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FOREWORD

COUNCILLOR PEGGY NOLAN, MAYOR

As Mayor of County Longford it is with great pride that I present the Council's 2007 Annual Report detailing the activities of the Council during the year. This excellent publication is a valuable source of reference material and information with regard to the Council's wide range of services.

The Annual Report records the achievements of this Council and the progress that has been made with regard to achieving the goals that were included in the Corporate Plan adopted by Longford County Council in 2004. Major development and growth has taken place in the county during the year and the County Development Plan has been used as the template for controlling the pace and level of development.

The key functions of Longford County Council are delivered across five Directorates. The challenges facing each Director of Service in managing the services for which they are responsible are significant. In our rapidly expanding county the Council is committed to providing first class amenities for all. The delivery of improved services and amenities is a work in progress and I am happy that in 2007 progress was made in many respects. The increasing demand for water and sewerage networks of the highest standards is, I believe, one of the principal challenges facing the Council. I have no doubt that a combination of the dedicated professionalism of the employees of Longford County Council and the ongoing commitment of the elected representatives will result in the challenges being overcome.

Longford as a County is embracing change. The county continues to be recognised as an ideal place in which to live, work and conduct business. The county offers an exceptional quality of life to those who choose to live here. Longford County has experienced significant social and economic development and it is my privilege to constantly promote our county. The success of Longford County Council is very much a team effort. I would like to thank all of the employees for their dedication and professionalism. I wish also to thank the elected members of Longford County Council whose endeavours are reflected in the spread of success countywide.

To conclude I would like to wish everyone a successful 2008 and pledge my continued commitment to work for a bright future for all who choose to call Longford "Home". I commend this report to the people of Longford as an excellent overview of the work done by this Council in 2007.

Peggy Nolan
Mayor



INTRODUCTION

MR. TIM CAFFREY, COUNTY MANAGER

I am pleased as County Manager to welcome publication of the Longford County Council Annual Report for 2007. In examining the report, I am satisfied that we are continuing to improve our performance and effectiveness against a background of prudent financial management and transparent accountability. This achievement in delivering quality services and in planning appropriately for the future of our County, is largely due to the continued commitment of the Elected Representatives and Executive in working harmoniously for the betterment of Longford and its communities.



Some of our principal achievements during the last year are detailed within the report. For example, a strategic planning project for Ballymahon and environs has been progressed, as well as proposals for new library facilities in the town. Subject to the success of this approach to town planning and development, it is proposed to replicate the process on a needs basis in other towns in the county.

A new swimming pool complex has been successfully implemented in Longford Town Mall, together with a state-of-the-art all-weather playing pitch and childrens' playground. Playgrounds were also successfully implemented in both Edgeworthstown and Ballymahon.

Significant improvements are in train in the areas of road improvement and water services.

The housing needs of the County continue to be monitored and effectively met.

Towns and villages in the County and their approach roads have been visually enhanced during the year and it is proposed to continue with this approach into the future.

Support is provided in every possible way to the growth of existing and new enterprise and every effort is continuously made to facilitate and attract new industry into the County.

The Council continues to monitor and review how it communicates with those who live and work in Longford. Significant improvements have been made in the areas of customer services and media interaction.

I am confident that Longford County Council continues to deliver services of a quality compatible with modern standards and expectations. I look forward to working with our employees, elected representatives, other agencies and the various community sectors in the ongoing improvement and development of the County for the betterment of all the people of Longford.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Caffrey'.

