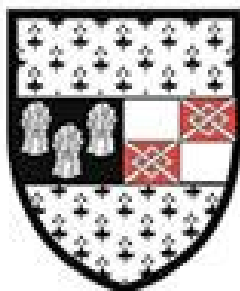


# Kilkenny County Council



## Housing Report



6 NEW HOUSES AT MANOR WALK ROSEHILL

**31<sup>st</sup> December 2016**

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## **SECTION 1: POLICY**

### **A. SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2015 - 2018**

The Housing Strategy was approved at the Council Meeting in June 2015. This Strategy resulted in the approval of €39.8ml for the construction and acquisition of accommodation along with the cost to provide units under the RAS/Leasing/CAS Schemes and Long Term Voids.

The Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government has sought the accelerated delivery of housing units under *'Rebuilding Ireland, An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness'*. This Council targeted acquisitions in 2016 and turnkey developments to fast track delivery. Fifty three (53) units were 'sale agreed' in 2016 and a public tender has issued for expression of interest from developers with turnkey proposals. Also the Council is examining suitable lands for purchase in areas of greatest need. 18 units were completed during 2016 by the Council and a further 12 units by Cluid Voluntary Body.

The emphasis in 2017 will be on 'new builds' and derelict/unfinished properties and estates.

This Council is prioritising the Western Environs area that has the potential to provide 3,688 housing units (public/private). In order to open these lands the Council is seeking approval for funding from the Department under the LIHAF scheme to support the delivery of critical infrastructure.

It is expected that a 'Repair and Leasing' Initiative will be rolled out in 2017 that will concentrate on single vacant units that require repairs and in return these units will be signed up under a lease arrangement with the local authority.

### **B. HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2016**

The Statutory three year Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) was carried out in September 2016. This is the last of the three year full Housing Needs Assessment and will be replaced by an Annual Assessment in May 2017. The approved number of housing applicants at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 is 2,059.

## C. PROPERTY TAX

The Council is obliged by law to pay Property tax for our rented housing stock. The amount paid in 2016 is €194,040 and the amount estimated on Local Authority houses for 2017 amounts to €196,290 (2,181 houses).

## D. HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

Kilkenny commenced the Introduction of the HAP Scheme in mid October 2014.

Where a client is eligible and approved for HAP, the local authority will pay, on behalf of the client, a monthly rent to a landlord. In return the housing client will be required to pay a contribution towards this rent to the local authority. This will be a differential rent based on household weekly income, in a similar way to the differential rents charged for all local authority housing. The Scheme is now rolled out to all Local Authorities except the Dublin authorities. They will commence the scheme in Q1 2017.

There are 711 HAP tenancies in Kilkenny at 31/12/2016. These clients are an even mix of transfers of rent supplement clients and new clients approved as having a social housing need.

All clients on a long term rent supplement payment will transfer from the Department of Social Protection scheme to the HAP scheme. There are over 300 households in Kilkenny on rent supplement at present and these will be contacted in the 2017 to arrange the transfer of their housing support to the Local Authority.

Minister Coveney notified local authorities of significant amendments to the levels of supports available under the HAP scheme in 2016. This is provided for by the Housing Assistance Payment (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2016, which have legal effect from **1 July 2016** as follows:

	FAMILY SIZE						
	Single Shared Accom	Couple Shared Accom	Single	Couple with no children	Couple/Lone Parent with 1 child	Couple/Lone Parent with 2 children	Couple/Lone Parent with three or more children
New Rate	€230	€270	€480	€530	€630	€660	€690
Old Rate	€200	€230	€390	€430	€540	€565	€590

## **F. NATIONAL DIFFERENTIAL RENTS FRAMEWORK**

Under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, there is a commitment to review the differential rents system for social housing with a timeline for action indicated as Q2 2017.

The Housing Department carried out a full rent review in February 2016 (3,200 accounts) based on tenant's current household income. The next general rent review for all tenants will be carried out in 2018. The Council will need to address some of the anomalies in the current rent scheme and this can only be achieved by having rent harmonisation as is the case for all local authorities. This matter will be reviewed in the context of rolling out the National Rent Framework.

## **G. TENANT (INCREMENTAL) PURCHASE SCHEME 2016**

The scheme was introduced with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 but came into operation on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Tenants over a year are eligible to apply and also must have reckonable income greater than €15,000. The house must also be deemed eligible for sale. The purchase price is based on a percentage discount of the market value of the property, or, half the estimated replacement cost of the dwelling, whichever is the greater.

<b>Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme</b>	
<b>Number of Applications Received in 2016</b>	35
<b>Number Invalid</b>	12
<b>Offers Made</b>	10
<b>Further Information Required</b>	10
<b>Valuation Stage</b>	2
<b>Did not Proceed</b>	1

## **H. DISABILITY STRATEGY**

The Housing Agency requested the update of our draft Disability strategy submitted in 2015 to reflect the changes in the recent Housing Needs Assessment carried out by Kilkenny County Council in October 2016 and to reflect the outstanding data submitted by the HSE on Emerging Need. This updated draft Strategy is now submitted to the Housing Agency for inclusion in the overarching National Disability Strategy.

