy collecting the Autumn leaves which are composited on site and reused as leaf mould to enrich our herbaceous borders. The resident Christmas reindeers will also be making an appearance throughout the gardens to add to the excitement, for younger visitors, in the build up to the festive season.



LEO/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary of 2024 Awards to Businesses

- €565,656 in direct financial assistance has been approved for 23 manufacture /export service businesses in located throughout the County.
- €357,014 awarded in Business Expansion Grant assistance and €60,000 in GradStart assistance
- €107,480 awarded in start-up/priming assistance
- €41,162 awarded in a feasibility study grant assistance.
- 7 Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter grants awarded to support businesses in exploring new export market opportunities.
- 23 Businesses have commenced LEAN one to one consultancy programmes to investigate possible resource efficiencies and process improvements their businesses.
- 12 Businesses are availing of the Digital Start programme to prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across the enterprise
- 43 business have been approved a Trading Online Voucher totalling €85,546 to support the enhancement of their online trading capacity.
- 21 Green for Business supports awarded with five businesses awarded an Energy Efficiency Grant. These schemes support businesses to becoming greener and environmentally friendly.
- 9 applicants have been supported to make loan applications to the Micro Finance Ireland loan fund.

- 1,059 people participated on focused small business training, including 92 people participating on the Starting Your Business programme
- 434 businesses have availed of specialised business specific mentoring on a variety of topics including finance, marketing, social media marketing and HR.

Succession and Exit Strategy Conference

LEO Kilkenny and Carlow in partnership ran the Succession/Exit Strategy Summit on October 30th. This event featured industry experts who provided invaluable guidance on optimizing business exits for maximum value and minimal complications. Attendees learned from seasoned professionals about navigating regulatory landscapes and minimizing tax liabilities during transitions and got first-hand accounts on the implications of poor tax & legal planning.

Future Focus - Management Development Series

Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny continues the Future Focus: Management Development Series with 11 Kilkenny based business.

Future Focus provides Owner Managers with a supportive programme environment which is designed to assist in the acceleration and development of their businesses. The programme has run over the course of November.



Kilkenny Digital Gift Voucher

Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce and Kilkenny County Council are partnering on the new physical and digital gift card for the City and the County. The new Kilkenny Gift Card replaces the paper vouchers. The new gift card will simplify shopping local, enhance tourism, and ensure more spend into the County.



Design Kilkenny 2024



"A place with inclusive education, business innovation, natural beauty and cultural excellence.
A place to call home."

Design Kilkenny 2024 took place on Friday 15th November as part of Irish Design Week. The event showcased the design thinking and ideation process and examined attendees vision of what Kilkenny will be like as a place to do business in fifty years.

Broadband/ Digital Update

Kilkenny County Council is developing a three-year Digital Strategy for the County covering the period 2025 - 2027. Work is on-going with a final draft ready by early 2025. The Broadband Officer is also awaiting the launch of the DRCD National Hub Strategy 2024 - 2027 in early 2025.

Night Time Economy

Kilkenny City Night Time Economy Diversification Fund

A number of events took place in November which were funded under this scheme.

They included:

- Kilkenny Game Fest @ The Club House Hotel
- Budo Karate Workshop at The Watershed
- Subtitle Film Festival
- Matt Molloy & John Carty at Cleeres
- Envelop by Hilda O'Mahony at St Johns Priory
- Red Book of Ossory Talks at St Canices Cathedral
- Autumn Pottery Nights at The Happy Pottery
- Sea School – All Living Things Environmental Film Festival at Billy Byrnes
- Drumming Showcase by Music Generation & Foroige at McDonagh Junction

The NTE Advisor also attended the National Implementation Group on the night time economy to update on the progress and feedback from the pilot locations to date.

Kilkenny Tourism



Kilkenny Tourism marketing activity following the Halloween season prepares visitors for 2024 Yulefest celebrations.

A *Kilkenny Gifts You* campaign was also launched in November and is a collaborative project between hotels and attractions to offer a *gift* to guests coming to Kilkenny to complement their experience and to add value to their trip.

Social Media marketing activity is focused on the cross promotion of web-site content and highlights Christmas Gift Guides and showcases Christmas Itineraries for visitors to Kilkenny in the run up to Christmas.

Festivals and Events

Kilkenny County Council continues to support our year-round calendar of events with November welcoming a fantastic new festival to Kilkenny for November 2024.

Kilkennys Toil and Trouble 2024 commemorated the 700th anniversary of the spells cast on society at the time and delved into the infamous Kilkenny Witch Trials.



Meet in Kilkenny

A key priority in Kilkenny's Destination Experience Development plan is to attract a larger portion of the international tourism market. To meet this objective, Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Tourism, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland have developed the micro site "Meet in Kilkenny" to specifically target tour operators and destination management companies to attract additional business to Kilkenny.

