



Cumann na mBainisteoirí Contae agus Cathrach
County and City Managers' Association

Supporting Enterprise, Local Development and Economic Growth

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY
ACTIVITIES FOR 2012

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL IN 2012



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Dhún na nGall

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

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Section One: Introduction

1.1 Local Government in Transition

Local government today is a sector in transition. According to a recent review of the year in local government, “2012 was notable both in terms of structural changes proposed and in terms of policy decisions on a range of reforms that will shape the local government landscape in the coming years” (Administration vol. 60, no. 4 (2013): 21). These include the decision to establish Irish Water, proposals outlined in Putting People First to enhance local government functions and reform its structures and a decision to introduce a Local Property Tax. The Sectoral Strategy¹ on Enterprise and Jobs envisages a broad, enhanced role for local government acting as a local “engine for growth”.²

In examining how local government can contribute to enterprise and job creation in future, it is important to understand the very substantial role already played by local authorities in this area. Although their remit is narrow in an international context, Irish local authorities still retain quite broad powers to positively influence their local community and to support enterprise and employment initiatives.

Irish local government functions include:

- a strong representative role; as a provider of local services;
- acting as an agent of central government;
- a role as a local regulator;³
- Local authorities are also responsible for state capital investment in housing and water services, and for provision and improvement of local facilities, roads, urban / village enhancement schemes, and other infrastructure, including rural broadband.

Local authorities retain functions essential for the promotion of economic development in a local area. Such functions include the physical planning remit to make towns and counties more attractive places to live, work and invest; the capacity to directly invest in roads, water, recreation, enterprise, tourism, heritage and cultural assets. Importantly, local authorities can acquire land/property in order to perform any of their functions.⁴

The functions of Local Authorities are also reflected in the nature of properties/lands held. These range from: social housing, housing regeneration projects, landfill and civic amenity sites, community and leisure centres, fire stations, roads, civic offices, market buildings, multi-storey car parks, parks

¹ <http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/PublicationsDocuments/FileDownload.30643.en.pdf>.

² See <http://www.lgma.ie/en/news/ccma-report-local-authority-support-enterprise-and-business> for examples of what local authorities do.

³ Part 9 Chapter 1 of the Local Government Act 2001; Callanan and Keogan (2003): 9.

⁴ See section 213 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

and open spaces, heritage sites and buildings, libraries, art galleries, enterprise incubation units, one-stop shops, town centre development, industrial and economic development, water and sewage installations, halting sites, bridges, river amenities, piers & harbours.

In addition, under the Local Government Act, 2001, local authorities have a general power of “competence” to promote their local area as follows:

“A Local authority may take such measures, engage in such activities or do such things in accordance with the law (including the incurring of expenditure) as it considers necessary or desirable to promote the interests of the local community” (Local Government Act, 2001).

This is generally achieved through the development of economic strategies for local areas, including branding of towns and cities as part of tailored investment or tourism strategies. Local authorities generally acquire land/sites to facilitate urban renewal/development in accordance with the objectives of statutory development plans. On an ongoing basis, the purchase and sale of land under Section 183 of the Planning & Development Act is a significant part of a local authority’s statutory duty as a planning and development authority. Local authorities can make strategic land investments in local communities e.g. site assembly for future town centre regeneration, or in order to positively influence private sector investment.

In 2001, the Twentieth Amendment of the Constitution of Ireland provided Constitutional recognition for local government for the first time. According to Article 28 A: “The State recognises the role of local government in providing a forum for the democratic representation of local communities, in exercising and performing at local level powers and functions conferred by law and in promoting by its initiatives the interests of such communities.”

Constitutional recognition offers a framework in which the functions and roles of local government can be enhanced over time, in line with the needs of local communities. The central “place-making”⁵ role, whereby local authorities are involved in planning local communities around the needs of citizens helps to explain why they also have such an important role to play in enterprise and job creation.

1.2 Action Plan for Jobs

*The Action Plan for Jobs 2012*⁶ set out over 270 separate actions with delivery spanning all Government Departments and involving a range of state and non-state actors. The Government has

⁵For a good description of the local authority role in “place-making”, see presentation from Joe Crockett, Kilkenny County Manager here: <http://ourplan.kilkenny.ie/sites/default/files/Kilkenny%20Placemaking%20-Economic%20Development.pdf>

⁶ Link to national action plan for jobs: www.djei.ie/publications/2012APJ.pdf

committed to updating its *Action Plans for Jobs* (ACJ) on an annual basis. Section 6.5 of the Action Plan refers to local government's role as follows:

Develop a new sectoral strategy to promote employment, and support local enterprise by local government, to include measures in the area of business charges, local enterprise and business support arrangements, procurement support, local development and community based initiatives, the Green Economy and local government participation in employment support schemes.

These measures will complement, and assist in the delivery at a local level, of other actions set out in this Action Plan.

On 27 September 2012, the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan published a Sectoral Strategy on Jobs, *Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – Locally*.⁷ The document complemented the broader government plan, and highlights the existing contribution by local authorities to jobs and enterprise.

The Strategy further:

- underpinned local government's pro-active stance in supporting enterprise and economic development;
- acknowledged that "the role of local government is *fundamental* to enterprise support and economic development at local level";
- highlighted the broad range of activities where local government actively drives the local economic agenda; and
- concluded that: "*local government support on the ground is critical to the success of initiatives ranging from support for FDI and micro-enterprises, to rural broadband or major investment in wind farms and the green economy...*"

1.3 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)

As part of the Action Plan for Jobs, the government also decided to replace County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) with Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) which will act as "one stop shops" to deliver enterprise supports through the local government system. The CCMA welcome the decision of the Government in this regard and the CCMA are centrally involved in the implementation process and are committed to ensuring their establishment in 2013. In terms of local authority actions for this and following years, implementation of the Governments decision in 2012 to establish LEOs will be a key priority for all local authorities.

1.4 CCMA research on Local Authorities Supporting Enterprise

In support of the sectoral action plan in 2012, the CCMA published a report which identified over 2,000 separate local activities in 2011 which had a positive impact on local development, economic

⁷ www.environ.ie/en/Publications/LocalGovernment/Administration/FileDownload.31194.en.pdf

recovery and enterprise. The Report on 2011 activities was a first attempt to map the broad range of enterprise supports delivered by local authorities and link them to the Action Plan for Jobs.⁸ The Report was accompanied by a searchable database detailing actions at individual local authority level. The database gave a “snapshot” of the full range of enterprise activities carried out by the local government sector at a given time.

Under a renewed Action Plan for Jobs 2013, the CCMA is required to produce an update reviewing “actions/projects/activities undertaken by Local Authorities which can be seen to contribute to local development, enterprise support and economic growth...” (Action 226).⁹ In line with this requirement, the CCMA has produced *Local Authority Support for Enterprise & Economic Development, a Report on Activities for 2012*. This update report briefly reviews activity in local government during 2012 based on new material submitted by each County and City Councils.