The core goal of the Strategy is to meet the identified housing needs of people with disabilities locally whether they are currently living in the community or in a congregated setting.

## **I. TENANT HANDBOOK**

The current Tenant Handbook is in place for over 10 years and is currently being reviewed, as discussed at the Housing Strategic Policy Committee. A copy of the current Tenant Handbook was circulated to all members. This handbook outlines the responsibility of both the tenant and landlord (Kilkenny County Council) in relation to housing maintenance. The revised Handbook will be completed in the first quarter of 2016 and circulated to all tenants. This will assist members when dealing with queries from tenants and making representations.

## SECTION 2: CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Outlined in the table below is a synopsis of the numerous capital projects delivered and currently being managed by the Housing Section. Further explanatory details for some of the projects are provided in the subsequent paragraphs.

### 2.1 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015 -2018:

**215 Units      Budget: €39.8ml      Additional Budget: €5ml for Acquisitions**

Delivered to Date				
Scheme	Number of Units	Budget Amount	Location	Stage/Comments
Construction	18	€ 2,875,782.00	Gaol Road (10), Rural Cottages (2), Rosehill (6)	Completed and allocated in 2016
Long Term Voids / Derelicts	24	€ 607,862.00	Countywide	24 units completed and allocated in 2015
	11	€ 547,303.00	Countywide	Completed and allocated in 2016
AHB's	12	€ 1,488,011.00	Friary Walk, Callan	Completed and occupied
Acquisitions	24	€ 3,452,060.00	Countywide	Purchased and allocated in 2015
	53	€ 7,593,694.00	Countywide	53 'sale agreed' in 2016; Of these - 30 are allocated, 7 awaiting works and 16 awaiting closure of sale
<b>142</b>		<b>€16,564,712.00</b>		



*6 no A3 rated Houses at Manor Walk Rosehill, Kilkenny City, 4 no 3 bed and 2 no 2 bed.*

*Constructed by Kilkenny County Council. Completed and allocated in December 2016.*

<b>In Progress &amp; Planning Stage</b>				
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>No. of Units</b>	<b>Budget Amount</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Stage/Comments</b>
<b>Construction</b>	TBA	TBA	Brewery Site	Design Stage. Budget amount and tenure mix to be confirmed.
	38	€6,392,822.00	Bolton, Callan	Planning Stage (Part 8 Statutory Consultation Underway). With Dept for Stage 2 approval.
	24	€5,433,707.00	Donaguile, Castlecomer	Design Stage. With Dept for Stage 2 approval.
	14	€ 2,320,026.00	Station Avenue, Ballyragget	Stage 1 approval received. Design team to be procured
	18	€ 2,979,878.00	Main Street, Piltown	Stage 1 approval received. Design team to be procured
	10	€ 1,429,411.76	Robertshill, Circular Road, Kilkenny City	Land being transferred to KCC. Design team to be procured.
<b>Turnkey</b>	7	€ 1,600,000.00	The Haven, Newpark	Under construction. To be completed by Feb 2017
	11	€ 1,900,000.00	Togher Way, Urlingford	Due to commence. Expected completion date June 2017
	TBA	TBA	Countywide	Expressions of Interest Sought from Developers - Closing Date Jan 2017
<b>Long Term Void / Derelicts</b>	9	€ 500,000.00	Countywide	Works to take place in 2017.
<b>CAS 2014</b>	5	€ 982,398.00	Camphill Thomastown	Under Construction
<b>CAS 2015</b>	82	€ 9,873,586.00	Countywide	Various Stages of Completion
	<b>218</b>	<b>€ 33,411,828.76</b>		

It should be noted that any capital expenditure over and above the Department level of funding must be provided from the Council's contribution as provided in the revenue budget or from internal capital receipts. Internal Capital Receipts arise from the sale of Council units under the Tenant Purchase Scheme.

<b>Other Social Housing Supports in progress at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016</b>			
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>No Units</b>		
<b>HAP</b>	711		2016 target = 8 new tenancies per week
<b>RAS</b>	551		49 units taken on in 2016 with 30 units leaving the scheme i.e. net 19 units
<b>Leasing 2016</b>	3		3 Aylesbury, Ferrybank
<b>LA Extensions &amp; Adaptation Scheme</b>	17	266,924	3 Extensions 14 Adaptations (90% recoupment)
<b>Housing Loans</b>	50	€4,467,156	71 applications received with 50 approved
<b>Energy Efficiency</b>	21	€147,093	Works completed
<b>Private Grants</b>	309	€1,946,775	Full Allocation expended
<b>Traveller Accommodation</b>	6	€1,328,546	Phase 1 St Catherine's - 2 units completed Phase 2 Under Construction (4 units)



## 2.2. ACQUISITIONS

Acquisitions are one of the options to address housing need. It should be noted that not every house on the market is suitable to purchase into stock. To accelerate the delivery of housing units in the short term the Council sought and were approved an additional allocation of €5M for the acquisition of 30 units in 2016. We are targeting the areas of greatest need i.e. homeless, overcrowding, traveller accommodation and Special Needs.

