



Emergency Services & Building Control

July 2016 Progress Report

Introduction.

In general, the first half of 2016 represented a period of re-organising, re-appraising and prioritising Carlow County Councils Emergency Services short to medium term goals. Following discussions with and funding from the DECLG & NDFEM, a number of projects such as further development of Hacketstown Training Centre, Upgrades to Bagenalstown Fire Station, construction and delivery of a new Class B fire appliance and water tanker for Carlow Fire brigade and the delivery of a new response vehicle for senior officers can now commence.

With a number of staff members on various secondments with the EU & the DOE, the fire service will continue to fulfil its statutory responsibilities to Sections 10,11,13,14,18,19,& 20 of the Fire Services Act, as well as its statutory obligations to both the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act and to Building Control Legislation.

Value for money is a priority and all expenditure is constantly monitored with particular emphasis on procurement procedures in line with County Council policy. Substantial efforts continue to be made to ensure that expenditure remains on target.

Fire Safety and Building Control activities continued during this period with a significant number of inspections being undertaken across the County in a broad range of building types to ensure compliance with Fire Safety Legislation and Building Control Legislation. During Performance Inspections of public assembly premises such as pubs, nightclubs, cinemas, hotels...etc., will continue to be a feature of our inspection programme throughout 2016.

In addition, the Building Control section continued the successful introduction and application of the new Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the associated national Building Control Management System (BCMS), and the introduction of new Building Control (Amendment) Regulations in 2015.

Organisation

O.H.S.A.S 18001 Safety Management System Accreditation

In December 2013 Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service achieved the coveted Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Specification (OSHAS 18001 Safety Management System) award from the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI). The Fire & Rescue Service successfully maintained its accreditation following a re-audit by the National Standards Authority of Ireland in November 2015.

The system was achieved by implementing 19 policy and procedure documents each accompanied by a large number of supporting documents and was the result of a year-long implementation project. The system enables the Fire service to have greater control and management of vital areas such as Control of Contractors, Training, Maintenance of Fleet & Equipment, Statutory Requirements and First Aid.

Social Media and Community Connectivity

In September 2015, Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service launched a new Twitter account, and is in the process of launching pages on other social media platforms, including Facebook, and is in the process of redeveloping its web presence.

It is anticipated that these platforms will provide the Fire Service with the means and tools necessary to provide information to the public, in relation to incidents, Major Emergencies, Fire Safety, Building Control, Road Safety, and other critical information. The use of these platforms will also coincide with National initiatives being created or developed to further enhance and promote safety and public awareness of the dangers of fire in the home and community. As part of National Fire Safety Week, the NDFEM have some recommended fire Authorities undertake some social media initiatives with respect to community fire safety.

Operations

Capital Programme.

The refurbishment and development of Muinebheag Fire Station remains a priority Capital Project for the service.

Capital funding was granted by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in the fourth quarter of 2013 to purchase a temporary two bay shed. The new two bay shed was completed in 2014, and currently houses a new water tanker, a 4x4 jeep and a Motorway incident warning sign.



Muinebheag Fire Station Development

In February 2016, minister Alan Kelly announced a five-year Fire Services Capital Programme with an allocation of €40 million, based on the current annual €8 million allocation, to be used for the purchase of fire appliances and specialist equipment, building or upgrading of prioritised Fire Stations, an upgrade of the Communications and Mobilisation system and improvements to Training Centres. Under this programme, the list of priority projects to be progressed will be kept under review on an annual basis.

An upgrade of Bagenalstown fire station is provided for in the current five-year programme. The Department is liaising with relevant local authorities to progress proposed projects in this programme within the indicated timescales. The projects in the capital programme will be reassessed on an annual basis and priority may be adjusted to bring forward projects offering best value-for-money and to take account of the state of readiness of the projects.

Following discussions with the DCELG it was agreed that an application for an extension to and upgrade of the existing fire station in Bagenalstown to the value of circa. €420,000 would be supported. Work is currently being undertaken to finalise a realistic detailed design and submission to the department for final approval. Subject to this approval, the planning and tendering stage will commence.

The Department of the Environment Community and Local Government have been very supportive of many important development projects undertaken by Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service in recent years, which must be acknowledged.

Currently the following capital projects are being undertaken by Carlow Fire Service;

Project	Value
New Class B Fire Appliance	€290,000
New Water Tanker Carlow	€180,000
New Senior Officer Response Vehicle	€36,000
Development Work at Hacketstown Training Centre	€243,000
Upgrade of Bagenalstown Fire station	€420,000
TOTAL	€1,169,000

As part of the OSHAS 18001 Safety Management system review, it was identified that the electrical wiring in Muinebheag Fire Station was sub-standard, and unable to achieve test certification. It is proposed to completely re-wire the fire station, and to install an Emergency Lighting system, and a Fire Detection and Alarm System.

