

# Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge

## Waterford City & County Council



### 5. Management Report Plenary 14th May 2020

14/05/2020

Michael Walsh,  
Príomhfheidhmeannach

14/05/2020

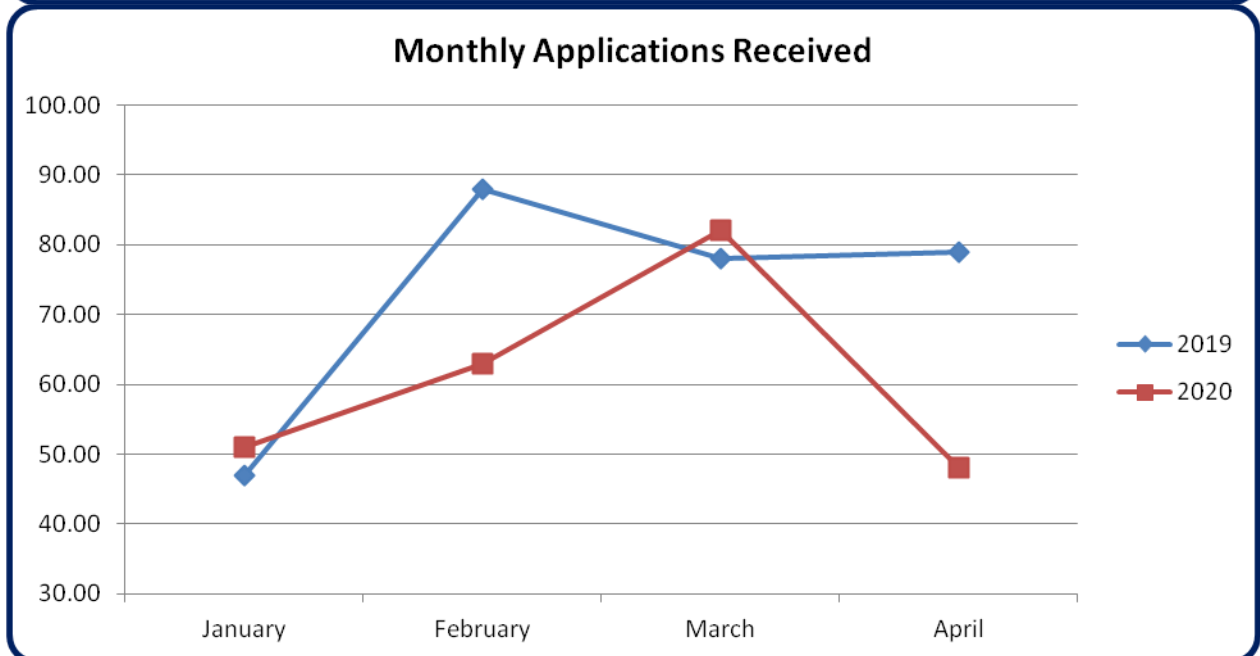
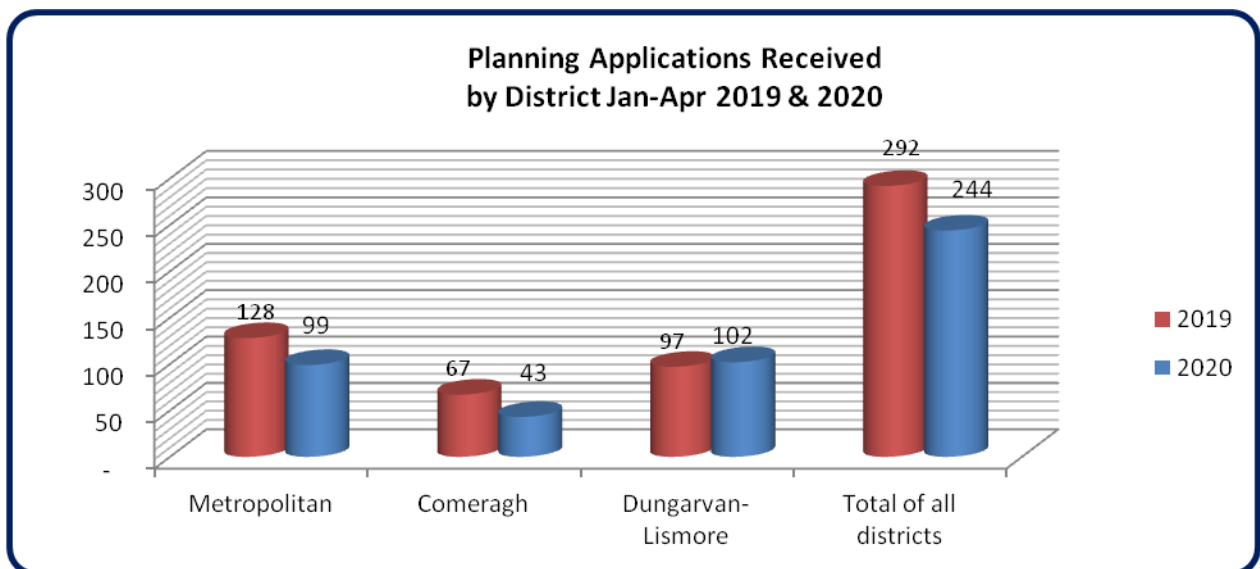
Michael Walsh,  
Chief Executive