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 we have 'Sale Agreed' on 53 houses (see table) to the value of €7,593,694 compared to 24 purchases for the full year in 2015. Of these 53 houses – 30 have been allocated, 7 are awaiting works and 16 are awaiting closure of sales.

Area	Number of Properties where Sales were Agreed in 2016
Callan	4
Kilkenny City	23
North Kilkenny	12
South Kilkenny	11
Thomastown	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>53</b>

While we continue to acquire units throughout the city and county the Council is prioritising the delivery of new builds in 2017, as the Council are conscious that first time buyers are in the same market for acquisitions. However, not all houses for sale are suitable for social housing due to price, standard, low priority, low housing need, removed from market or there is an over concentration of social housing in that area.

There can be delays with the **conveyance stage** of acquiring these properties that can take up to 3 to 6 months to complete. This is beyond the control of the Council.

### Turnkey Developments

The Council has advertised for 'expression of interest' from local developers to provide for completed schemes (turnkey developments) to meet housing need along with acquisitions. The closing date for submissions is the 20<sup>th</sup> January and we are hopeful that some viable projects will be presented under this process. All projects will be subject to Dept approval.

### **2.3. HOUSE EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS - LA HOUSES - DISABILITY GRANTS**

The Council was notified on 30th June of its allocation of €261,191 for disability/ improvement works (DPG) to 18 Local Authority houses. Three extensions were completed and 14 houses adapted for disability and overcrowding need.

### **2.4. RETROFIT PROGRAMME - ENERGY EFFICIENCY WORKS**

Phase 1 of the Special energy efficiency upgrade on 21 houses in Polerone Green, Mooncoin were commenced and completed in 2016 at a cost of €147,093.

### **2.5. RETURN VACANT COUNCIL UNITS FOR RENTING –CASUAL VACANCIES & VOIDS**

The Department of Environment approved funding for eleven (11) long term voids and three (3) derelict units on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 to be renovated and returned back into productive use at a cost of €547,303. Works are progressing on a number of these units and grant must be drawn down by end of the year.

- At the start of 2016 we had **12** Vacant Units
- **98** Units became available during above period
- Therefore we have had **110** vacant units during the above period
- Out of the **110** vacant units **89** have been refurbished and returned back into stock
- Therefore at date 21<sup>th</sup> Dec we have **21** Vacant Units- breakdown of **12** casual vacancies and **9** long term voids.
- Of these **21**, **6** are currently on site being refurbished, with **15** at pre Tender stage (i.e. about to be refurbished).

*Breakdown of current vacant units within each Municipal District:-*

<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>No of Vacancies at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016</b>
Municipal District of Kilkenny East	8
Municipal District of Kilkenny West	5
Municipal District of Piltown	3
Municipal District of Castlecomer	5

## SECTION 3: HOUSING DEMAND & SUPPLY

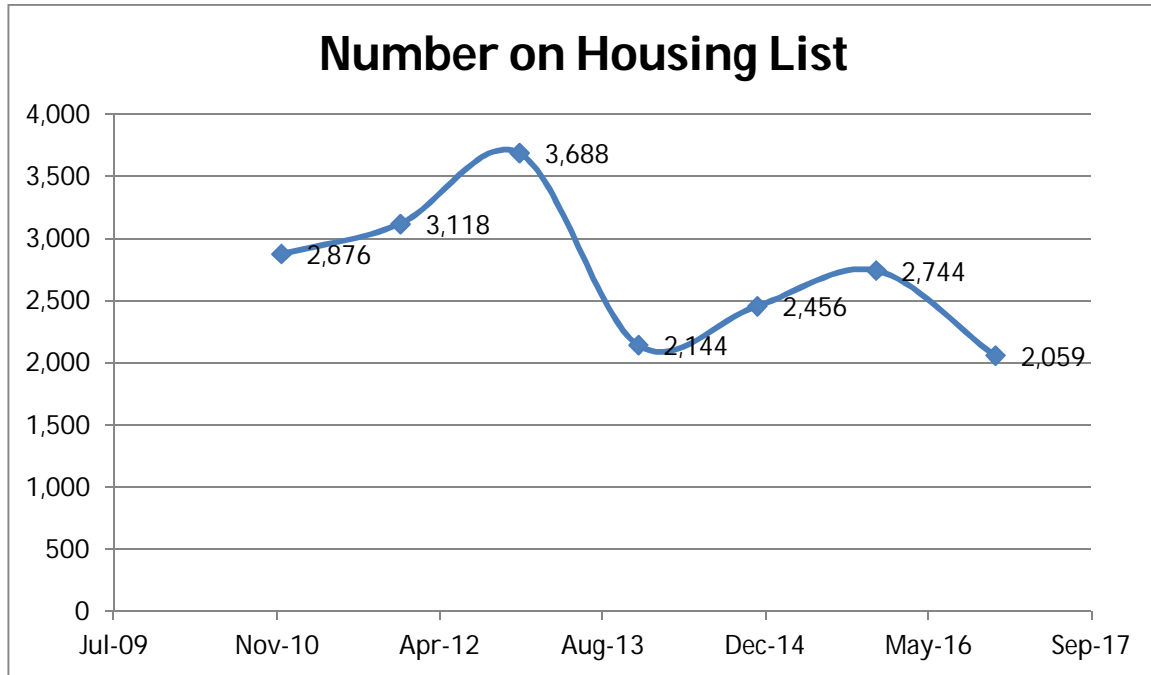
### 3.1 SUMMARY OF SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENT 2016 (HNA)

The Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government directed under s.21 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 the preparation of a Summary of Social Housing Assessments to be carried out in each of the administrative areas. The purpose of the **Summary of Social Housing Assessments** is to capture the **total number of households qualified** for social housing support across the county whose social housing need has not being met, in order to understand the level of need for such support. This Summary was last carried out in April 2013.

This undertaking of the Summary of Assessment was carried out on 21<sup>st</sup> September and returned to the Department of Environment on **10<sup>th</sup> October 2016**. This is the last of the three year full Housing Needs Assessment and will be replaced by an Annual Assessment in May 2017. The approved number of housing applicants at 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016 is 1,732. A total of 751 applicants/households are removed from the List as they failed to return their application or did not qualify on income grounds. This list does not include those households on a transfer list or in accommodation provided under RAS or HAP.

The current Housing List at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 is **2,059**. A comparative analysis with previous years is outlined below:

Year	Number on Housing List
December 2016	2,059
December 2015	2,744
December 2014	2,456
December 2013	2,144 (Last Statutory Assessment 2013)
December 2012	3,688
December 2011	3,118
December 2010	2,876



Then housing demand broken down by no. of bedrooms is as follows:

One Bed	Two Bed	Three Bed	Four Bed
812	707	465	75
<b>39%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>4%</b>

**Housing List at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016**

<b>Area</b>	<b>No of Approved Applicants</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Ballyragget	38	1.8%
Ballyhale	11	0.5%
Bennettsbridge	29	1.4%
Callan	81	3.9%
Castlecomer	53	2.6%
Clara	1	0.0%
Clogh	8	0.4%
Coon	3	0.1%
Ferrybank	55	2.7%
Freshford	26	1.3%
Glenmore	3	0.1%
Goresbridge	9	0.4%
Gowran	28	1.4%
Graiguenamanagh	42	2.0%
Hugginstown	2	0.1%
Inistioge	20	1.0%
Johnstown	22	1.1%
Kells	14	0.7%
Kilkenny City & Environs	1,270	61.7%
Kilmacow	38	1.8%
Kilmanagh	7	0.3%
Kilmoganny	6	0.3%
Knocktopher	6	0.3%
Moneenroe	21	1.0%
Mooncoin	29	1.4%
Mullinavat	4	0.2%
New Ross Environs	13	0.6%
Paulstown	15	0.7%
Piltown	42	2.0%
Fiddown	10	0.5%
Skeoghvosteen	3	0.1%
Slieverue	12	0.6%
Stoneyford	9	0.4%
The Rower	0	0.0%
Thomastown	90	4.4%
Tullaroan	2	0.1%
Urlingford	34	1.7%
Windgap	3	0.1%
	<b>2,059</b>	

## 3.2 HOUSING SUPPLY

The Council has 2,268 units of accommodation to meet its housing need along with 551 RAS units and 113 leased units secured with private landlords and voluntary housing Associations. These units do not include units provided by the Voluntary Housing Associations who have provided in excess of 840 Units, of which, 251 units of these are for the Elderly and 397 units for Special Needs.

A total of 136 offers of accommodation were made in the period January to Dec 2016 with a 15% refusal rate.

### Analysis of Offers of Accommodation made Jan - Dec 2016 – old Electoral Areas

Electoral Area	New Lettings	Casual Vacancies	Refusals
<b>Ballyragget</b>	7	17	2
<b>Callan</b>	4	6	1
<b>Kilkenny City and Environs</b>	38	31	8
<b>Piltown</b>	6	9	4
<b>Thomastown</b>	4	14	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>20</b>

### Analysis of Offers made Jan- Dec 2016 – New Municipal Districts

Electoral Area	New Lettings	Casual Vacancies	Refusals
<b>Castlecomer</b>	7	17	2
<b>Piltown</b>	6	9	4
<b>Kilkenny City East &amp; West</b>	46	51	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>20</b>

- **49** offers of transfers were made up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.
- **21** offers of accommodation were made to applicants who were homeless/potentially homeless.
- There are **2,059** approved applicants on the Social Housing Support waiting list at the end December 2016
- **436** Housing Need Assessment appointments were held in 2016

### **3.3 RAS –RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME**

This scheme continues to be a defined social housing option with 551 units available to the local Authority. The Department of Environment set a national target of 1,000 new units nationally to be provided in 2016 with a target of 19 set for Kilkenny for 2016. In 2016, 49 units were taken on with 30 units leaving the scheme i.e. net 19 units.