The added value from this report is as follows:

1. The extent of local government’s role in this area is often undervalued and may not be fully understood by all stakeholders. The focus of the analysis is to link local authority actions to positive outcomes for businesses, employment and local communities.
2. The secondary purpose is to showcase the experience and unique capability of local authorities in the area of economic development.
3. The 2012 Report provides summary analysis of current levels of activity and enterprise and business supports provided by local authorities using the baseline data from each county / city council for 2012. The main output is the National Database which has been refreshed since last year, taking into account a range of positive actions identified by local authorities for the year 2012.
4. It is intended to publish and circulate the final formatted database for use by local authorities and to help share examples of innovation at local level.
5. Case studies cited in this report can help to inform Local Action Plans and to identify individual projects which can be replicated elsewhere or extended nationally.¹⁰
6. Each local authority is also asked to publish locally its individual “*Template*”, giving a “*helicopter view*” of some of the main actions taken in support of enterprise and economic development.

⁸ <http://www.lgma.ie/en/news/ccma-report-local-authority-support-enterprise-and-business>

⁹ <http://www.djei.ie/publications/2013APJ.pdf>

¹⁰ In this regard, it should be noted that a number of local authorities have already presented their completed templates to councillors or to senior management teams with positive feedback.

1.5 Report on Activities of Donegal County Council in 2012

This report illustrates examples of the activities, initiatives and work undertaken by Donegal County Council in 2012 to support enterprise, local development and economic growth. The report is set within the overall context of the CCMA report on activities at national level, which represents the work of all local authorities. Donegal County Council has prepared a detailed submission to the overall CCMA national report of activities. This submission is available on the website of the City and County Managers Association and located at www.lgma.ie/publications.

Section Two: Summary of Research

2.1 Research Results: Summary Description of Activities

This report has been compiled at National level by the CCMA, based on submissions received from all 34 County / City Councils.

- ✓ Responses were received from 34 County/City Councils ensuring a complete response within a tight timeframe;
- ✓ Modifications/edits were made to individual responses before being incorporated into the database;
- ✓ Costings are included where available; however, in some instances, this data is not available or was impossible to record;
- ✓ In some instances, it is difficult to quantify outcomes delivered (for example where a particular tourism event has been supported or local authorities may not have statistics on total number of attendees etc.);
- ✓ In spite of the limitations of the data as outlined above, nevertheless the information is useful as it links local authority investment and current activities to final outcomes. The information also provides an interesting snapshot of what each local authority actually does to support employment and business activity.

Much the same approach to analysis has been taken in 2012 as in 2011. Collated responses were used to develop a simple database giving a picture of activity levels and outputs throughout the sector. By examining the data, it is possible to map the broad spectrum of activities where local authority support on the ground is essential to implementing the 2012 Action Plan for Jobs.

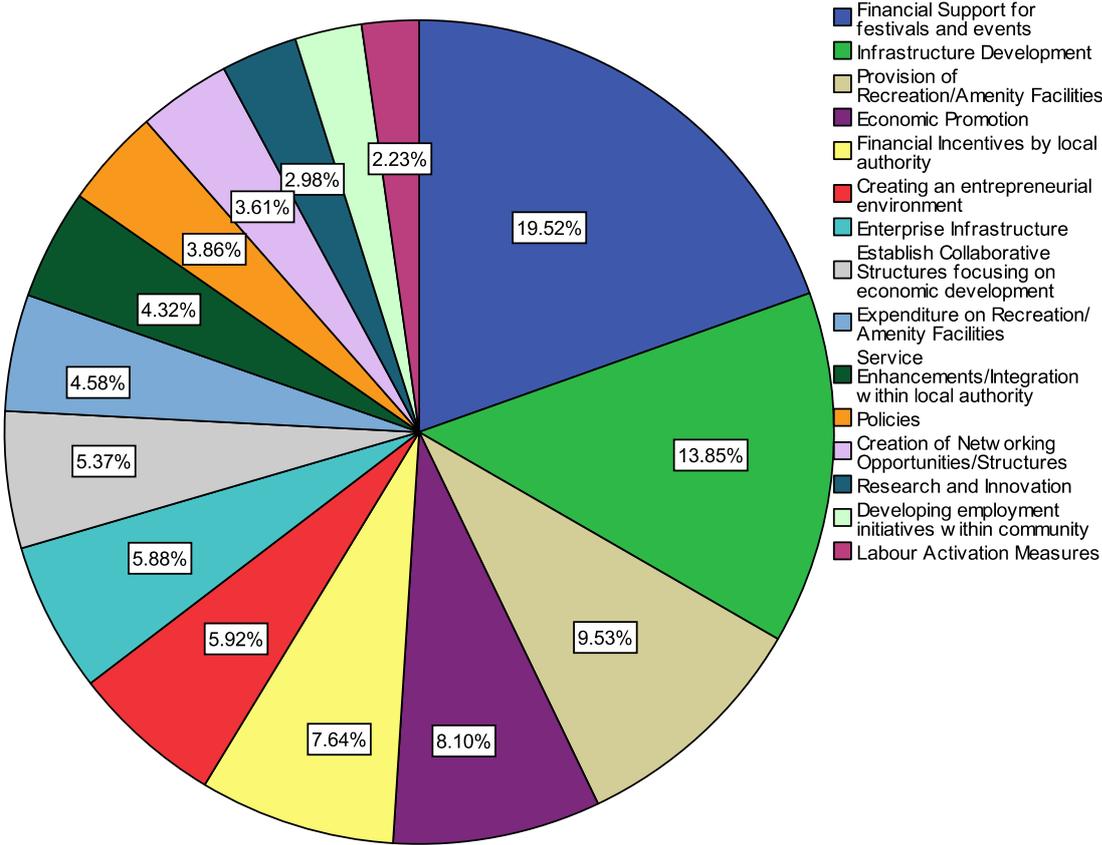
The research identified **2,382** separate actions/projects/activities undertaken by local authorities in 2012 which contribute to local development, enterprise support and economic growth. This is broadly on a par with the findings from the 2011 survey.

The research identified **195** actions in relation to Donegal County Council. Table 1 below offers a high level summary of categories of activity reported and local activities for County Donegal.