A targeted campaign will commence in the coming weeks and months to engage with this audience to let this market segment know that Kilkenny has all the essentials for great meetings and events, access from key transport hubs, a wide variety of venues and accommodation and value for the visitor. <https://visitkilkenny.ie/meet-in-kilkenny/>

HOUSING

The Directorate of Housing incorporates a wide range of services for applicants and tenants to facilitate and support the provision of independent and supported accommodation. The following information gives the up to date progress for 2024 under the various support services.

AFFORDABLE HOMES

Kilkenny County Council continue to work in partnership with developers Whitebox and Cairn Homes in delivering Affordable Homes across Kilkenny City and Ferrybank.

All units in ‘Cluain Glassan Affordable Homes in Kilkenny City’ are now Reserved, with a limited number of homes available in the remaining 2 developments. Under the Affordable Purchase Scheme successful applicants will be able to avail of a reduction on the full market price, of between up to 20% and 25%, depending on the price of the property and the applicant’s own financial circumstances.

Applications can only be made online via the dedicated application portal accessible via the council website as follows:

<https://affordablehousing.kilkennycoco.ie/abbeymeadows>

<https://kilkennycoco.ie/nyne-park>

<https://kilkennycoco.ie/cluain-glasan>

Application portals remain open for the remaining 2 developments.



House Type	Floor Area Sq M	Market Value	Minimum Affordable Purchase Price	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price	Gross Income Threshold*	Max % Discount
4 bed Semi-Detached	123	€349,000	€274,000	€331,550	€74,599	21%
3 bed End Terrace	103	€325,000	€250,000	€308,750	€69,469	23%
3 bed Mid Terrace	100	€315,000	€240,000	€299,250	€67,331	24%

**Indicative figures – income assessed by Kilkenny County Council*



House Type	Floor Area Sq M	Market Value	Minimum Affordable Purchase Price	Maximum Affordable Purchase Price	Gross Income Threshold*	Max % Discount
3 bed Mid Terrace	117.25	€345,000	€255,000	€327,750	€73,744	25%
3 bed End Terrace	117	€360,000	€270,000	€342,000	€76,950	25%

**Indicative figures – income assessed by Kilkenny County Council*

The Affordable Homes are generally targeted at first-time buyers (*exceptions apply*) who need assistance bridging the gap between their own available funds (*including the Help to Buy Scheme*), the mortgage that they can obtain and the cost of the new home. Under the Affordable Purchase Scheme eligible buyers will be able to purchase their own new home by availing of this shared equity scheme. Kilkenny County Council will retain an equity share and successful applicants have the option of buying out this share over time. Equity shares are calculated on an individual basis and are linked to an applicant's income, their savings and their mortgage capacity.

It is important that potential applicants familiarise themselves with the eligibility criteria and compile the requisite documents to complete their applications subject to them meeting the qualifying criteria. Full information is available at <https://kilkennycoco.ie/affordable-homes>

It is strongly recommended that applicants have Mortgage Approval in Principle prior to applying for this scheme, as applicants will be required to demonstrate their capacity to purchase. Only valid applications (i.e. applications with all required documentation submitted) will go forward for assessment. Applications which are incomplete or those not accompanied by the required documentation will be deemed invalid.

Any queries in relation to any of the above to affordablehousing@kilkennycoco.ie and a member of the team will revert back.

HOMELESS SERVICES

Homeless Prevention Measures

The government have put in place a number of measures to prevent homelessness arising from the reactivation of notices of termination of tenancies in June 2023.

We are currently providing advice and directing Tenants to the appropriate services required to prevent homelessness. Where a household is in receipt of a valid notice to quit and requires assistance in establishing what options are available to them to avoid potential homelessness they are advised to contact the Housing Office at its dedicated email address NTQEnquiries@kilkennycoco.ie. Further details are available on www.kilkennycoco.ie.

Any tenants who may have received a notice of termination or a landlord who has issued a notice of termination to their tenants or who may wish to in the coming months should direct any queries to the dedicated email provided and all queries will be responded to in a timely manner.

HOMELESS SERVICES SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2024	
Homeless Presentations	35
Homeless Assessment Outcomes	
Prevention & Interventions	23
Emergency Service	7
Not eligible / Did not avail of service	5
HAP Place Finder Service	
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies @ 1 st day of month	154
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies created during month	0
Number of Homeless HAP tenancies in place @ last day of month	153
Number of Homeless HAP tenancy breakdowns	1
Other Social Housing Tenancies supported / created during month	3
Households in Temporary Emergency Supported Accommodation at 30th November	27
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation	4
Households in Temporary Emergency B&B Accommodation that are families	4
Households (singles/couples) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (Own Front Door)	15
Households (Families) in Transition Emergency Accommodation (OFD)	6

SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL HOUSING SUPPORT APPLICATION SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2024	
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at November 30 th (<i>Gross Need</i>)	1,413
Number awaiting Social Housing Support at November 30 th (<i>Net Need</i>)	638
Number of Social Housing Applications received in November	104
Number of applications incomplete/ Awaiting Further Information/Clarification	76
Number of applications validated and ready for assessment during the month	50
Number of applications assessed during November	32
Number of applications awaiting assessment as at 30 th November	41