### **3.4 LEASING**

To date the Leasing model (116 units) has not been as successful as the RAS Scheme in delivering units as part of the Social Housing Strategy. This was mainly due to the level of finance needed from the voluntary bodies own resources and the level of rents in rural local authorities to support the repayment of their capital loans.

There are currently 14 to 16 leasing proposals under negotiations with approved Housing Associations/Housing Agency for the provision of **362** units of accommodation in the city and county i.e. Kilkenny City & Environs, Callan, Thomastown, Castlecomer, Ferrybank, Mooncoin, Urlingford and Goresbridge.

There are a number of other sites that are very suitable to meet our housing supply but require negotiations with the input from third parties such as the Banks, Liquidators, Receivers and NAMA. Also the majority of these sites are the subject of planning compliance.

### 3.5 CAPITAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME 'CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2014 - 2016

These CAS units form part of the 2015-17 Housing Capital Programme. The Department invited applications under a 'Special Call' during 2014, 2015 and 2016 and the following applicants were approved and are at various stages of completion:

No. of Units	Approved Housing Body & location of units	Status	Budget €
12	<b>Special Call 2014</b> - Cluid VHA – Friary Walk, Callan	Completed 2016 and allocated	<b>1,488,011</b>
5	<b>Special Call 2014</b> - Camphill Thomastown – Brooke House, Thomastown	On site 2016	<b>1,327,088</b>
6	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - SOS. H.A. Ltd – Cashel Downs, Kilkenny	House purchased works in progress	<b>500,000</b>
4	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - Good Shepherd Centre – Purchases	4 completed and allocated	<b>423,000</b>
5	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - Focus Ireland – purchases	5 completed 2016	<b>692,792</b>
12	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - Good Shepherd Centre – Wing 52 Project Church lane, Kilkenny	Design & tender stage	<b>1,200,000</b>
16	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - Camphill, Callan – Nimble Spaces Project at Prologue, Westcourt & Moate Lane	Design & Planning stage	<b>2,200,000</b>
4	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - Belmont Park HA Ltd -	Withdrawn by VB	
6	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - Good Shepherd Centre – construction project	Preliminary Site investigation and planning stage	<b>666,000</b>
4	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - Cluid HA – Turnkey Development did not proceed – funds transferred to purchases	Purchases in progress	<b>606,000</b>
4	<b>Special Call 2015</b> - Camphill, Ballytobin – construction	Design & planning stage	<b>514,361</b>
15	<b>Special Call 2015 – Approved April 2016</b> – Respond! – Golf Links Road	Design stage	<b>2,419,478</b>
5	<b>Extra project approved 2016 – Camphill</b> – Grennan Villa, Thomastown	In progress	<b>334,955</b>
5	<b>Special Call 2016</b> – Oaklee Housing – Logan Street, Thomastown	Acquisitions in progress	<b>801,611</b>
2	<b>Special Call 2016</b> – Waterford Dove HA – project at Belmont Road, Ferrybank	2 acquisitions completed and allocated	<b>410,064</b>
5	<b>Special Call 2016</b> – Focus Ireland – purchase of 5 units	In progress	<b>729,705</b>
110		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,313,065</b>

The 'Special Call' in 2015 under the CAS Scheme resulted in the nine projects approved. The six (6) successful Voluntary Housing Bodies secured funding of €7ml in principle from the Dept of Environment to meet a special category of housing need;



## **Calls for Proposals 2016**

LA's were informed by Circular dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016 (Housing 29/2016) that the CAS Scheme was open to Approved Housing Bodies to submit proposals for the construction and acquisition of houses/apartments to meet the needs of homeless persons, elderly, people with a disability with a particular emphasis on moving people from a congregated setting into community based living.

Construction Projects - Closing date for submissions was 30th November 2016. A number of submissions are with the Dept for approval.

St Patrick's, Kells Road, is working with three Approved Housing Bodies to source and provide the community accommodation to address the de-congregation of its current accommodation.

## SECTION 4: PRIVATE HOUSING

### 4.1 PRIVATE HOUSING GRANTS:

The Council provides Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability to enable them to remain living independently in their own homes for longer and also to facilitate early return from hospital stays. The Mobility Aid (MAG) and Housing Adaptation (HGD) grant schemes are medically assessed and requires certification from a qualified medical practitioner and report from the Council's approved Occupational Therapist. The OT carries out an assessment and assigns one of four categories based on priority to each application i.e. Emergency, Priority 1, P2 and P3. The Housing Aid for Older Persons (HOP) is a grant to assist older people living in poor housing conditions mainly covering rewiring and re-roofing and is assessed in-house by technical staff.