# Forbairt Eacnamaíoch & Pleanáil

## Economic Development & Planning

### Planning Applications Received – Countywide

48 Planning applications were received in the month of April countywide. This compares with 78 planning applications received in the same month in 2019. Additional responses are also being received to further information requests. The number of new applications received since the suspension of statutory time periods on the 29th March is approximately 55% of the number that was received during the same period last year. We expect to receive clarification from the Department on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May in relation to the suspension of statutory time periods as the current suspension only extends as far as Saturday 9th May.



## **National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF): Consultation Draft.**

A submission was made on behalf of Waterford City & County Council to the Consultation Draft of the NMPF.

### **Development Plan**

Letter issued to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Office of the Planning Regulator on the 13th March informing them that we are deferring commencement of the City and County Development Plan review process which was due to commence on the 23rd March. This deferral was necessary as a result of our inability to hold public meetings or engage in any meaningful way with any of our stakeholders.

The Department and the OPR have both acknowledged receipt of our correspondence and have no objection to this temporary deferral.

Under normal circumstances, we would be obliged to commence our review process within 26 weeks of the making of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly area (i.e. before the 30th July 2020).

In house, work is continuing on finalising certain aspects of the Draft Plan including:

- The Core Strategy
- County Settlement Strategy
- Housing Needs Demand Assessment
- Retail Strategy
- Joint Retail Strategy in conjunction with Kilkenny County Council
- Metropolitan Spatial Area Plan (MASP)
- Infrastructural Capacity and Constraints assessments

### **North Quays - Tender processes**

#### **a. Advanced contracts**

Tenders have been assessed by Roughan & O'Donovan, Consulting Engineers for the proposed Utility Diversion Works Contract and Demolition Contract. In light of the Covid 19 restrictions the awarding of these contracts are currently being reviewed.

Tenders for Waterford North Quays Independent Check and the Sustainable Transport Bridge Cat 3 Independent Design Check have been issued on e-tenders with response dates 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 respectively.

#### **b. Main contract**

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020 the Waterford North Quays Project Suitability Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) for the Main Construction works to be carried out by a Main Contractor was issued on etenders. Due predominantly to current Covid-19 restrictions, the response date has been extended to the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The SAQ which is stage 1 of a two stage process under a Restricted Procedure will be assessed by an Independent Assessment board. It is planned that the top 5 qualified submissions based on the recommendations of the Board will be invited to stage 2 of the Restricted Procedure Process.