HAP Summary Year To-date 2024	
Total active HAP Tenancies	464
New HAP Tenancies set up	56
HAP allocated Social Housing	117
Closed HAP Tenancies	127
HAP Rent Reviews	248
HAP Other Tenancy Amendments	216

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

The Tenancy Management Team deal with allocations, maintenance and anti-social behaviour complaints in relation to our tenants. Below is a summary of activity in November and to date this year:

- LA/RAS/Leasing allocations in November (*offers made*): **12**
- LA/RAS/Leasing allocations to November (*offers made*): **126**
- Tenant Liaison Officer cases in November: **37**
- **Maintenance Calls for November: 784**
- **Maintenance Calls year to date: 6482**

Where anti-social behaviour is ongoing, tenancy notifications and warning notices continue to be served and monitored. Where tenants engage in anti-social behaviour relating to offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act or violence and intimidation resulting in criminal charges, the local authority will take enforcement action to terminate the tenancy and alternative social housing supports will not be provided.

PRIVATE HOUSE GRANTS

The 2024 housing grants allocation has been received from the Department of Housing, in the amount of **€2,161,278** comprised of €1,729,023 (80%) grant and €432,256 (20%) KCC contribution.

This allocation exceeds the amount included in the budget for 2024 and reflects the Department's confidence in the grants section to meet and exceed its targets for 2024.

Grants Approved & Committed to 30 th November, 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	169	€1,844,865
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	11	€35,505
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	292	€1,478,388
Total	472	€3,358,758

Grants Paid out to 30 th November, 2024		
Scheme	Number	Amount
HGD - Housing Adaptation Grant	77	€1,844,865
MAG - Mobility Aid Grant	7	€35,505
HOP - Housing Aid for Older Persons	191	€1,478,388
Total	275	€3,358,758

HOUSING LOANS

The Tenant (*Incremental*) Purchase Scheme 2016, which allows local authority tenants to buy their homes is being revised as of from 29th January 2024. Changes to the scheme are as follows:

- **Minimum Income Requirements:** The minimum income required for an applicant to be eligible to apply under the scheme has been revised from €12,500 to €11,000 per annum. (At least 50% of which must come from a reckonable primary source of income).
- **Primary Sources of Income:** In addition to employment and the State Pension (*Contributory and Non-Contributory*) being considered as primary sources of income, the Widow's, Widower's, Surviving Civil Partner's (*Contributory and Non-Contributory Pension*), Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension and Disability Allowance are now also considered primary sources of income.
- **Time Receiving Social Housing Supports:** The period of time tenants will be required to be in receipt of social housing support to be considered eligible under the scheme remains at 10 consecutive years. However, in the case of joint tenancies only one tenant is now required to have been in receipt of social housing supports for 10 years.
- **Income Included/Not Included as a Secondary Income for Assessment**
Changes have been made to income that can be considered and not considered as secondary income when assessing for discount.

Housing Loan Activity 1 st January to 30 th November, 2024					
Loan Type	Received	Approved	Amount Approved	Number Paid	Amount Paid
Local Authority Home Loan	38	10	€1,270,950	11	€1,596,326
Caravan Loan	0	0	€0.00	0	€0
Total	38	10	€1,270,950	11	€1,596,326

VOIDS

At the end of November 2024 there were **42 vacant units** of local authority accommodation awaiting refurbishment or remediation works.

Works are ongoing on the voids maintenance programme and it's envisaged that a minimum of 75 units will be complete under this programme during 2024.

Housing Capital Delivery



College Park Crescent – 10 x 3 bed houses completed November 2024



Completion works ongoing at Crokera Hill, Kennyswell Road – 88 unit and community centre



The Rise, Castleoaks, Kilkenny – 30 apartments almost complete

COMMUNITY

The Table below outlines in summary ongoing projects and schemes in the Community Department.

Town & Village Scheme			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Glenmore CLG Project Development Measure 2022	Develop plans for a building purchased under Building Acquisition Measure. The building will be used as a community shop/café and meeting facility	€49,950	A number of surveys are underway. Planning permission granted.
Callan 2023	Restoration and clean-up of the King's River to enable the community to use it for activities fishing, swimming & canoeing and kayaking	€247,500	Planning of project commenced, consultant appointed
Dunnamaggin Local Community Group 2023	The Transformation of a community green space into an events amenity for all the community known as Madge's Garden	€247,500	Planning permission granted. Design brief to commence.
Urlingford Town Team 2023	Refurbishment of Community Hall. Phase 2	€500,000	Project manager engaged, tender process to commence
Callan Project Development Measure 2024	Develop plans to establish an outdoor classroom community space in Abbey Field and examine the re-development of a derelict cottage in Moate Field and complete biodiversity studies on both sites	€49,950	Brief for consultant being prepared
Paulstown Community Group Project Development Measure	Complete feasibility and design studies for the creation of a centre point in the village, consisting of an open public green space with seating and leisure facilities. This will redevelop the village centre and provide accessibility between the main street and residential areas	€49,950	Brief to be prepared