Tim Caffrey
County Manager



MEMBERS OF LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

DRUMLISH ELECTORAL AREA



GERRY BRADY



LUIE MCENTIRE



MARTIN MULLEADY

DRUMLISH

LONGFORD ELECTORAL AREA



DENIS GLENNON



VICTOR KIERNAN



ALAN MITCHELL



JAMES COYLE



MARTIN FARRELL



FRANK KILBRIDE

GRANARD ELECTORAL AREA

GRANARD



PETER MURPHY



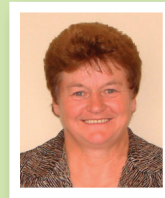
MICHAEL NEVIN



PEGGY NOLAN



SEAMUS BUTLER



MAURA
KILBRIDE-HARKIN



P.J. REILLY

BALLYMAHON ELECTORAL AREA

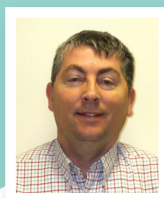
BALLYMAHON



LARRY BANNON



PADDY BELTON



MICK CAHILL



SEAN FARRELL



ADRIAN FARRELL



BARNEY STEELE



MEMBERSHIP OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES

Housing, Building, Social Policy, Planning and Building Control	
Chairperson:	Councillor Victor Kiernan
Members Longford County Council:	Councillor Alan Mitchell Councillor Maura Kilbride-Harkin Councillor Martin Mulleady Councillor Peter Murphy Councillor P.J. Reilly
Longford Town Council:	Councillor James Keogh
Sectoral Representatives: <i>1 Development/Construction</i> <i>3 Community & Voluntary:</i>	Mr. Kevin Hughes, Construction Industry Federation Ms. Patricia Harrison, Community & Voluntary Forum Ms. Fionnula Spillane, Community & Voluntary Forum Mr. Benson Ogboko, Community & Voluntary Forum

Transportation, Road Development, Road Maintenance & Road Safety Policies	
Chairperson:	Councillor Larry Bannon
Members Longford County Council:	Councillor Adrian Farrell Councillor Paddy Belton Councillor James Coyle Councillor Luie McEntire
Longford Town Council:	Councillor Edward Kelly
Sectoral Representatives: <i>1 Agriculture/Farming</i> <i>1 Trade Union</i> <i>1 Community & Voluntary</i>	Mr. Seamus Treacy, Irish Co-Operate Organisation Society Mr. Bernard Nolan, Irish Congress of Trade Unions Ms. Trish Rouiller, Longford Women's Link



Water and Environmental Services Policy

Chairperson:	Councillor Gerry Brady
Members Longford County Council:	Councillor Martin Farrell Councillor Seamus Butler Councillor Mick Cahill Councillor Peggy Nolan
Longford Town Council:	Councillor Carmel Fay
Sectoral Representatives: <i>1 Agriculture/Farming</i> <i>1 Community & Voluntary:</i>	Mr. Albert Cooney, Irish Farmers Association Mr. Parvez Butt, Newtownforbes Development

Economic, Urban and Rural Development, Cultural and Recreational Policies

Chairperson:	Councillor Barney Steele
Members Longford County Council:	Councillor Sean Farrell Councillor Denis Glennon Councillor Frank Kilbride Councillor Michael Nevin
Longford Town Council:	Councillor Paul Connell
Sectoral Representatives: <i>1 Business/Commercial:</i> <i>2 Community & Voluntary:</i>	Mr. Brian Dillon, Longford Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Mark Casey, Lanesboro Amateur Boxing Club. Mr. Terry McKenna, Ballinamuck Community Enterprise Ltd.



REPORT ON WORKING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES DURING 2007





REPORT ON WORKING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES DURING 2007

WATER SERVICES & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Strategic Policy Committee met twice during 2007. The following matters and recommendations were considered:-

26th February 2007

- Presentation on Camlin River Fisheries Rehabilitation Project by Mr Fergus Lynch, Shannon Regional Fisheries Board
- Consideration of developing Policy on Flooding
- Consideration of the Civic Amenity Site Discussion
- Consideration of Survey and Report on Longford County Council Cemeteries for the period 2006 – 2025
- Consideration of Policy in relation to erection of Auctioneers signs in County Longford

27th November 2007

- Information regarding New Drinking Water Regulations
- Information regarding New Licences required for Waste Water Treatment Plants
- Cemetery Bye Laws
- Selection of nominee to represent Longford County Council on the Energy Agency

TRANSPORTATION, AND ROAD DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE AND ROAD SAFETY

Strategic Policy Committee

The Strategic Policy Committee met twice during 2007 with a core objective of ensuring that infrastructural transportation policies and investment assist the economic and social development of County Longford and preserve and improve the particular attractiveness of the County and its background environment.