Table 1: Summary of Activities Undertaken by Local Authorities Nationally and Donegal County Council

Description of Activity	No. of Local Authority Actions Identified	Donegal County Council Actions Identified
1. Financial Support for festivals and events	465	49
2. Infrastructure Development	330	10
3. Provision of Recreation/Amenity Facilities	227	13
4. Economic Promotion including information dissemination	193	16
5. Financial Incentives by local authority	182	14
6. Creating an entrepreneurial environment	141	18
7. Enterprise Infrastructure	140	14
8. Establish Collaborative Structures focusing on economic development	128	15
16. Expenditure on Recreation/ Amenity Facilities	109	22
11. Service Enhancements/Integration within local authority	103	5
15. Policies (Donegal County Development Plan 2012 – 2018; Donegal CDB County Strategy 2012 - 2014)	92	2
10. Creation of Networking Opportunities/Structures	86	5
13. Research and Innovation	71	9
14. Developing employment initiatives within community	62	1
12. Labour Activation Measures	53	2
Total	2,382	195

Graph 1: Summary of Activities Nationally by Category



Taken together, the responses represent a rich and diverse body of evidence highlighting the positive and ongoing contribution by local authorities to the national recovery effort.

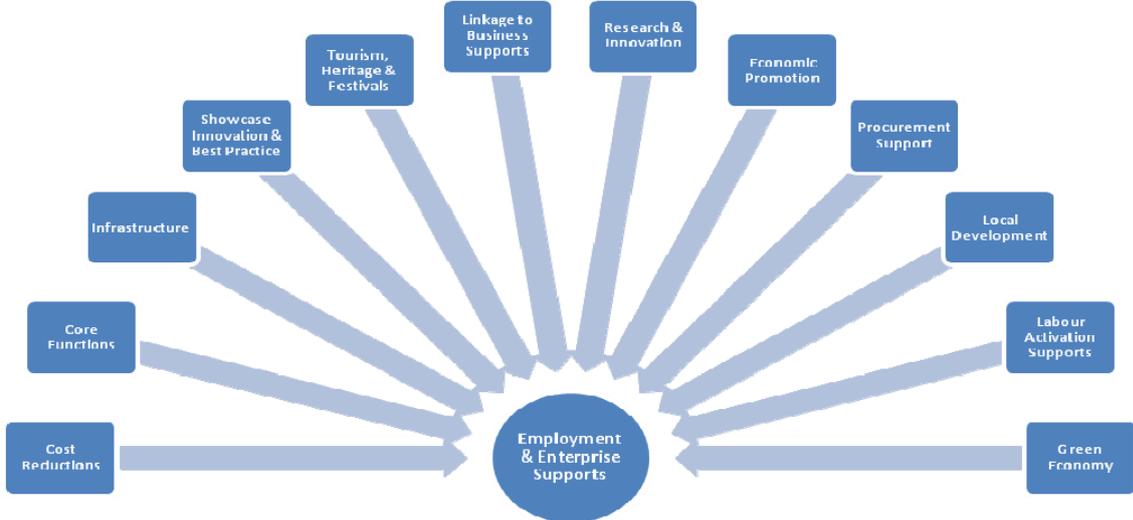
2.2 General Findings

It could be argued that the local authority role in promoting local or regional enterprise tends to be undervalued. This is because, as many supports provided by local authorities are indirect, it is often difficult to directly link the local authority role to positive outcomes such as jobs supported or jobs sustained. However this research conclusively demonstrates that local authorities collaborate on a daily basis with the business community and a network of national / local agencies, providing a *key enabling role* in a myriad of activities which ultimately yield valuable and significant job dividends.

Local authority input is evident across the full spectrum of actions outlined in the national strategy. Indeed, the research strongly suggests that the role of local government is *fundamental* to enterprise support and economic development at a local level.

Perhaps the most notable finding from the two years of this study is that local government activities to support enterprise span a much broader range of activities than previously acknowledged. It highlights the important role played by local authorities in the delivery of tourism, cultural and heritage assets, along with the delivery of priority infrastructure needed to underpin economic recovery.

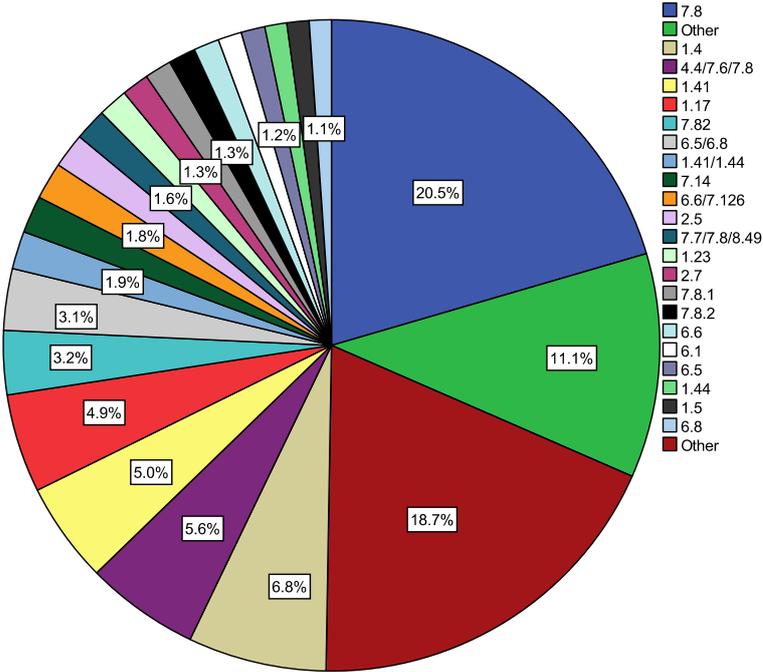
Graph 2: Employment and enterprise supports provided by local authorities



2.3 Links to National Jobs Plan

Each action in the database was then linked back to the national strategy (see National Database for specific links). Graph 3 below links over 95% of actions taken by local authorities in 2012 to the 2012 Action Plan for Jobs.

Graph 3: Links between LA Actions in 2012 and the National Action Plan for Jobs (2012)



Note: Derived from National Enterprise Support Database 2012.

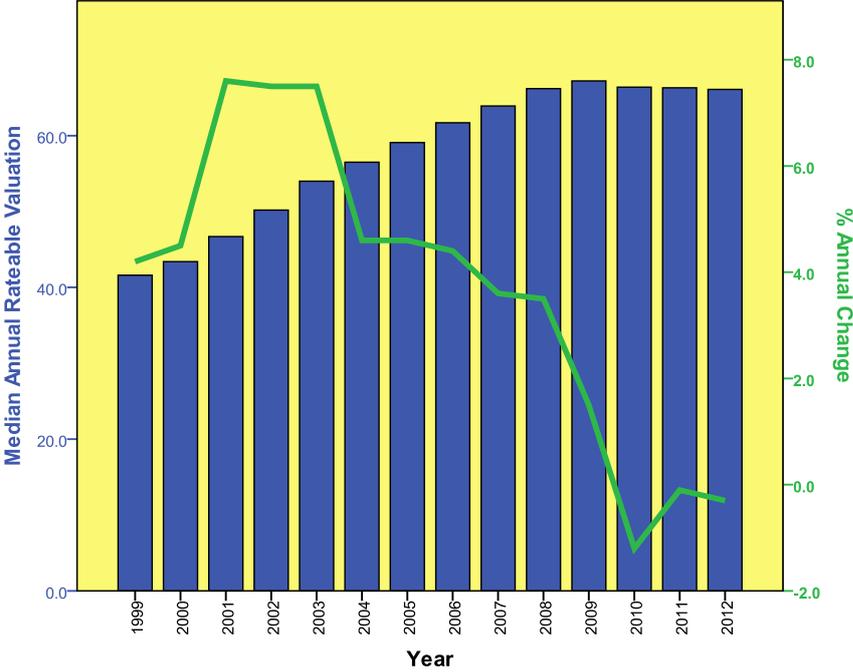
For example, roughly 20% of all actions relate to Tourism supports of some sort which fall under Section 7.8 of the National Action Plan for Jobs. Around 6.6% of all local authority actions relate to 1.4, which refers to the need to deliver on priority infrastructure to help businesses and develop a growth strategy.