Rural Regeneration Development Fund			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Piltown	Phase 1 of the project comprises of main street urban renewal enhancement, parking bays, EV charging points, and bicycle bays x2	€2,180,931	Tender assessment complete. Consultant to be appointed.
Glenmore	Develop the South East Greenway Connectivity Link and Pink Rock Cycle Loop & Amenity Trail	€2,356,423	Part 8 approved. Detail design due to commence.
Thomastown	Thomastown Library and upgrade to Community Centre	€4,013,115	Work in progress

Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Johnstown Sports Field 2022	Contribution to development of walk way around complex	€40,000	Group have received Sports Capital funding for other elements of the walkway. Project due to commence.
1st Kilkenny Scout Group 2022	Upgrade of lighting to LED lighting, improve installation in attic, upgrade boiler and installation of solar panels	€15,000	Work in progress
Mooncoin Celtic AFC 2023	LED Floodlighting for extra training area	€20,000	Work in progress
John Lockes GAA Club 2023	Walkway improvements, CCTV, Sensory activity outdoor wall panels/litter bins/walkway benches & security gate	€11,000	Partially completed
Cois Nore 2024	Develop and Refurbishment of Community Space	€40,000	Tender process commenced
Piltown AFC 2024	Walkway, Lighting and Security Fencing	€36,000	Tender process commenced
Callan United AFC 2024	Upgrade of Dressing Rooms and Storage facilities	€35,000	Section 5 granted, works to commence in November
Inistioge Community Council 2024	Bi folding doors to increase space for large functions	€14,000	Awaiting contractor to commence
Danesfort GAA Club 2024	Extension of floodlit walkway	€15,000	Work in progress
Mullinavat Community Group 2024	Installation of CCTV and fob entry system	€9,000	Tender process commenced
Ballyhale Shamrocks 2024	Upgrade of toilets / disability access	€9,000	Due to commence
Gowran Community Complex 2024	Contribution towards the refurbishment of a community hub	€27,000	Tender process commenced
Johnstown Community Hall 2024	Refurbishment of balcony area	€15,000	In progress, 40% complete
Conahy Shamrocks GAA 2024	Upgrade to lighting around walk way	€25,000	Tender awarded project due to commence

CLÁR 2023			
Community Group	Project Description	Grant	Status
Tullagher Rosbercon GAA Club	Provision of tarmacadam car park, passing bay and emergency access road to new playing field.	€50,000	Project 50% complete
Muckalee Football Club	Provision of completed carpark at the grounds	€50,000	Project complete
Kilmoganny GAA	Upgrade car park and walkway	€30,150	Work in progress
St Martins GAA	Lighting, nets, railing and gates	€44,766	Work in progress
Kilkenny County Council Supported by Coolagh Community Group	Upgrade works outside community hall	€45,000	Works commenced
Kilkenny County Council Muckalee Public Lighting (Phase 2)	Upgrade of public lighting	€24,750	Works due to commence
Galmoy Community Hall	Provision of a MUGA	€30,015	Procurement in progress
Windgap Tidy Towns	Provide tarmac surface at Windgap Lake car park.	€20,788	Works completed
Skeoughvosteen Community Centre & GAA	Provision of outdoor public and wheelchair accessible public toilets	€50,000	Procurement in progress

Pride of Place

Community groups based in Kilkenny were honoured at the prestigious Pride of Place community awards at a gala ceremony in Monaghan on the 2nd November, 2024. Ferrybank Community were awarded runners up in the Community Well-Being Initiative. Inistioge village community group were awarded runners up in the category for Areas with a Population 0-300 people.

Sponsored by IPB Insurance, the Pride of Place competition was initiated 22 years ago through a Co-operation Ireland programme to acknowledge the invaluable work undertaken by volunteers and those involved in local community development. It has grown into the largest competition recognising community development achievements on the island of Ireland.



Pride of Place runner-up award for Community Well-Being Initiative presented to Ferrybank Community



Pride of Place runner-up award for the Population of 0-300 Category presented to Inistioge Community

Healthy Ireland

Kilkenny LCDC promoted health and well-being through community cycling initiatives in the Autumn months. Coordinated by the Active Travel and Healthy Ireland Teams in

Kilkenny County Council, cycling tutors have been teaching cycling programmes in Droichead Family Resource Centre and L'Arche in Callan.

The Healthy Ireland community cycling programmes have made a positive impact on the health and well-being of young people and individuals with additional needs in Callan. By teaching participants to cycle and encouraging regular physical activity, these programmes have provided more than just a means of transportation. Cycling has proven to be a powerful tool for building physical fitness, improving cardiovascular health, and enhancing motor skills.