#### **c. SDZ Development**

On 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020 Falcon Real Estate Development Ireland was requested to submit further information in relation to the application in Waterford North Quays Strategic Development Zone.

The SDZ developer has six months to comply with this request; however, they are expected to submit the further information requested to WCCC shortly.

#### **d. Sustainable Transport Bridge, Transport Hub and SDZ Access Infrastructure**

Detailed design for the Sustainable Transport Bridge, Transport Hub and SDZ Access Infrastructure Works are currently being finalised and are due to be completed in the coming weeks. These works will form part of the main construction contract which is currently on tenders, at Suitability Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) stage as outlined above.

#### **Tourism**

The Tourism Team and Visit Waterford are preparing a new marketing plan for Waterford for the rest of 2020 specifically focused on the domestic market. It will have both a national and regional focus across social and digital media, print, radio and on-line travel agencies. The plan will be finalised in the next few weeks and will be activated once restrictions are lifted.

In the interim Visit Waterford are engaging through its social media channels keeping the profile of Waterford to the forefront as destination to visit. Visit Waterford and the Tourism Team are also engaging with stakeholders in the industry to provide attractive packages to potential visitors.

The Councils application under Platforms for growth 2019- 2022 A Programme for Tourism investment programme to develop a world-class visitor experience in the Viking Triangle on the sorting office site has progressed to Stage 3 of the application process and a proposal is currently being worked on for submission to Fáilte Ireland. The closing date has been extended to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Local Enterprise Office**

At the present time, the Local Enterprise Office is the main local agent for delivering government supports and services to the SME sector. It is very important that the Waterford business community has ready access and immediate contact with the Local Enterprise Office whose contact details are: [info@leo.waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:info@leo.waterfordcouncil.ie) or 0761-10-2905. All the LEO's services are outlined at [www.localenterprise.ie/waterford](http://www.localenterprise.ie/waterford)

At the moment, our main supports for small businesses are:

- Free expert one-to-one confidential mentoring and advice sessions in areas such as HR, financial management, e-Commerce and general business
- Business Continuity Vouchers – Consultancy support to a max value of €2,500 in order to develop Business Continuity or Business Recovery plans
- Micro Finance Ireland Loans – low interest loans to a max of €50,000 with a six month moratorium on repayments and interest payments
- Trading Online Vouchers – Vouchers to a max of €2,500 to facilitate businesses to develop e-Commerce platforms

Indicator	At end of Apr 2019	At end of Apr 2020
No. of Clients Met	144	240
No. of clients applying for Measure 1 support	4	8
No. of clients securing Measure 1 support	3	8
Value of Measure 1 support approved	€75,350	€154,420
No. of clients receiving Measure 2 support	442	965
Value of Measure 2 support given	€131,785	€194,231

### Business Continuity Voucher: Open for applications

The new Business Continuity Voucher, available through Local Enterprise Offices, is designed for businesses across every sector that employ up to 50 people.

The voucher is worth up to €2,500 in third party consultancy costs and can be used by companies and sole traders to develop short-term and long-term strategies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to help companies make informed decisions about what immediate measures and remedial actions should be taken, to protect staff and sales.

Support	Applications Submitted	No. of Approvals	In Progress	Value of Approvals
Business Continuity Voucher	275	174	101	€427,751

### Other Main Supports (from 16<sup>th</sup> March to 6<sup>th</sup> May)

Support	Applications Submitted	No. of Approvals	Value of Approvals €
Trading Online Voucher	27	27	€66,250

Support	Applications Submitted to MFI	No. of Approvals	Value of Approvals €
Micro Finance Ireland Applications	8	8	€198,000

Support	No. of Participants
Covid-specific Mentoring	137
Training	278

## **Retail City / Town Centre Group**

Economic development has engaged with various stakeholders and is having ongoing remote conferencing to deal with issues as a result of Covid 19. Issues facing businesses have been discussed and compilation of all available supports is being circulated through the LEO office, Chambers of commerce, Waterford Business Group as well as online and in the media. As part of the ongoing collaboration a new web resource has been launched so as to bring all the current and emerging supports for Waterford businesses onto a single digital platform during this Covid-19 crisis.