Fire Brigade Mobilisations

The level of operational activity throughout the County for 2016 compared with operational activity for the same period in 2015 saw a drop of 5%. It should be noted that a reduced number of operational incidents does not directly translate into reduced costs in providing and maintaining the operational service.

52% of all mobilisations were fire calls in County Carlow, with a further 8% of fire calls in other County's

Road Traffic Collisions constituted 22% of Fire Service mobilisations

False Alarms – Good Intent (both equipment failures, and good intent fire calls) constituted 12% of Fire Service mobilisations

Other fire calls, including miscellaneous call, malicious calls, and non-fire rescues constituted 6% of Fire Calls, during 2016

Forest/Bog/Grass fires comprise 16% of all mobilisations

Chimney Fires represents 21% of mobilisations

Domestic dwelling fires constitute 16% of mobilisations

Vehicle fires constituted 12% of mobilisations

All combined, these 5 fire call types constitute 79% of all Fire Call Mobilisations of Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service.

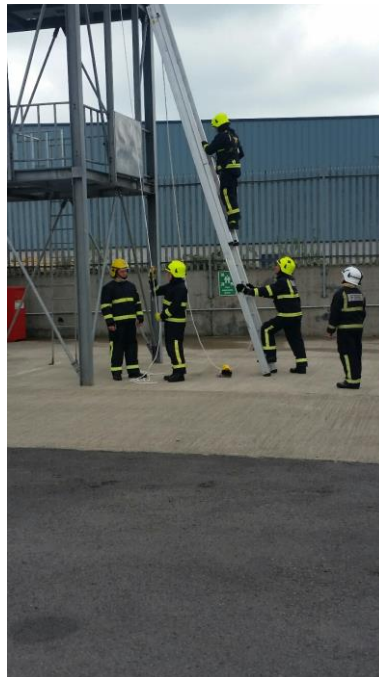
Training and Development.

The development and training of personnel across a wide range of disciplines is being undertaken during the year in accordance with the brigade training programme for 2016. The annual training programme is developed each year following consultation at all levels across the service. This consultation ensures that the training provided at a significant cost to the Fire Authority is relevant, and meets the needs of the firefighters, officers, administrative and other technical and support personnel.

The training necessary to comply with the requirements and guidance issued by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management.

In 2016, training will be provided to firefighters in the following areas:

- CISM Awareness
- EFR & CFR
- Breathing Apparatus Refresher
- ESDS
- CAFS
- Hydraulic Platform
- Pump Operator



On Station Training.

Weekly on Station Training in all Stations is undertaken in accordance with the On-Station Training Programmes issued to each Station Officer and under the supervision of Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Operations. Attendance at weekly on-station training remains very high in all four brigades which is encouraging and confirms that the firefighters are committed to ensuring that their knowledge and skills are continually refreshed.



Carlow Technical Rescue Extrication Team

Carlow County Fire & Rescue Service has been at the forefront of vehicle extrication and patient care for numerous years, from its involvement in the first National Extrication Challenge back in 1992 through to the establishment of Rescue Organisation Ireland in 2008.

During this time Carlow have competed successfully on the world stage at the following events organised by the World Rescue Organisation.

Capetown, South Africa 2006
Barcelona, Spain 2007
Cardiff, Wales 2008
Frankfurt, Germany 2009
Cork, Ireland 2010
London, England 2012
Clearwater, Florida 2013
Morton on Marsh, England 2014
Lisbon, Portugal 2015
La Rochelle France 2016
National Challenge Meath May 2016 3rd overall

Vehicle extrication and casualty care is becoming increasingly more complex and challenging and there is a growing need to develop new and exciting strategies, interventions and partnerships which further assist rescue workers and the people they care for as they face their daily challenges.

The team achieved 3rd Place overall in Road Traffic Collision Challenge in the National Rescue Organisation Ireland (ROI) challenge in May 2016, at Tayto Park, Co. Meath.

A tribute to the work and commitment given by each of the team members, their colleagues, who assist them in preparation and training and the team management, all of which is done on a voluntary basis.



The Chief Fire Officer has acknowledged the hard work and commitment from past and present members of the extrication team, their families and colleagues from the other principle emergency services who contribute in a significant way to the success of the team.