Healthy Ireland Community Cycling Programme in Callan

For individuals with additional needs and their carers the programme has been particularly empowering, providing opportunity for greater independence and confidence while promoting inclusivity.

Kilkenny Public Participation Network

Kilkenny Public Participation Network (PPN) presented the Volunteer Engagement Award at the Kilkenny Chamber Business Awards in collaboration with the Kilkenny Volunteer Centre on Saturday 23rd November 2024.

Free training supports on topics such as good governance, financial management, board roles, funding applications and understanding the Oireachtas were provided for PPN member groups to build their capacity.

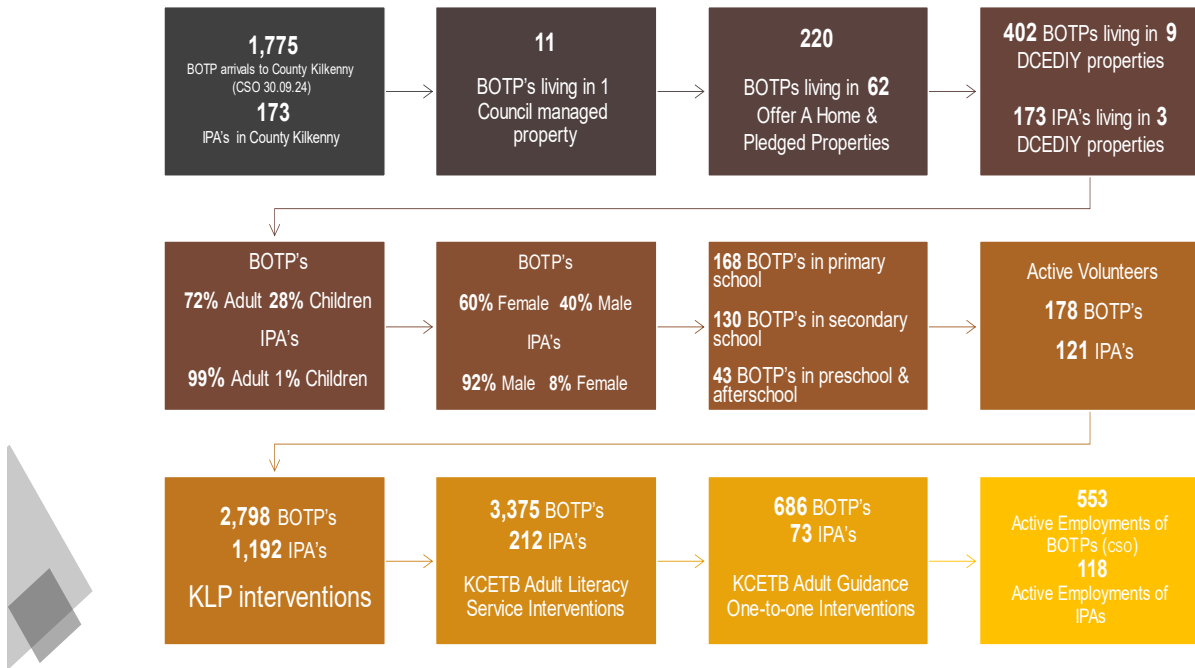
The Kilkenny PPN Autumn/Winter Plenary and Networking event took place on Wednesday 27th November 2024. Highlights included presentations from the National Ombudsman and Information Commissioner for Ireland, Macra and the Nore Vision Catchment Trust along with the launch of the first Kilkenny PPN Strategic Plan.



Kilkenny PPN Autumn/Winter Plenary



Community Integration Monitor to 05.12.24



FIRE SERVICES

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

91 applications for Fire Safety Certificates were received to date.

A Fire Safety Certificate is a Certificate issued by the Building Control Authority which states that the works or building to which the application relates will, if constructed in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, comply with the requirements of Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997.

Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003

- Fire Prevention staff made targeted inspections of premises both to provide advice and to enforce legislation during 2023.
- 68 Licence Applications were processed under Section 24 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.
- 7 licence applications under the Dangerous Substances legislation were assessed to date
- 94 Fire Safety Inspections of premises have taken place in 2024.

Fire Brigade Operations

The existence of a professional Fire and Rescue Service is fundamental to public and personal safety. The Fire Service plays a crucial role in making our communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly and effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur 24 hours per day/7 days per week/365 days per year. The Brigades have attended 958 callouts to date in 2024. These incidents included a number of road traffic collisions, house fires, ambulance assists, car fires, chimney fires and automatic fire alarm activations.

Recruitment of Retained Firefighters

Our second recruitment campaign has commenced to recruit Firefighters in Castlecomer, Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown and Graiguenamanagh. Shortlisting and suitability assessments tests have been carried out. All new recruits will undergo extensive initial training to equip them with the skills to be a Retained Firefighter. As well as responding to emergency calls and undertaking community fire safety initiatives, Retained Firefighters attend weekly training nights to maintain competency levels and undertake routine checks on their equipment. Freshford and Callan have held an open night/ day in their fire stations.