2.4 Financial Incentives by Local Authorities

As noted in the Sectoral Strategy of the Local Government Sector to Promote Employment and Support Local Enterprise, “Local authorities have responded positively in recent years to requests to exercise restraint in setting commercial rates. In 2011, 68 local authorities froze their ARVs at 2011 levels, and 19 reduced theirs.¹¹ Overall, the average change of ARV from 2011 to 2012 shows a decrease of 0.31%.” Historically, the annual increase in the rateable multiplier (technically referred to as the Annual Rateable Valuation) was in excess of the rate of inflation. Between 1998 and 2008 the annual average change in the rateable valuation during this period was +5.2%. This historic trend compares with a sharp decrease of -.5% between 2010 and 2012.

¹¹ It should be noted that one local authority has increased its ARV and will continue to increase it until 2015, but this is a technical adjustment and legal requirement following the extension of a town boundary.

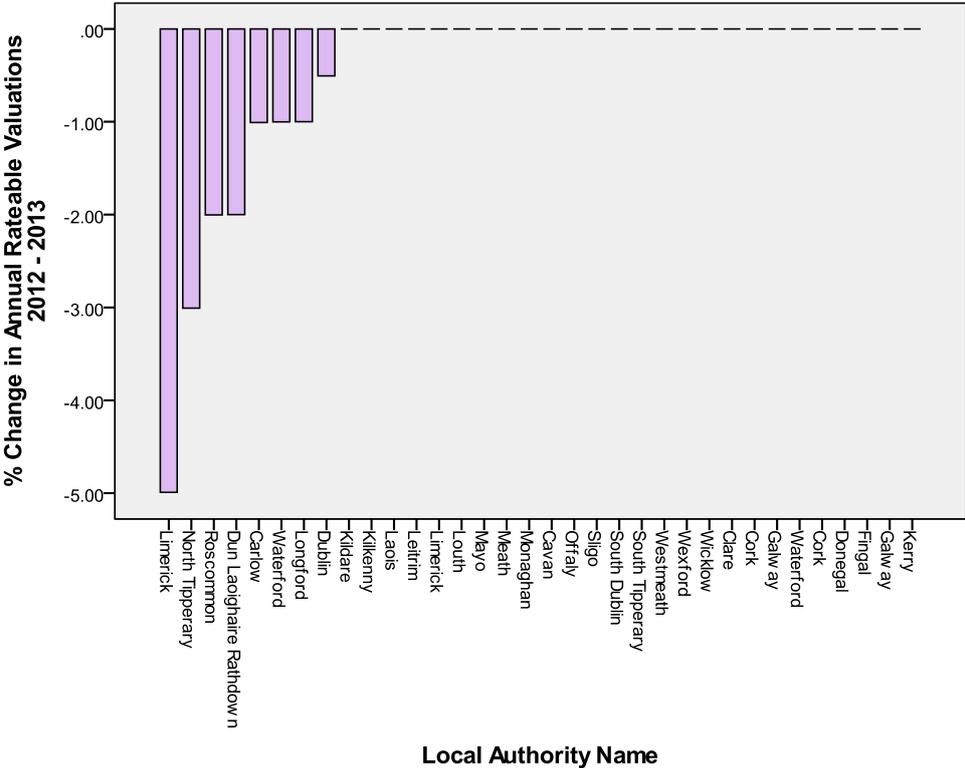
Graph 4: Annual Average % Change in the Rate Multiplier 1999 – 2012



Footnote: County / City Councils

As Graph 5 below shows, local authorities have continued this trend of freezing / reducing commercial rates charges for the 2012 / 2013 period. Out of 34 County / City Councils, 8 local authorities reduced their rate multiplier for 2013 while the remainder of rates charges remained unchanged. This contrasts with the approach taken in some other jurisdictions where commercial rates generally increase by a minimum of the inflation rate.

Graph 5: % Change in Rate Multiplier 2012 - 2013



Additional measures recorded in the database confirm that all local authorities are being very pragmatic in trying to assist ratepayers.

This is achieved through the following measures:

- Freezing / reducing commercial water charges where appropriate, such that this represents a **subsidy to business** relative to the true cost of providing the service. All councils are working actively with local businesses to put payment plans into place with customers in arrears, and to make other flexible arrangements to pay monies owed. Measures taken by local authorities to assist businesses with debt management plans include the non-application of interest or financial penalties for late payment, or where payment plans are entered into. This assists ratepayers with cash flow and reduces the pressure that a single payment might bring. It should be noted that the widespread application of payment plans across the local authority sector effectively increases the cost of interest for local authorities and represents a subsidy for businesses.

Donegal County Council has established an integrated debtors management unit, working with customers on a multiple-debt basis. All customers are engaged with in a business-friendly approach with payment plans, commensurate with each individual customer's capacity to service at that time, entered into as appropriate. There are in existence at any given time 2,000+ payment plans across Rates, Non-Domestic Water, Development Charges, Housing Loans, Housing Rents and Fire Service Charges.

- Most Councils introduce reductions in car parking charges during peak holiday periods, where appropriate (e.g. provided that local research demonstrates the positive benefits of such measures, having regard to local traffic management policies, and environmental policies) to attract shoppers to town centres at Christmas, or other peak periods;
- Many local authorities are in the process of, or have already reviewed their development contribution schemes to reduce charges in order to stimulate new development in specific areas;
- A number of local authorities have also introduced innovative new business incentive schemes to encourage start-up businesses in vacant properties, within current constraints;

Donegal County Council has a dedicated Business Support Unit which provides a full range of supports for new and existing businesses located in the county. This unit provides assistance in relation to future development, preplanning, assessing suitable development land and business premises etc

2.5 Direct/Indirect support for business networking events

The database also confirms the growing importance of an emerging role local authorities are playing in fostering local innovation and entrepreneurship. Evidence in the database confirms that this is being achieved in partnership with business partners such as Chambers Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, local universities, institutes of technology and enterprise boards etc.