The whole idea behind the [Waterford Business Supports Hub](http://waterfordcouncil.ie/businesssupporthub) is that Waterford businesses, seeking guidance, will need to access just one primary local resource. This resource, in turn, will have summaries of the main national supports as well as appropriate links and signposting when required. This platform has been devised so as to ensure that Waterford businesses have the very best of access to clear, concise information and guidance. <http://waterfordcouncil.ie/businesssupporthub>

The Council communications and marketing team are assisting the group on a branding campaign for Waterford starting with Facebook and have developed the below banner, similar banners will be used on other social media platforms. They are also currently working on doing a series of short videos from local businesses in preparation for the unwinding of the lockdown.



## **Event Licensing**

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government issued Circular Letter PL 04/2020 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April confirming that all applications for licenses in respect of outdoor events requiring an event license under Part XVI of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and associated regulations - i.e. events comprising an audience of 5,000 people or more – should not be considered in respect of events scheduled to take place in the period up to the end of August 2020.

This decision was taken having regard to the need to provide certainty to planning authorities and event promoters, as well as all other stakeholders, in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 emergency while also maintaining the integrity of the planning system including the statutory consultation requirements in this regard.

Planning authorities have been instructed to inform relevant event promoters of the Government Decision. A copy of the press release issued by the Government Information Services is available at this link: [https://merrionstreet.ie/en/NewsRoom/News/Government Statement on licensed events.html](https://merrionstreet.ie/en/NewsRoom/News/Government%20Statement%20on%20licensed%20events.html)

Two event planned for this summer which will be impacted by this direction are: the Spraoi Festival and the All Together Now Festival at Curraghmore, both of which had been planned for the August bank holiday weekend.

## **Liquidation of Debenhams**

Initial contact has been made with the Letting Agent for City Square, Lambert Smith Hampton Commercial real estate consultants to offer the Council's support in attracting a new tenant

## Bóithre agus Iompar

### Roads and Transportation

Following the Government announcement last Friday on the Phased Reopening from May 18<sup>th</sup>, we are working towards having our teams and contractors ready to resume normal roads maintenance works and our annual Road Works Programme on May 18<sup>th</sup>. We have finalised procurement of both materials and contractors to allow us resume work as quickly as possible.

The original timescale of our Road Works Programme has obviously been delayed and we working on a revised schedule to ensure delivery of the Programme in the current year. We will advise the individual Members of the planned works in their areas as soon as possible.

In the context of the ongoing Covid 19 crisis and the requirements around social distancing etc. and to ensure the safety of our employees , contractors and the public we have also carried out risk assessments across all our operational areas and as a consequence will be introducing revised safe work practices.

In the interim we are continuing to operate a scaled back level of service as detailed below and making preparations for a return to the delivery of services once national policy allows. A summary of services being delivered is as follows -

- Urgent and critical road and footpath repairs – we have had our jet patching units deployed and operational across the county for the past few weeks engaged in dealing with critical road repairs. If any Members come across areas that need urgent attention, they should contact the Area Roads Engineer
- Support to the Environment Department in clean-ups of illegal dumping
- Emergency and after hours call outs
- Maintenance of public lighting and traffic signals

Design and tender work is continuing apace including consultations and remote meetings with both the TII and the Department on a number of schemes which we would intend to commence later in the year including

- The 2020 Low cost safety schemes
- S.38s on a number of traffic calming schemes
- Resurfacing works on the N25 The Burgery
- Lemybrien N25 traffic calming
- Macadam contracts for the 2020 urban areas roads programme

# Seirbhísí Comhshaoil

## Environmental Services

### Water Services

Water supply and waste water services continue to be delivered across the City and County in accordance with the revised guidance from Irish Water. The maintenance of all water and waste water treatment plants, pumping stations and the networks will remain as a critical priority for the duration of the current crisis. There are some reductions in service in non-critical areas such as meter reading, non-essential capital works and non-priority repairs.