Retained Firefighters are men and women who are on call to respond to a range of emergencies. Many Retained Firefighters have other full or part-time jobs but when the call comes they are ready to drop whatever they are doing and become part of a team, ready to face any emergency. Although part-time, Retained Firefighters are fully trained and capable of saving life and property.

Fire Appliances

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service maintain fire appliances in all seven (7) Fire Stations throughout the County. Kilkenny County Council Fire and Rescue Service have a Command and Control vehicle, 2-seater electrical fire vehicle and a Class B fire engine being built at present. We will continue with a replacement programme and refurbishment programme as capital funding is made available.

Community Fire Safety Programme

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service continue to deliver the National Directorate Fire and Emergency Management Primary Schools Programme. It is targeted at all 3rd Class Primary School children. The Fire Authority has delivered this programme from inception in 2006 and every year subsequently (*except during the recent pandemic*). Over 20,000 pupils have participated in the Primary School's Programme to date.

The Fire Authority has provided training and refresher training for a number of firefighters in each brigade to assist them to deliver this Programme to all school children in Third Class in Kilkenny City and County where the school management accept our invitation to visit their schools.

Training

Kilkenny County Council's Fire and Rescue Service are obliged under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to ensure that our Fire Fighters and Officers are adequately trained and competent to deal with tasks and varying roles they may encounter in the performance of their duties.

All personnel responding to Fire and Rescue Service incidents require a minimum level of training to meet core requirements. In addition, many personnel also require further training for specialist or supervisory roles. Furthermore, a number of Fire and Rescue Service personnel have completed Instructor courses in order that they in turn can instruct and direct delivery of training sessions/courses. Personnel also require appropriate refresher training in all of the above throughout their careers, generally delivered either through on-station training or through specific refresher courses.

Training has traditionally been delivered at varying *levels* (e.g. *Local Station, Fire Authority, Region, National and International*) and through a variety of arrangements.

A Water Awareness Course was held in Graiguenamanagh Fire Station. Instructors on the course are external. This course provides practical training on the knowledge and skills that are required to enable firefighters to safely operate near water.

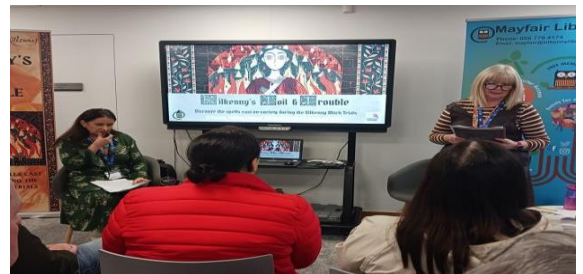
LIBRARY



National Public Library Conference 2024

Kilkenny County Council Library Service was delighted to host the National Public Libraries Conference 2024 in November. The theme of this year's conference was "Libraries, a space for both an escape and exploration; a refuge from the world and a doorway into it" and we welcomed colleagues from all over the country for 3 days of presentations on a range of topics from AI to countering disinformation. Staff in the Mayfair Library were on hand to welcome everyone for a tour of the new library.

This year, we had two of our own library staff presenting at the conference where they showcased and shared their experiences developing a programme of events commemorating the 700th Anniversary of the witch trials in Kilkenny.



Science Week 2024

Science Week ran from November 10th – 17th with hundreds of events taking place nationwide. We ran a programme of free science workshops for primary school children throughout the week to encourage them to get involved, experiment, investigate and learn more about the world around them.



Highlights included a visit from Luke's Deadly Dinosaurs, explosive experiments with the Nutty Scientists and Junior Einsteins and a wind turbine making workshop. The Rediscovery Centre also held a week-long residency in the Mayfair Library, teaching members of the public how to repair and transform their old clothes and support climate action in their local communities.

A number of flower bulbs were also distributed to local schools, creches, community groups and individuals so that they could learn to grow them over the winter months.

Thomastown Library Update

- Superstructure blockwork is 90% completed on the ground floor. First floor blockwork has now commenced.
- Both stairs and landings are poured to first floor level.
- Curran Aluminium have commenced installing windows and glazing on the ground floor. External doors will follow once the screed is completed.



St. Canice's Christmas Tree Festival

If you head down to the St. Canice's Christmas tree festival which runs from Dec 5th to 9th you'll spot Kilkenny County Council's Library Service's entry titled "Tree Leaves and Tall Tales". Earlier this year we collaborated with design students and tutors from SETU to explore ways in which damaged library books could be used to create new and innovative products. Our Christmas tree entry was inspired by this collaboration.

Our entry features damaged books which have been repurposed to create some unique Christmas decorations. Staff member Laura facilitated free workshops in Loughboy Library, Castlecomer Library and the Mayfair Library where attendees learned how to make these decorations and even helped to make a few for our tree. We hope that our entry will inspire others to make their own and to give something old a new lease of life this Christmas.