In spite of reduced funding from all sources, local authorities are continuing to provide direct / indirect support for business networking events, entrepreneurial support programmes and leadership and other training programmes that benefit SMEs and start-up companies. Although in most cases, the level of funding involved may be relatively modest; staff resources and local authority support often mean that projects can leverage other sources of national and European funding. All of this demonstrates that local authorities are developing closer links with business groupings and that they will undoubtedly play a much broader role in enterprise support than initially envisaged in the Action Plan for Jobs.

One positive example of an area where local authorities are providing expert assistance is in energy management. At national and local level, local authorities work in partnership with Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to champion energy efficiency initiatives. On the ground, local authorities are also working to encourage best practice in the business community. Table 2 below provides a number of examples from Donegal County Council of how local authorities actively work with business partners to help them reduce their energy and environmental costs.

Table 2: Donegal County Council Examples of local authority advice to business on energy cost reductions

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
REN-NET	The REN-NET project is supported by the Interreg IVA Programme and is providing advice and support to businesses on renewable energies. The project has established a Cross Border Renewable Energy Consortium (REN NET): involving public and private sector interests.
CDB GREEN ENERGY FORUM	The Donegal CDB Green Economy Forum is a multi-agency body representing public, private and educational bodies. The Forum has produced an information booklet titled ' <i>Renewable Energy in the Home</i> ' which provides homeowners and businesses with affordable options for the use of renewable energy in the home as well as providing valuable tips on saving money through efficient use of energy. The booklet was developed as an action in pursuit of its goal of maximizing the use of renewable energy in County Donegal.

2.6 Promotion/Marketing of Local Areas

Another key finding of the research is that local authorities devote significant resources and time to the marketing, promotion and branding of counties/cities, and of particular enterprises and tourism products within the local area. **193** of all actions identified nationally relate to this category and demonstrate the important role that local authorities play in cultivating and promoting local cultural and heritage products to the benefit of local business and employment.

Table 3: Donegal County Council examples of Tourism / Marketing initiatives

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
Donegal Tourism Website – www.govisitdonegal.com	The GoVisitDonegal website presents Donegal as a high-quality, value for money holiday destination. The website will assist Donegal's tourism service providers by driving business and visitors directly to them through online marketing and promotion.
Donegal Diaspora project	Donegal Diaspora project (www.donegaldiaspora.com) is a strategic initiative undertaken by Donegal County Council. This initiative is developing international networks for the promotion of the county across all sectors (e.g. inward investment, enterprise and skills development, tourism, promotion of Donegal goods and services). The Council promotes this initiative e.g. through the Annual Golden Bridges Event and through the annual Tip O'Neill Irish Diaspora Award. It has a website and an ezine which goes to 30,000 people worldwide, six times a year.
Promotional Brochures	Donegal County Council has published a range of marketing / promotional literature to support local tourism promotion, including for example, Killybegs Tourism Brochure, Colmcille Heritage Trail Brochure, Maritime Heritage Trail Brochures, Donegal Craft Village Promotional Brochure, and Letterkenny Gateway Prospectus.
Donegal Film Office	The Donegal Film Office was established in 2003 to add benefit to the County in a range of ways, e.g. through promoting and marketing the region and also through fostering and developing creative industries. This activity is recognised, as being of substantial economic benefit, and the Donegal Film Office ensures that this county can compete. It also acts as a focal point and as a resource for the development of indigenous activity in this sector.

Donegal Gathering 2013	The Donegal Gathering initiative has produced a range of outputs to date, including launch of the official website, events calendar, marketing and social media promotion. An advertising campaign is also located at key access points at Knock, Derry and Donegal Airports.
Tech County Donegal Brochure	The 'Tech: County DONEGAL globally connected' brochure was developed by Donegal County Council in conjunction with Ernact, CoLab, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Donegal County Development Board, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Donegal County Enterprise Board, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Sligo Institute of Technology, University of Ulster, North West Regional College and South West College. This brochure highlights why Donegal is developing a growing reputation as a credible location to base digital technology development or operation centres.
Donegal Tourism Ltd.	Promoting a co-ordinated approach to the marketing and promotion of the tourism sector in County Donegal.

The 2012 data suggests that local authorities are increasingly targeting their investment in promotional activities to niche or growth markets in line with regional or local economic policies devised in partnership with local stakeholders.

2.7 Provision of Recreation/Amenity Facilities

During 2012, local authorities provided support and constructed, or assisted in the planning of, over **227** separate projects nationally relating to a broad range of recreation and amenities facilities. These range from small-scale tourism mapping projects to large scale development of heritage sites, theatres, museums, greenways and river walkways.

Taken together, these findings are significant given that the 2012 national Action Plan for Jobs referred to “**over 200**” tourist events supported at national level. In overall terms, the research underlines the important contribution made by local authorities in areas such as the national tourism strategy.

Table 4: Donegal County Council examples of Recreation / Amenity facilities provision

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
Tourism product development	A range of initiatives including Sli na Slainte trails development, Fort Dunree Tourism project, Greencastle Maritime Museum project,
Regional Arts promotion	Supporting the continued operation of arts facilities, including the Regional Cultural Centre Letterkenny, An Grianan Theatre, Aislann Gaoth Dobhair, County Museum, Central Library etc.
Reconciliation Through The Riverine project	Creation of a shared space along the Lifford Strabane border including amphitheatre, pedestrian bridge, raised boardwalk, and promenade.
Killybegs Playspace	The Killybegs playspace will assist in providing a vibrant sustainable rural community – providing increased economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities so as to enjoy a standard of living and a quality of life, which will make it an attractive community in which to live and work.

Marine and Piers Infrastructure	Strategic tourism product investment at Gola Island Port a Chruinn Pier, Glengad Slipway, Bunagee Slipway, Leenan Pier, Burtonport Slipway.
Dungloe Mini-pitch	Further development of local recreational Infrastructure and Installation of an all weather multiuse games area.
Barrick Hill Town Park	Provide increased economic, social and cultural opportunities for the local community through the development of the Barrack Hill Town Park initiative.
Best Kept Housing Estate Competition	Local amenity maintenance and support to 14 estates countywide.
Bealach na Gaeltachta	Maintenance of Bealach na Gaeltachta flagship tourism trail.
Playgrounds	Maintenance and upkeep of 38 playgrounds within the county
Swimming Pool supports	Supports to Aura Facility, Letterkenny; Ballyshannon Swimming Pool, Bundoran Waterworld

2.8 Infrastructure and Enterprise

Local authorities are well placed to act as engines for growth by enhancing the attractiveness of towns and counties as places to work, live and visit. Core local authority functions include planning and development and the provision of local infrastructure. In particular, the Development Plan is a framework which underpins economic growth and employment. In collaboration with national agencies, they set up business parks and incubation units; invest in streetscape and village renewal schemes, or support pop-up shops, shop front painting campaigns and local markets.