All of our available Water Services are and will continue to be fully engaged in the provision of essential water and waste water services.

### Environmental Services

Again in the context of the Phased Reopening from May 18<sup>th</sup>, the operational element of the Environmental Services Department is being prepared for a phased reintroduction of normal services.

We would intend resuming full grass maintenance services in all public areas from May 18<sup>th</sup>. There has been significant growth over the past 5 weeks or so and there we estimate it will take 3 – 4 weeks to get back on track with respect to the normal grass cutting and landscaping maintenance works.

Preparations have also been made for the summer floral planting programme in the urban areas and while it will be a little behind schedule, we would expect to have the bulk of this work done by mid-June.

In the meantime the critical services are still being delivered and these include –

- Street cleaning – with reduced levels of traffic and footfall, the street cleaning and litter bin servicing regimes in the three urban areas have been reduced to a ‘weekend’ service.
- Civic amenity sites are still operational as per normal opening hours – the sites have been quite busy over the past few weeks
- Waste Enforcement – our Waste Enforcement team is active and fully engaged in dealing with illegal dumping.
- Veterinary service – our Vets are working as normal undertaking important consumer food safety and animal welfare services in the small abattoirs and meat processors
- Dog pound – this is closed to the public for the time being but the Dog Warden service is still operational and responding to incidents involving stray and dangerous dogs on a daily basis.
- Parks and public Open Spaces are being inspected on a daily basis, urgent and immediate safety issues are being addressed and the grass is being cut as required.
- Burial grounds – continue to operate as normal



# Tithíocht / Seirbhísi Éigeandála

## Housing / Emergency Services

### Choice Based Letting

Following the recommencement of essential construction sites, 72 properties have been advertised on Choice Based Letting (CBL). The allocation process has commenced for these properties with the aim of tenanting the properties on completion and subject to the public health guidelines. It is important to note that all allocations under CBL are made in accordance with the Council's adopted allocation scheme. The CBL system limits the consideration on the waiting lists to just those applicants who express an interest in the houses advertised. It should also be noted that good estate management is a critical consideration in the allocation scheme and any person being considered for an allocation is subject to ASB checks by the Guards.

### Housing Supply & Maintenance

The Government through the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has determined that certain social housing projects are deemed essential within the meaning of the COVID-19 health regulations. In Waterford, certain projects have been identified as meeting the criteria and these sites have re-commenced construction activity immediately. These sites are Knight's Grange, Lacken, Waterford City (S & K Carey Construction) and Na Fearnóga, Ballinroad, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford (Nevin Construction).

In each case the contractor employed by the local authority will undertake the works in accordance with HSE and Government COVID-19-related public health guidelines and recommendations. In this regard, the Construction Industry Federation has published the *Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures* and the government is also compiling a *Protocol on Safe Working Arrangements*. Additional sites are also expected to recommence in the near future.

In addition, Waterford Council continues with limited maintenance works to their own properties and also with the return to use of void/vacant properties throughout the city and county.

### Homeless Services:

Waterford City & County Council's Homeless Services are operating as normal at 28 Parnell Street and contactable on 0761 10 2499 or at [homelessserVICESTeam@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:homelessserVICESTeam@waterfordcouncil.ie).

Waterford City & County Council, in partnership with the HSE Social Inclusion Department, are supporting Homeless Service Providers to manage Covid-19 restrictions and self-isolation requirements. Tinteán Housing Association has been appointed to operate a Homeless Isolation Unit in Waterford City to cater for homeless clients who have to self-isolate or who are Covid-19 positive and not in need of acute medical services.