Library Activities

This month we held lots of activities and events across our libraries.

These events included:

- A mending and repairing workshop for teens in the Mayfair Library
- An eco-friendly Christmas papercraft workshop in Loughboy Library
- A slime workshop in Ferrybank Library
- A new art group for adults in Graig Library
- A one-to-one energy advice clinic in Castlecomer Library
- A knitting and crochet group in Thomastown Library
- Christmas wreath-making in Urlingford Library

Library staff prepared, recorded, edited and published **242** posts and videos on our social media platforms in November. Our engagements for the month were **6,002** and our videos and reels had **6,707** views. Our virtual newsletter was sent to **7,980** email accounts.

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

Here are 2 ways in which Kilkenny County Council Library Service helped to further the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in November:

SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production

Library staff held a number of Christmas papercraft workshops to upcycle damaged library books into Christmas ornaments.

SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth

Our library branches provided free access to PCs, WiFi, study and workspace as well as access to free online learning courses.

Image: SDG8



ARTS

The Art of Change Youth Arts Programme has come to an end with a final evaluation session with the young people taking place on the 26th November 2024. During the Spring and Autumn this year, 32 young people took part in a series of workshops in Youth Centres with a variety of artists. The sessions saw the young people delve into different art practices and approaches offering them a new perspective and new ideas.

The programme also delivered workshops to 77 students in two secondary schools. One school located in the City and the other in a rural location. The Rediscovery Centre delivered their Sustainable Fashion Workshop which is particularly tailored to secondary schools.

Impacts:

- The project exposed young people to how art, culture and creativity can help us understand the world around us, to shift our thinking in ways hard facts often can't.
- The group became aware of how art and creativity are a powerful tool in helping us process big ideas and create change. That small changes in attitudes and values can build to create great impact.
- The project facilitated meaningful connection with the changes that are happening in our environment. It offered young people another way to connect with nature and the environment, providing another way in.
- The programme promoted diversity and inclusion, creating a safe space for young people with similar interests to come together and share time together outside of school on topics and creative activities they value.
- The workshops focused on engaging young people in artistic practices and processes which encouraged them to consider our environment and the impact we can have on Climate Change
- The programme engaged highly skilled artists who have been specifically chosen due to the unique aspects of their practice which in different ways aimed to highlight, respond to, reflect on, or force our attention on the devastating effects climate change is having across the world and the massive disruption to interconnected ecosystems.



Art of Change Workshops at The Drum & Ossory Youth

Creative Ireland

During November the Creative Ireland Programme in Kilkenny continued to support a variety of projects across multiple cultural sectors, aligning with the strategic priorities of both the Creative Ireland Programme and Creative Kilkenny including Climate Action, Local Economic Development, the Town Centre First initiative and the promotion of Vibrant Communities.

Building a sustainable legacy of high-quality, inclusive, and diverse initiatives, the programme demonstrates a collaboration between various external agencies and internal

strategic goals, including Biodiversity, Arts, Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, Heritage, Healthy Kilkenny, Age Friendly, Integration, Climate Action, Libraries, Community, Night Time Economies, and the Local Enterprise Office. Key initiatives included Cruinniú na nÓg, Bookville, Alice Kyteler events, Art for Change, Living Artfully, Age Friendly Creative Christmas Connections and Live Music Performances in Retirement Homes. Creative Kilkenny developed positive working relationships with youth and community groups and key stakeholders on an ongoing basis.



Niamh Sharkey Illustration Workshop



School Children engaging with the Pinocchio Exhibition, Mayfair Library

HERITAGE

Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble festivities to commemorate the 700th anniversary of Kilkenny's Witch Trials took place throughout October and early November 2024 with an engaging and creative programme for all to enjoy. A steering group comprised local event organisers was brought together by the Heritage Office and chaired by Tim Butler, Director of Services. A coordinated and integrated programme was developed which included:

- The Alice Kyteler Festival organised by Kilkenny Archaeological Society;
- Specialised tours and lectures at the Medieval Mile Museum and Kilkenny Castle;
- 'The Witch Hunt of Alice Kyteler' a play by Core Productions;
- A Service of Atonement for Petronilla de Midia at St. Canice's Cathedral

A public programme of events primarily aimed at young people was run by the Heritage Office and Library Service funded by Creative Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media along with Kilkenny County Council.

Highlights included an Educational Resource Pack delivered to over 13,000 primary school children around the County just in time for Halloween; children's art and history workshops; walking tours; a podcast; and a series of short videos. The event received significant local, national and international media attention including BBC, Irish Independent, RTE news and Kilkenny People. Below are the links to the articles.