<b>2016 Allocation from the Department</b>	<b>€1,936,266</b>
<b>Kilkenny County Council Contribution - 20%</b>	€387,253
<b>No Applications approved in 2016</b>	309 i.e. 71 HGD €758,179 38 MAG €178,969 200 HOP €1,009,628
<b>Amount Approved</b> <b>Amount Claimed from Department</b>	€1,946,775.45 €1,547,504.61
<b>No. of Applications Approved at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 to be paid from 2017 Budget Allocation</b>	19 i.e. 15 HGD €224,232.42 4 MAG €12,859.60
<b>No. of Applications on hand at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 in process for the 2017 Budget Allocation</b> <b>Amount</b>	310 i.e. 46 HGD €380,974 (estimated) 27 MAG €34,759 (estimated) 237 HOP – To be processed

\*HOP = Housing Aid for Older Persons Scheme, MAG = Mobility Aid Grant Scheme, HGD = Housing Grant for People with a Disability Scheme

The HOP Scheme was opened for receipt of applications (237) from 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016 to the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016. The decision to re-open the HOP Scheme will be reviewed in late 2017.

## 4.2. INSPECTIONS OF PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

The 2009 Act amends the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 under which each housing authority has a responsibility for the standards of private rented accommodation within its jurisdiction. In 2016, 38% of the target inspections were completed.

Private Rented Inspections	2016	2015	2014	2013
<b>RAS</b>	100	115	116	233
<b>HAP</b>	279	211	0	0
<b>Private</b>	35	11	228	2
<b>Voluntary</b>	0	35	37	0
<b>Total</b>	414	372	381	235

The challenge for 2017 is to meet the backlog (244) of inspections carried forward from 2016 along with achieving the target of 483 for 2017.

## 4.3 HOUSING LOANS

### 4.3.1 ANNUITY LOAN

Again in 2016, there was a marked increase in loan activity. The maximum loan amount that the Council can advance is €200,000 or 97% of the value of the house. The fee is €40 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. The loan can be used to purchase a new or second hand or a new build. The applicant must be a first time buyer with exceptions for divorced or separated couples. There are income limits of under €50,000 for a single person and under €75,000 for a couple. Interest rates are now 2.30% variable rate and 2.25% fixed for five years only. Repayment periods of 15, 20, 25 and 30 years are available.

### 4.3.2 Reconstruction Loan

Loans of up to €38,000 may be considered for repair/refurbishment or extension to main residence. The fee is €15 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017. The variable interest rate is the same as that applicable to the normal housing loans, currently 2.30%. Loans in excess of €15,000 must be secured against the property as a charge on the folio. A comparison on loan activity is outlined below for the years 2015 and 2016.

## 2015

	No. Of Applications Received	Approved	No. Paid	Amount Paid
Annuity	62	38	44	€4,440,996
Reconstruction Loan	6	5	4	€13,700
Caravan Loan	3	3	2	€12,460
Total	71	46	50	€4,467,156

## 2016

	No. Of Applications Received	Approved	No. Paid	Amount Paid
Annuity	84	32	29	€3,565,752.37
Reconstruction Loan	6	3	4	€87,000
Caravan Loan	8	7	7	€44,150
Total	98	42	40	€3,696,902.37

### 4.3.3 MORTGAGE ARREARS RESOLUTION PROCESS -MARP

638 Loan Accounts with a capital value of €32.9ml. 130 Loan Accounts in arrears amounting to €572,600 i.e.21%. To date, 123 loans have been treated as MARP cases and borrowers have availed of the various resolution options available under MARP in order to deal with their loan arrears. There are currently 71 loan accounts in MARP with an arrears value of €516,906 i.e. 90% of the total arrears.

### 4.4 INCOME COLLECTION - SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR HOUSING COLLECTIONS

A summary of the collection performances showing the 31 December 2015 arrears position in respect of the main income categories with the comparative figures for the previous year are as follows:

	2014	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016
	Arrears	%	Arrears	%	Arrears	%
Housing Rents	630,000	92%	590,000	92%	531,679	92.5%
Housing Loans	710,000	77%	570,000	82%	617,035	80%
RAS	62,189	94.5%	46,516	95%	69,016	95.34%

## **SECTION 5: TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION & HOMELESS SERVICES**

### **5.1. Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018**

Kilkenny Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 was adopted by Kilkenny County Council on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2014.

A review of the Programme has been completed as directed by the Minister, under Section 17 (1) (a) of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.