### HAP Place Finder Service:

The Place Finder Service is operational in accordance with Departmental guidelines i.e. in situations where there is a real and apparent risk of homelessness or a need to exit emergency accommodation.

## **Rents**

Where people have lost their job or have a reduced income as a result of Covid-19, we are giving priority to reviewing their rents to adjust them downwards accordingly. In the very limited number of cases where the tenant is now receiving more income as a result of the Covid-19 payment we are not adjusting the rent upwards as the payment is temporary.

## **HAP**

In light of announcements made by Government, only emergency HAP applications are currently being processed by the HAP Department and HAP applications where a tenant is currently living in the accommodation where they are applying for HAP. Requests to move to alternative accommodation by HAP tenants cannot be assessed at this time and previously approved permissions to move to alternative HAP accommodation have been suspended. Once the Government restrictions have been lifted applications to move to alternative accommodation under HAP can be submitted and previously approved permissions to move HAP accommodation can be reinstated.

## **Emergency Services**

All fire stations are operating as normal along with all fire safety and building control functions. Business continuity plans have been formulated.

Waterford Civil Defence is currently available to assist the principal response agencies (the HSE, An Garda Síochána and the Council).

# Seirbhísí Corparáideacha /

## Corporate

### Human Resources

Staff have been advised to register with PAS for reassignment, the following figures provide details of current numbers on the panel along with reassignments.

PAS Reassignment panel:	100
Community Support Reassignment:	87
HSE Reassignment	4

### Community Response Call Centre

We have received and dealt with over 748 requests to the Call Centre. The breakdown in the nature of the calls is as follows:

<b>Nature of Request</b>	<b>% of Total Requests Received 07/05/2020 – Total Calls <u>748</u></b>
Collection & Delivery	23%
Volunteer Information	19%
General Information	22%
Social Isolation	24%
Other Medical	8%
Meals	2%
Transport	1%
Garda Related	1%

There are 74 groups active and verified.

### Council Meetings

A quorum plenary council meeting with proportional representation will be held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 5pm. The meeting will be held in the Large Room in City Hall so that social distancing requirements can be adhered to.

### Roadmap for Service Provision in accordance with National Roadmap

The LA sector is finalising its own roadmap for increased service provision in accordance with the phases as set out in the National Roadmap. For each service and activity Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) are being developed for the sector so as to ensure compliance with public health guidance and social distancing requirements.

### **Community Response Forum**

Meeting of the Waterford Community Response Forum continue to take place by conference call. The Forum is chaired by Council management and in addition to the HSE and the Gardaí and An Post, the membership includes a broad range of community based organisations including Waterford GAA, the IFA, the local development companies and other groups like Alone and the Age Friendly Alliance. A number of new groups also participated in the second meeting including St Vincent de Paul, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Citizens Information and the Disability Federation.

### **COVID-19 Emergency Fund for community groups**

The Department of Rural and Community Development issued information to local authorities on a new COVID-19 Emergency Fund for community groups involved in the Community Call. The grants are for expenditure by those groups related to the COVID-19 response work and the maximum grant per group is €1,000. We will be writing to all the groups that have been registered as volunteers advising them how to apply for the grant.

# Airgeadas

## Finance

### Mortgage Payment Break

Borrowers of local authority home loan products can apply for a payment break for up to three months if they have experienced a reduction, (or anticipate suffering a reduction), in their income arising from the COVID-19 emergency.

A mortgage payment break means:

- The borrower will make no mortgage payments for up to three months.
- Additional interest will NOT accrue to the borrowers account during the period of the payment break ensuring that no increased cost will arise.
- The monthly repayment following the break will increase to facilitate the repayment of the loan over the remainder of the existing term of the loan.
- However, MPI (Mortgage Protection Insurance), must be paid.
- This facility applies to all local authority home loan products.