- <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx241e9d222o>
- <https://www.kilkennypeople.ie/news/what-s-on/1604197/experience-the-chilling-tale-of-ireland-s-first-witchcraft-trial-at-kilkenny-s-new-toil-and-trouble-festival.html>
- <https://www.independent.ie/life/heresy-persecution-and-abuse-of-power-the-case-of-witch-alice-kyteler-a-wealthy-woman-who-refused-to-submit-to-the-hierarchy/a825825328.html>
- <https://www.rte.ie/news/leinster/2024/1030/1478228-kilkenny-festival/>

Full details of events and resources that were created to commemorate this event can be found on the Kilkenny's Toil and Trouble website:

<https://content.kilkenny.ie/toilandtrouble>



Alice Kyteler Events of Fin Dwyer workshops in schools



'The Witch Hunt of Alice Kyteler' a play by Core Productions

Biodiversity

Kilkenny's Draft Biodiversity Action Plan is now on public consultation and is open for comment until Wednesday 18th December 2024. It is being advertised in local press and local radio and over 30 non-governmental organisations have been notified of the opportunity to review the draft plan. The draft plan has over 30 actions. Kilkenny's Biodiversity Working Group, a newly formed group have provided support and expertise in the development of the plan and will assist in driving the actions forward in the years ahead.

In November, representatives from the Biodiversity Working Group met with the Kilkenny Education Training Board to determine the best pathway to create more ecology-based training opportunities locally to encourage more people to upskill in practical field ecology.



Kilkenny's Biodiversity ACTION PLAN 2025-2030

Public Consultation Open!

A draft Biodiversity Action Plan for Kilkenny is now on public consultation. It has been prepared after community engagement during the summer. The public are invited to review the draft plan and submit their comments.

The draft Biodiversity Action Plan is available to view on <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/> or a paper copy can be requested via biodiversity@kilkennycoco.ie by ringing 056-7794920.

Submissions are welcome until the 18th of December via:



1. The online consult portal, <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/> Scan this code for access.
2. Email biodiversity@kilkennycoco.ie
3. Send a written submission to:
Biodiversity Officer, Community Section,
Kilkenny County Council, St Patricks Court,
Patricks Str., Kilkenny City, R95 N28F.

The development of Kilkenny's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 has been supported by The Heritage Council.



FINANCE

The expenditure by service division to the end of November is set out in table 1. Total Expenditure for the period was €103.9m compared with the annual budget of €111m.

Table 1	Actual YTD November 2024	Budget Full Year 2024
	€'000's	€'000's
Housing & Building	28,552	26,258
Road Transport & Safety	30,076	29,958
Water Services	7,055	7,699
Development Management	15,908	14,720
Environmental Services	15,852	16,899
Recreation & Amenity	7,322	8,759
Agriculture, Education, Health, Welfare	568	690
Miscellaneous Services	9,137	6,331
Central Management Charges for Allocation	2,299	
OVERALL TOTAL	116,768	111,134

Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant Scheme

As part of Budget 2024, the Government signed off on a package of €257m for the Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant as a vital measure for small and medium Enterprises. This rollout was managed through the local authorities and funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). Eligible businesses will receive a once-off grant which will be based on the value of their Commercial Rates Bill in 2023.

A total of 2,450 grants were paid out up to 31st October 2024 with a value of €4,394,000. The scheme closed on 27th September, 2024 and the online portal closed on 25th October.

Power Up Grant

As part of Budget 2025, the Government has announced a new €4,000 grant called Power Up, to assist businesses in hospitality, retail and beauty sectors. This rollout is being managed through the local authorities and funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE).

The main eligibility criteria are the same as for the Increased Cost of Business Scheme: Kilkenny County Council has, to date, paid out €3,128,000 in Power Up Grants to 780 businesses.

Rates Revaluation

Further to Revaluation 2017, 197 customers with a total rate demand value of €4.5m appealed their new valuation to the Valuation Tribunal. To date 191 appeals have been completed. The following is a breakdown of the appeal outcomes to date:

Decrease in Revaluation on Appeal	149 cases
Appeal Withdrawn	33 cases
Increase in Revaluation on Appeal.....	1 case
No change to Revaluation on Appeal	9 cases
Appeals outstanding.....	2 cases

The total annual Income lost to date stands at €853k.

Finance Update

The bank overdraft facility was not utilized in the eleven-month period to the end of November.

Budget 2025

The 2025 budget was adopted by Council at the Statutory Budget Meeting on Friday, 6th December, 2024. The total estimated expenditure for 2025 comes to €120.5m which is 9.4m (8%) higher than the comparable figure for 2024. The budget includes increased expenditure allocations across Housing, Local Roads Maintenance, Economic Development, Tourism, Community, Climate Change, Town Regeneration, Fire Service, Libraries and Parks/Open Spaces.

A commercial rate increase of 4% was approved. This is only the second time commercial rates has been increased since 2008. The prompt payment discount was increased to 8.3% (capped at €300 per rate account) from 5.8%. The increase in the prompt payment incentive for commercial rate payers would mean that the net increase would be less than 2% for the majority of rate payers if they avail of the prompt payment discount.