The methodology used to carry out this review is outlined as follows:

- Reporting to and monitoring by members of LTACC (Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee).
- Invitation of submissions from those groups who were given notice prior to the preparation of the TAP and to local Traveller Groups.
- Direct consultation with Travellers and Traveller Support Groups.
- Reappraisal of the assessment of accommodation need carried out during 2013 in the preparation of the TAP, utilising information gained from the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2016, results of the Annual Traveller Count 2015 and Progress Reports on the Implementation of the TAP.

The assessment of current and projected needs undertaken in the preparation of the TAP 2014-2018 indicated that a total of 65 units of accommodation would be required during the 5 year period.

Progress in meeting these targets have been significant - In 2014, 9 offers of accommodation were made (2 refusals), in 2015, 20 offers of accommodation were made (1 refusal) while in 2016, 22 offers of accommodation were made (4 Refusals).

#### **The total number of families accommodated in the first three years of the programme is 46**

Probably the most significant achievement of the TAP has been the progress made in the redevelopment of St. Catherine's, Wetlands. Phase 1 has been completed with two houses already allocated, while Phase 2 has commenced, which will see the construction of four houses. Phase 3 will see the completion of the redevelopment with the construction of two houses and a community facility.

In spite of progress made, KCC still faces a number of key challenges in addressing the accommodation needs of Traveller families living in its functional area. These challenges can be summarized as follows:

1. Provision of appropriate Traveller Specific Accommodation to meet the needs of newly formed young families at St. Mary's, Hebron.
2. Meeting the accommodation needs of roadside families in Ferrybank.
3. Growing demand for housing in Rosbercon, compounded by scarcity of available housing, estate agents reluctance to deal with the local authority and proximity to Co. Wexford.
4. Identifying and securing standard houses throughout the City and County for those families who have chosen this option as their accommodation of choice.

The review of the TAP will outline proposals to meet the identified need, however these proposals will **not** necessitate an amendment of the existing programme.

## 5.2. Annual Count of Travellers and their Accommodation Status

The Annual Count of Traveller Families and their Accommodation Status was carried out on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2016 as directed in Circular Letter 47/2016.

The total number of Traveller families resident in the County on November 24<sup>th</sup> was **196**, indicating a 20% increase from 2015 and a 53% increase since 2004, the first year current records were kept.

It is important to note, that the increase in number of families living in Kilkenny is a direct result of new family formations within the existing population, and not an influx of families moving to Kilkenny from other counties.

The table below gives an overview of the six key accommodation categories over 13 Annual Counts and highlights the changing trends in accommodation preferences during that period. ***(Please note the total number of families each year, denotes the total from all accommodation categories included in Department returns and not the total number of families in the accommodation categories listed below)***

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	170	170	157	196
Standard Lettings	50	52	58	67
RAS	10	10	11	13
HAP (PRA)	35	32	16	16
Halting Sites	10	10	10	4 +5*
Group Housing	8	8	8	10
Sharing	18	9	15	32
Roadside	3	0	2	7~

*\*Refers to 5 families residing at St. Catherine's, whose bays have been demolished and who have been provided with temporary facilities during construction of Group Houses.*

*~ Of the 7 roadside families identified on date of count, 2 were parked at Castletown, Rathdowney (not indigenous to Kilkenny) and 5 were parked at the Port Road, Ferrybank, 3 of whom have since secured PRA.*

Of particular interest are the:

- 75% increase in the number of families sharing
- 28% increase in the number of roadside families
- 70% decrease in the number of families in receipt of HAP(Rent allowance), from a height of 54 families in receipt of SWA Rent Allowance in 2010.

Comparative figures between 2015 and 2016 indicate:

- 53% increase in the number of families sharing
- 71% increase in the number of roadside families
- 0% increase in number of families in receipt of HAP

These trends reflect the overall housing crisis and lack of available private rented accommodation in Kilkenny City and County, the spike in new family formations at a younger age and the ongoing difficulty in sourcing suitable houses for purchase.

### **5.3. Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee - L.T.A.C.C.**

Section 21 Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 directs each local authority to appoint a Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) to advise on the provision and management of accommodation for Travellers.

The membership of Kilkenny LTACC, chaired by Cllr. Joe Malone comprises of three members and three officials of the local authority, five representatives the local Traveller and Traveller Bodies and one official from the HSE.

The committee met on five occasions in 2016 including, one meeting convened in November to discuss the review of TAP 2014-2016.

The committee enjoyed almost full attendance at each meeting, with the exception of a Traveller Representative from St. Mary's, Hebron. There is ongoing difficulty in engaging a participant from St. Mary's, despite the best efforts of all concerned.

The main topics for discussion throughout the year centered on (i) The redevelopment of St. Catherine's, (ii) Increase in number of young families parked at St. Mary's, (iii) Difficulties in securing accommodation to meet the needs of families in South Kilkenny, (iv) Roadside parking in Ferrybank, (v) Kilkenny Traveller Horse Project and (vi) Review of TAP 2014-2016.