This is confirmed in the economic templates which highlight the significant number of infrastructure/enterprise projects implemented by local authorities. Approximately **330** infrastructure projects were supported in 2012 nationally, ensuring towns and counties have adequate water/sewerage capacity, road infrastructure, broadband and other supports to encourage future industry and employment.

Table 5: Donegal County Council examples of Infrastructure projects

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
N56 Cloghbolie to Boyoughter Road Scheme	Improved infrastructure to promote access, connectivity and local investment.
Letterkenny Wastewater Treatment Plant	Provision of significant spare wastewater treatment capacity for Letterkenny Gateway, This shall obviate the need for developments to install temporary on-site wastewater facilities, with consequential financial benefit to the viability of schemes.
Water Conservation Pipe Replacement Countywide	Maintaining security of water supply for businesses throughout the county.
Enhancement of environment: Lifford Strabane Town renewal project	Investment in local infrastructure and supporting the creation of local employment.
Letterkenny Gateway Environmental Enhancement Streetscape scheme	Creation of 20 jobs during construction phase and encouragement of tourism and enterprise activity.

Active Travel project - Letterkenny Town Council	Improved access in Main Commercial Centre
Improved resilience of ICT links - Letterkenny Town Council	Improved ICT infrastructure
Coastal Walks Investment - Bundoran Town Council	Improved quality of life/ Tourism attraction
Project Kelvin	This project provides direct international telecommunications connectivity between the North West of Ireland, North America and Europe. It gives Letterkenny direct fibre connectivity with North America providing reduced latency and benchmarked pricing compared with other European cities. Project Kelvin will be of major strategic significance to the County in terms of promoting Donegal as a region for ICT based investment as having state of the art resilient telecommunications networks with diverse backhaul links including direct connections to North America with benchmarked pricing.

Similarly the database shows that during 2012, local authorities nationally were involved in establishing or supporting over **140** enterprise infrastructure projects, including enterprise centres and incubation spaces.

Table 6: Donegal County Council examples of Enterprise Infrastructure projects

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
Stranorlar Community Enterprise Centre	Dedicated Facility for business start ups and technology based enterprises, in collaboration with BASICC ltd. (e.g. training, mentoring etc.)
Donegal Craft Village (Council owned)	Marketing and promotion of local craft village and investment in facilities.
Development of former IDA lands/buildings as opportunity sites for Economic Development	Promote the availability of sites to attract and facilitate investment in towns throughout the county.
Donegal Town Community Enterprise Centre	Support existing and assist in the creation of new jobs.
Wind training facility Killybegs	32 fully trained wind turbine technicians and cohort of 16 being trained at present. This project is a collaboration with LYIT.
Development of marina at Bunagee	Development of essential marine tourism infrastructure.
Development of Ballybofey Stranorlar Sport Tourism Hub (Finn Valley Leisure Centre)	Development of local sports hub for Tourism and creation of local employment opportunities.
North West Science Park	Strategic Science Park development to support Letterkenny – Derry gateway. Collaborative venture with LYIT.
North West Clinical Research Academy	Development of a state of the art medical facility at Letterkenny General Hospital which can provide medical education and research facilities for students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The Donegal Clinical Research Academy is a collaboration with the NUI Medical School, Galway.
ICT and telecommunications	Developing access to broadband, including for example the development of municipal area networks and other initiatives.

2.9 Festivals/Events/Tourism, Heritage and Sporting Events

As with 2011, the survey once again confirms that local authorities are the prime local actors delivering most of the heritage, cultural, tourism, green enterprise and other supports at local level on behalf of national bodies.

In combination with the significant level of capital investment in arts, tourism, sports, recreation and community infrastructure, all of this has a positive impact on employment supports and economic recovery. An important finding from the research is the extent to which the local government sector supports and underpins many of the local tourism, heritage and cultural events that form the backbone of the Irish tourism industry.

In 2012, the research identified **465** different festivals and events nationally which are directly supported by local authorities. These range from high profile events which have a major impact on the local economy to much smaller but important local activities which attract tourists, and sustain small businesses.

Table 7: Donegal County Council examples of Festivals / Events / Heritage and Sport projects

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
Financial Support for festivals and events	48 events supported from a range of funding from Donegal County Council including, Development Fund Initiative 2012, Members development fund 2012 and the Tourism Development Fund 2012.
Strategic Partnerships - Arts Service	Supporting the operational costs of eight organisations - venues and projects across the county.
Errigail Arts Festival	160 events of national and international significance across 40 venues
The Tip O'Neill Irish Diaspora Award 2012 & associated events (7th & 8th Sept)	1). Inaugural Annual Diaspora Award Event est. 2). 80 overseas visitors in attendance 3). Permanent Tip O'Neill monument installed as visitor and public attraction. 4). Annual historical symposium established 5). Inishowen Schools involvement 6). Important links established with University of Ulster, Irish American Partnership, Boston Immigration Centre, IFI etc.
Féile Oireachtas na Gaeilge (29th Oct - 4th Nov)	20,000 in attendance, with an estimated value of €5m. 114 events, with media coverage locally, nationally and internationally. Showcasing prominent events ongoing on RTÉ, BBC Ulster TV & radio, Irish Seminar by Comhdháil Naisiúnta na Gaeilge hosted in L/Kenny 28th Feb '13 as a result.
Magill Summer School	800-900 approx. persons attending from local, national and international areas.
Donegal Bay and Bluestacks Festival	40 events, 8 towns/villages across County Donegal, national media coverage, supports artists and performers, and is a key tourism attraction
Ulster Dancing Championships	Key tourism and cultural attractor for County Donegal in 2012

2.10 Collaborative Ventures

Local authorities are key drivers of local research projects with universities, enterprise start-ups and national bodies such as Enterprise Ireland. The database includes very real examples of collaborative ventures between local authorities and national / local partners to support community employment and enterprise, to provide financial supports to business, to carry out R&D and to promote entrepreneurship. Some local authorities are offering space or direct funding to local Chambers, and working with them on collaborative projects which are an extremely positive development.

There is plenty of evidence of innovation and excellence in all local authorities. There is also impressive emerging evidence of high level collaboration between local authorities, private entrepreneurs, and academic institutions, Enterprise Ireland, Failte Ireland and Chambers Ireland to develop enterprise hubs, incubation spaces and new R&D space. The Creative Alliance in Dublin operates at a very high level, but such collaborative work is happening in a very real way in other locations – i.e. Kilkenny County Council working with the Waterford Institute of Technology, Cork working with the CIT and UCC, Kildare working closely with Maynooth, Donegal with LKIT and Donegal, Mayo and Galway with GMIT amongst others.