He also wishes to acknowledge the collective learning achieved from our participation in such challenges, which has significantly improved our knowledge and skills in this area and enables us to better service our communities.

Hacketstown Training & Development Centre

The training and development centre based at Hacketstown Fire Station continues to provide essential Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour training to fire service personnel in County Carlow and also to personnel across the Country. The centre increased its level of activity in 2016, when compared with the use and operation of the centre in the same period 2015.

The Training Centre has Hosted and delivered training courses from Fire Services in Counties Wexford, Laois, Meath, Offally, Donegal, Waterford, and from the Defence Forces.

The Fire and Rescue service sees this as a huge opportunity to further enhance and strengthen our links with local industry and with the community. It is planned to undertake a feasibility study to explore the



possibility to further developing the provision of training to the public and private sectors and thereby generate income for the service. The Fire & Rescue Service has attained considerable expertise and experience

through the development of in-house Instructors to operate and deliver high class training at the centre.

It was recently agreed following discussions with the NFDEM that the €243,000 capital funding allocated would be spent on provision of new CFBT training units, repair and refurbishment of existing buildings and the provision of a new Shower, changing & welfare unit on the site.



Major Emergency Management

The service continues to perform the role of designated lead agency for the South East Region and continues its active involvement in the Regional Working Group and Regional Steering Group.

In 2015, the Local Authority's of the South East Region continued to chair both groups, having been successfully chaired between 2012 and 2014 by the Health Service Executive. Mr. Dan McInerney, Acting Chief Executive, Carlow County Council is currently the Chair of the Regional Steering Group and Mr. Niall Curtin, Chief Fire Officer, Waterford County and City Fire Service is currently the chair of the Regional Working Group.

The Local MEM Appraisal has been undertaken for 2015 and is in the process of being completed, signed off and submitted. Carlow County Council has been tasked to run a full scale regional Major Emergency training exercise in September / October 2016, with planning for this exercise due to commence shortly.

A Severe Weather related Major Emergency Exercise on was held in the South East Region during January 2016 in County Waterford.

The Regional MEM Training programme was delivered through the work of the Training and Exercise MEM Sub-Group, which is chaired by Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Michael Gahan.

Technical and Community Fire Safety

Fire Safety Inspections

The Fire Authority has carried out 27 inspections under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003, including During Performance Inspections of venues during an event, in a range of building purpose groups such as Residential Apartments, shops, offices, and Assembly and Recreation buildings 2016.

Intoxicating Liquor Licenses

The Fire Authority received and processed 18 License Applications for various premises throughout the county under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003 to date in 2016.

Dangerous Substances License Applications

The Fire Authority received and processed 2 License Applications for various premises throughout the county under the Dangerous Substances Act 1972 & 1979, thus far in 2016.

Explosives Registration Applications

The Fire Authority received and processed 0 Explosives Registration Notifications for various premises throughout the county under the Explosives Act 1875, so far during 2016.

Planning

The Planning Authority forwarded a total of 46 Planning Application files to the Fire Authority so far in 2016, which were processed, reports generated, and returned.

Building Control

Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2015

The Building Control (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2015 came into force on the 1st September 2015.

The introduction of the new amendments, which modify the 2014 BCAR included a critical provision for the 'opt out' of the requirement for an assigned certifier, in the case of 'one off' Domestic Dwellings – that is single domestic dwellings on single development sites, and domestic dwelling extensions. This 'opt out' does not remove or reduce the requirement for compliance with Building Regulations, but it does allow a homeowner, or developer, opt out of having an assigned certifier inspect and oversee construction works

In advance of the commencement of these new regulations, the Building Control Authority noted a substantial drop-off in the number of new dwellings commencing in August, and a substantial increase of Commencement Notices in September, the majority of which were of the 'opt out' type.

Fire Safety Certificates

The Building Control Authority received a total of 22 Fire Safety Certificate Applications in 2016 so far, which represents a reduction in the number of Fire Safety Certificates received, when compared with other years.

Disability Access Certificates

The Building Control Authority received and processed a total of 14 Disability Access Certificate applications to date 2016,

Commencement Notices

The Building Control Authority received 68 Commencement Notices in to date in 2016.

Building Control Inspections

A total of 67 Building Control Inspections have been undertaken throughout the County so far in 2016. Emphasis was placed on the importance of compliance with the Building Regulations and the Building Control Authority was and continues to encourage and advise private businesses and members of the public in relation to same.

In addition to the Building Control Inspections, 16 Fire Safety Inspections were also carried out so far in 2016.

Acting Chief Fire Officer