### 5.3. HOMELESS SERVICES

There were 349 Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations to 31/12/2016. Of the 349, 27 were couples/families and are counted as individual presentations. Breakdown:-

Month	2016	Month	2015
Jan	37	Jan	47
Feb	30	Feb	52
Mar	18	Mar	36
April	26	April	30
May	34	May	33
June	31	June	43
July	31	July	33
August	32	August	30
September	27	September	22
October	30	October	28
November	32	November	28
December	21	December	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>

Breakdown as follows:

	2016		2015
Female	148	Female	203
Male	201	Male	196
Children	181	Children	216

As advised by Homeless Providers there is no history of homeless individuals/families sleeping rough in Kilkenny. On occasion, there may be individuals who come to the attention of homeless services and when this happens every effort is made, in consultation with the individual and the relevant agencies, to address the issues.

- **Emergency Accommodation@ 31/12/2016: - 45 people (35 households)**
  - 17 Adults in Good Shepherd Centre.
  - Apartments at Brother Thomas Place - 7 Occupied and 1 Vacant
  - 1 Adult & 2 Children in the Lodge
  - 12 Adults & 8 Children in Hotel/B&B accommodation
  - no homeless beds in Amber



At local level homeless services continue to be co-ordinated and delivered by Kilkenny Homeless Action Team (KHAT) while oversight of service provision, strategic development and funding is coordinated by Waterford County Council, the designated lead authority for The SE Regional Homeless Services.

## **Housing First**

Housing First is a model for tackling homelessness which focuses on the immediate provision of long term/permanent accommodation for the homeless with supports and services subsequently built around the needs of each individual. Housing First/Led works from the ethos of moving the homeless individual or household immediately from the streets or emergency accommodation into their own accommodation.

The Homeless individual or household is provided with a high level of support until they are linked in with mainstream support services and this is to ensure they can sustain their tenancy. The approach is an alternative to the system of emergency shelter and transitional housing progressions that currently exists in Kilkenny.

## **SECTION 6: COMMUNITY & ESTATE MANAGEMENT**

### **COMMUNITY & ESTATE MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2016**

A key focus of the estate management work in 2016 has been implementing the 5 year Estate Enhancement Plan 2015-2020 plan.

#### **Estate Management Grant Scheme (Total spend €100,000)**

**Objective:** Implementation of the annual estate enhancement grant and expand the number of groups receiving funding in both the City and County in 2016:

- 47 Groups were funded in both the City and County in 2016; it is envisaged that this number will increase further in 2017
- 4 larger scale estate/community enhancement projects were identified and completed in 2016 i.e.
  1. Church Avenue Castlecomer
  2. Station Avenue, Ballyraggett
  3. Bishop Birch Place
  4. Nuenna Court, Freshford

Additional funding was given to the Combined Resident Association Ferrybank for the planting of trees. Four additional large estate projects will be developed in 2017 and annually in line with the Kilkenny County Council 2015-2020 Estate management Strategic Plan

### **KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL TIDY ESTATES COMPLETION 2016**

The aim of this competition is to encourage residents to take an active role in improving the physical appearance of their estate. The competition encourages resident associations across the City and County to plan estate management works within their estates. The initiative has been and will continue to be actively supported by Kilkenny County Council. Kilkenny. Kilkenny County Council appreciates all of the volunteers who actively work towards improving the physical appearance of their estate and who have contributed in a very positive way.

There were three entrance categories and prizes were awarded to the following categories;

- Larger,
- Medium and
- Smaller sized estates.



### Winners

	Small Estate	Medium Estate	Large Estate
1 <sup>st</sup>	Fr Rafter Place, Moneenroe Castecomer	St. Marys Ave, Urlingford	Leaca Ard Ferrybank
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hillcrest, Piltown	De La Salle Place, Kilkenny	Woodview, Freshford
3 <sup>rd</sup>	St Patricks Close, Mullinavat	Assumption Place, Urlingford,	Belfield Ferrybank

### PRIDE OF PLACE NATIONAL COMPETITION 2016

At the annual Pride of Place Awards Ceremony on Saturday (26 November), two groups from Co Kilkenny were presented with top awards in the Competition.

Stoneyford Development Association took runner up place in category two, which is for areas with populations of between 300 and 1,000 while Piltown Community Enterprise took runner up place in category seven, which is for Community Business Enterprise Initiatives.

The winners of the Pride of Place awards, known affectionately by many as the ‘Community Oscars’, were announced at the special gala event in Belfast Waterfront Hall in front of an audience of approximately 1000 guests and VIPs with many more people tuning in on-line to watch the live broadcast of the ceremony. Castlecomer Discovery Park was the third entry from Kilkenny in the competition.



## Community Information

Kilkenny County Council has developed an interactive e magazine that focuses on Kilkenny County Council Community grants, general community information and work carried out by communities and resident associations in Kilkenny City and County. Four of these online newsletters were published and circulated to communities in 2016.