Table 8: Donegal County Council examples of Collaborative ventures

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
Killybegs Jobs Initiative	Donegal County Council is working collaboratively with key stakeholders on the Killybegs Jobs Initiative, which targets the creation of 250 jobs across sectors such as tourism, added value food, renewable energies, cargo services and offshore energy exploration by 2015.
Letterkenny Gateway Economic Forum	The forum will track and seek to coordinate and facilitate development in the Letterkenny – Derry economic corridor, and seek to achieve the objectives of the Letterkenny – Derry Gateway working in collaboration with key agencies.
Cross Border local authority networks	Donegal County Councils works collaboratively with the cross border networks of NWRCBG, ICBAN, NE Partnership and COMET to advance areas of common interest.
Sailwest transnational marine tourism consortium	The SAILWEST project supported by Interreg IVA is a partnership of 22 public bodies from Northwest of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland and is working to develop key marine tourism strategic networks.
Donegal County Development Board (cdb) & associated structures	Inter-agency co-ordinated approach to the promotion of economic, social and cultural development for County Donegal. Sectoral fora operate in the areas of tourism, culture, enterprise and skills, green economy, Donegal brand, social inclusion.
Donegal Tourism ltd	Co-ordinated approach to the marketing and promotion of tourism in County Donegal.

North West Partnership Board	The North West Partnership Board (NWPB) was formed in 2011. It is a multi-sectoral platform, drawing its membership from the Donegal County Development Board (CDB) and the Derry Strategy Board, Strabane District Council and Limavady Borough Council. It is the aim of this partnership to promote a coordinated approach with regard to the economic, social and cultural development, on a cross-border basis, of the North West of Ireland.
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It would be impossible to adequately capture the full range of activities and projects undertaken in 2012 in this research report. The full report of activities is located at www.lgma.ie/publications.

Section Three: Local Authorities and Local Development

3.1 Local Authorities and Local Development

Local Authorities have considerable experience of all aspects of local development work. Local Authorities were given a general competence under the Local Government Act 1991. This made possible the involvement of local Government in local development activity. This competency was further enshrined in the Local Government Act 2001. The establishment of Community and Enterprise Functions in 1999 introduced a range of developmental skills and experience to local authorities, which augmented the already broad range of skills employed in the various sectors of local authorities.

3.2 Establishment of County and City Development Boards

Local Authorities initially established and have now managed County and City Development Boards (CDB) since 2000. These boards have brought together all sectoral interests to ensure a co-ordinated approach to development and public service delivery in each County / City. The Community and Enterprise units were a key resource for the establishment and ongoing management of CDBs.

Each CDB produced a Strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of their own region. This strategy preparation process was led by local authority staff. Subsequent implementation of the Strategy was co-ordinated by local authority staff. In December 2012, Donegal CDB launched its County Strategy for Social, Economic and Cultural Development 2012-2014.

Donegal CDB has identified six priority goals as follows:

Goal 1: To Ensure Best Access to Supports and Services for All in Donegal

Goal 2: To Ensure the Continued Development and Sustainability of the County's Cultural Resources

Goal 3: To promote Enterprise and Skills development in the region

Goal 4: To develop a Donegal Brand across all sectors

Goal 5: Tourism Destination Development for Donegal

Goal 6: To develop Donegal as a lead region for the Green Economy

Proposals for local government reform in the Republic of Ireland indicate the proposed establishment of Socio-economic committees (SEC) in each county and city council area. The SEC will have responsibility for planning and oversight of all local and community development programmes, and will have responsibility for developing a 5 year county local and community plan encompassing all State funded local and community development interventions. The role of the SEC will be to ensure a coherent integrated approach to the management of funds and to facilitate collaboration across all sectors

As part of the local government reform agenda, greater alignment between local government and local development is also currently being pursued.

3.3 Local resource development co-ordination and management

Local Authorities have been involved in the provision of local amenity development, direct provision of community facilities, and provision of assistance for local community groups. Local Authorities have had a lead and key role with regard to town and village renewal, and provided for a range of funding initiatives from within their own resources to support local development.

Working in a CDB context, local authorities have led out and secured additional funding for a range of developmental projects in sectors such as economic development, community enterprise, ICT, urban and village renewal, cultural resources, education & training, tourism, renewable energies, recreation, social inclusion, community development, marine leisure, infrastructure delivery etc. There are very clear outcomes being delivered as a consequence of such projects.

Local authorities have promoted all aspects of community development ranging from involvement in estate management, to the co-ordinating role of community fora, and animation / capacity building.

Table 9: Donegal County Council examples of Local resource development

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
Community development supports	Donegal County Council has been responsible for the Donegal County Community Forum, and the provision of co-ordinated supports to the community sector and for fora at county and sub-county levels (as their representative bodies, promoting the concept of “participative democracy”).
Strategic Tourism Products	Donegal County Council is leading out on the development of strategic tourism products in the county (e.g. Sliabh Liag €4.5mn, Inch levels €1.2mn, Malin Head €500k) It also leads Donegal Tourism Limited, a collaborative marketing platform which has developed a website and delivers a comprehensive tourism marketing programme.
Green Economy	Donegal County Council working with partners on the CDB Green Economy Forum has advanced a range of green economy initiatives working in a CDB/County Strategy context.
Cultural resources	The Donegal CDB Cultural Forum is seeking to maximise the unique cultural heritage and landscape which Donegal has to offer.
SAM – Sporting Aiding Mental Health, National Conference	An interagency working group has been set up to organise this conference with representatives from HSE Local Office, Mental Health Promotion and Mental Health Services, Donegal Sports Partnership, Donegal Travellers Project, Steer Ireland, Mental Health Ireland and Donegal County Council. This conference will begin a national conversation on mental health, on how to support those who are suffering from mental illness and how to promote positive mental health..
All-Island Pride of Place Competition	Donegal County Council has supported the All-Island Pride of Place Competition since 2005. This competition recognises and celebrates the vital contributions that community partnerships make to society. The focus is on people coming together to shape, change and enjoy all that is good about their local area. It acknowledges the involvement of the local community in all aspects of rural and urban regeneration including, promoting social cohesion, involvement in planning, the promotion of heritage and environmental awareness. In 2012, Castlefinn Community Garden was the overall winner of Category 7: Community Garden.

3.4 Co-ordination and Implementation of government led initiatives locally

Local Authority Community and Enterprise Units have implemented and managed a range of other government initiatives at county level, including for example, County Childcare Committees, Local Sports Partnerships, Social Inclusion Measure Coordination Groups, High Level Traveller Groups, Children’s Service Committees, CDB Economic Committees, and Joint Policing Committees.

Local Authorities are also responsible for the endorsement and approval process of local and community development programmes/plans.

Table 10: Donegal County Council examples of local government led initiatives

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
Targeted social inclusion measures initiatives	Donegal County Council has had a lead role in the management and co-ordination of social inclusion measures at county level, including the co-ordination of the Social Inclusion Measures Co-ordination Group (SIM), which involves all social inclusion stakeholders in the county; management and co-ordination of the high level Travellers group; provision of social housing & associated supports; and co-ordination of rural transport initiatives locally in collaboration with local partners.