### 3 Month rates waiver

- Exchequer will provide €260M to fully fund initiative
- Applies to businesses that have been forced to close due to public health requirements.
- Applies from 27/03/20 for 3 months.
- Post 27<sup>th</sup> of June position will be considered as part of wider review of options to support enterprise & employment.

### Restart Fund

- FUNDING: Exchequer will provide €250M to fully fund initiative
- TARGET: Micro & small businesses.
- CRITERIA:
  - Must have had a dramatic loss of turnover.
  - Must have maintained engagement with staff & linked to ongoing employment of staff.
- IMPLEMENTATION: Via a system of Rates rebates / waivers.
- VALUE:
  - Businesses will receive no more than their 2019 rates bill.
  - Capped at €10K.

The precise details of how these two initiatives will be applied and administered will be developed by central government over the next few weeks.

**Waterford City and County Council - Revenue Account Income & Expenditure Summary by Service Division**  
**Y.T.D. to Mar 31, 2020**

	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			<b>INCOME</b>		
	Expenditure €	Adopted Full Year Budget €	% Budget Spent to date	Income €	Adopted Full year Budget €	% Budget Raised
A Housing & Building	6,496,404	29,535,621	22%	6,934,379	31,511,289	22%
B Road Transport & Safety	6,311,561	42,241,585	15%	2,734,738	30,460,877	9%
C Water Services	2,568,875	10,966,994	23%	2,370,233	10,544,024	22%
D Development Management	3,377,674	16,954,281	20%	1,362,431	7,950,992	17%
E Environmental Services	4,468,283	19,224,337	23%	557,925	2,799,943	20%
F Recreation & Amenity	3,039,047	14,480,800	21%	344,362	1,819,371	19%
G Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	297,963	1,058,043	28%	130,711	489,290	27%
H Miscellaneous Services	2,429,917	9,521,645	26%	1,470,048	6,085,213	24%
LG Local Property Tax / GPG	0	0	0%	4,728,141	18,912,564	25%
RA Rates	0	0	0%	8,352,435	33,409,740	25%
	<b>28,989,724</b>	<b>143,983,305</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>28,985,403</b>	<b>143,983,305</b>	<b>20%</b>
Surplus/Deficit				(4,321)	0	

**Summary of main collections March 2020 YTD**

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]		[6] %	[7]
	Gross Bal as at 1-1-2020	Accrued ytd to Mar 2020	Write Offs and Vacancies	Total for Collection [1+2-3]	Collected ytd to Mar 2020	Gross Bal 31-03-2020 [4-5]	Collected ytd re Total for Collection [5/4]	% Collected ytd re 2020 Accrual [5/(4-1)]
		€	€	€	€	€	€	
<b>Rates</b>	9,281,448	33,705,110	-	42,986,558	4,809,802	38,176,756	11%	14%
<b>Loans</b>	2,020,256	808,832	-	2,829,088	1,031,325	1,797,763	36%	128%
<b>Rents</b>	3,720,581	3,873,024	-	7,593,605	3,567,775	4,025,830	47%	92%
<b>Aged Analysis :</b>								
			<b>Less than 1 mth</b>	<b>2 to 6 mths</b>	<b>7 to 12 mths</b>	<b>greater than 12 mths</b>		<b>Net Balance</b>
<b>Rates</b>			-	30,528,493	3,600,000	4,048,263		38,176,756
			<b>0 to 3 mths</b>	<b>4 to 6 mths</b>	<b>7 to 12 mths</b>	<b>Greater than 12 mths</b>		
<b>Loans</b>			129,996	72,220	158,884	1,436,663		1,797,763
			<b>Less than 4 weeks</b>	<b>4-6 weeks</b>	<b>7-12 weeks</b>	<b>Greater than 12 wks</b>		
<b>Rents</b>			319,506	259,598	419,351	3,027,375		4,025,830
<b>Overdraft Levels</b>								
Days in Overdraft Mar	0		Cost -	€0.00		Avg Value when in O/D : N/A		€ -