3.5 Business supports, including Economic development role

Local authorities are actively involved in economic development activity with a view towards developing their unique resources, creating the conditions for sustainable economic development and leading or partnering in job creation activities. This activity is undertaken in collaboration with key agencies, e.g. IDA and other enterprise agencies.

Table 11: Donegal County Council examples of economic development role

Local Authority Donegal County Council	Details
Enterprise Infrastructure	Donegal County Council is leading out on key enterprise support programmes (e.g. Business Bootcamp entrepreneurship programme 16-34 yr. olds; REN-NET renewable energies programme which develops the capacity of business to avail of opportunities in the Green Economy). The Council has invested €600k in the provision of enterprise space at locations including Donegal Town and Ballybofey and has taken ownership of Donegal Craft village, undertaking refurbishment of the centre and proactively marketing / promotion on behalf of local businesses.
Gateway Economic Forum	Donegal County Council is identified as the lead agency with regard to co-ordinating development of the Letterkenny – Derry gateway. Donegal County Council is establishing the Gateway Economic Forum, which brings together the relevant stakeholders who can act together to ensure that optimum benefit is derived for the county and region through development of all aspects of the Gateway economy.
Business Support	Donegal County Council provides business support to indigenous and Foreign direct investment companies.
Diaspora networks	The Donegal Diaspora project is undertaking targeted Diaspora initiatives, working with business networks at home and abroad.

3.6 Supports and Services

Local authorities have a lead role with regards to the provision of libraries, arts and cultural services. Local authorities also undertake a range of initiatives through the work of their heritage, museum and archives services. These are key resources for local economic, social and cultural development.

ICT and telecommunications infrastructure are of key importance locally. Donegal County Council has been to the fore in developing access to broadband, including for example the development of municipal area networks and other initiatives.

Local authorities also have a key role with regards to environmental services, including the development of educational initiatives, recycling, access to beaches, public parks, walking and trails development etc. (There are 13 Blue Flag beaches located in Donegal in 2012: Bundoran, Rosstown, Murvagh, Fintra, Narin (Portnoo), Carrickfinn, Killahoe (Dunfanaghy), Marblehill, Portsalon (Magherawarden), Lisfannon, Shroove, Culdaff and Downings).

3.7 External funds management

Local Authorities in the border region have been responsible for the management and administration of Peace I, Peace II and Peace III funding and the local CDB partnerships (in border counties). They have been responsible for the co-ordination of cross sectoral partnerships to prepare funding plans and for the allocation of funds at county level.

PEACE III funding was made available to Donegal in two Phases:

<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>2008-2010</i>	<i>€4,737,600</i>
<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>2011-2013</i>	<i>€4,737,600</i>

The Donegal PEACE III Action Plan 2011 - 2013 is currently being delivered through a combination of the following:

** Cross Community, Cross Border Grants Scheme*

** Partner delivery (partners are Donegal County Council, Health Service Executive, Co Donegal VEC, Inishowen Development Partnership, Tyrone, Derry and Donegal Action and the Donegal Community Based Youth Work Consortium).*

** Public Procurement specific actions*

Donegal County Council is involved in the administration of externally sourced funds, e.g. EU Interreg IVA, IVC Project funding, various exchequer funds, IFI and other EU funds, and has a close

working engagement with funding bodies at each of these levels. Donegal County Council established an EU Policy and Funding Unit in 2010 which seeks to maximise external funding opportunities to support the Council's corporate objectives and implementation of the priority goals of the CDB County Strategy.

3.8 Citizenship and representative democracy

In the context of local government, elected members operating at area and county level in Donegal, are bringing the voice of those they represent and a democratic mandate to the table (concept of "representative democracy"). Elected members are also involved in bringing their experience from Council, Strategic Policy Committees and other structures etc.

Donegal County Council has in place a decentralised structure of management, and network of local public service centres and offices, which is connecting to local towns, villages and rural areas.

Section Four: Conclusion

The research carried out by the CCMA sought to link actions taken by local authorities in support of enterprise and employment to the National Jobs Strategy. Individually and collectively, the Economic Templates offer a useful “helicopter view” for policy makers and help to identify actions that need to be prioritised, gaps that need to be filled, or actions that can potentially be replicated elsewhere or supported at national level.

The CCMA’s research confirms the vast majority of actions flowing from the National Action Plan for Jobs can be linked to specific investments by local authorities on the ground. Analysis of the 2012 National Database which accompanies this report confirms that that the exemplars of what “works on the ground”, works well precisely because these projects are designed with local strengths and assets in mind.

Whether it relates to tourism and branding packages, village enhancement schemes, labour activation projects, investments in art, culture and heritage, or collaborative R&D projects, the exemplars of good practice tend to *retain strong roots in their local community*. Some of most innovative examples of local authority action are ideas that have been specifically tailored to match the needs or strengths of a local area. Examples provided show that local authorities are good at identifying local strengths (i.e. tourism/cultural/heritage/agriculture/IT/third level research) and “plugging in” to national strategies. The most effective local strategies take into account factors that are unique to that area and therefore give it a competitive advantage. These include factors such as geography, demography, employment tradition, and links to colleges, local heritage, recreation and economic assets. This is precisely why local authorities, with their local expertise and capacity, are perfectly placed to support the Action Plan for Jobs by ensuring that actions are tailored to suit particular localities.

Local Diversity is Strength

The research points to the benefits of an inter-agency approach when devising enterprise supports in contrast to a one-size fits all approach which is not always effective. A collaborative inter-agency approach takes account of the interests of towns and cities, and involves all of the relevant government, commercial and community actors, as this will foster innovative and appropriate responses at local level. Therefore, it is important to allow for flexibility at local level so that national strategies can be tailored to fit local strengths in areas such as tourism, marketing and enterprise. As our evidence suggest, this will allow local authorities to “plug in” to activate elements of the National Jobs Plan more easily.

Conclusions

Donegal County Council has adopted a very proactive approach to economic development, enterprise, provision of infrastructure and the development of resources for the benefit of the county. The Council has carried out this work in its own right and also in a collaborative context through its role as lead partner of Donegal County Development Board. Donegal County Council will continue to work with all relevant stakeholders in the context of the Development Board and its priority goals, and will adapt its efforts to whatever new structures are put in place by Government in the context of the Putting People First document.

For further information please visit:

Donegal County Council

Website: www.donegalcoco.ie

Office for Local Authority Management (OLAM)

Website: www.lgma.ie/publications



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE
Dhún na nGall
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL



Donegal County Development Board
Bord Forbartha Chontae Dhún na nGall



donegal gathering
slógadh dhún na ngall



donegal diaspora
pobal domhanda