The days and dates of the meetings were:-

- Tuesday 1st May, 2007
- Thursday 18th October, 2007

The main items for discussion and consideration were:-

1. To develop a policy with regards the appropriate level of directly employed Longford County Council staff supervision at roadworks
2. Potential impact of current draft improvement plan submitted by Longford County Council to H.S.A on the 2007 Road Work Schemes
3. Refuse collection times in Towns throughout the County
4. Longford Streets Upgrading Programme
5. Health and Safety at road works
6. Policy on children at play signs



HOUSING & SOCIAL POLICY, PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL POLICY

The Housing & Social Policy, Planning & Building Control Policy SPC met seven times during 2007. The dates of the meetings held were as follows:-

- 22nd January 2007
- 26th February 2007
- 23rd April 2007
- 25th June 2007
- 23rd July 2007
- 24th September 2007
- 3rd December 2007

The following is a list of the main issues considered by the Committee in 2007:-

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Housing Maintenance Policy
- Policy on Roadside Advertising
- Tromra Road Rejuvenation Project
- Policy on Transfers and Re-Letting
- Waste collection – Local Authority Tenants
- Better Estate Awards
- Scheme of Installation of Smoke Alarms
- Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for older people and people with a disability
- Tenancy Agreement

ECONOMIC, URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, CULTURAL AND RECREATION POLICIES

The Strategic Policy Committee met on 2 occasions in 2007. The committee discussed the following policy issues: -

- Industrial Development
- Business Parks
- Cohesion
- Library Development Programme
- County Longford Museum
- Longford Swimming Pool
- Community & Voluntary Forum
- Broadband
- Comhairle na nÓg
- Young Citizen Awards
- CCTV
- Tourism
- County and Village Signage
- Sports Partnership



KEY FUNCTIONS

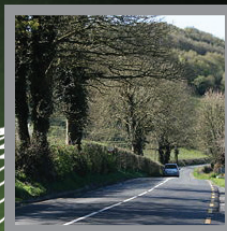
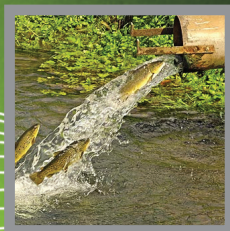
The principal services of Longford County Council are now provided within the following Directorate structure. The five Directorates cover the areas of: -

- Infrastructural Services Directorate
- Corporate, Environment, Emergency Services, Recreation and Amenity
- Housing and Planning Services
- Human Resources, Community and Enterprise, Economic Development, and Cultural Services
- Finance and Information Systems





INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE





INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES



Cllr. Larry Bannon,
Chairperson of Transportation SPC



Mr. Roger Timlin,
Director of Services

WATER SERVICES

Core Objective: *Provide environmentally sustainable water services and environmental infrastructure to secure economic and social development and to lobby for increased capital funding.*

Water Services Infrastructure:

There are five regional water schemes serving County Longford and it is estimated that 85% of the population receives a piped water supply treated to EU standards.

The Schemes are: Ballymahon, Lanesboro / Newtowncashel, Longford Central, Lough Gowna and Granard.

Drinking Water Quality is monitored by the Health Services Executive on an agency basis for Longford County Council in accordance with the E.C. (Quality of Water Intended for Human Consumption) Regulations, 2000. The results are reported quarterly to the County Council. They are also reported annually to the Environmental Protection Agency and a report is published by them.

Arising from the implementation, with effect from 12 June 2007, of S.I. No. 278 of 2007 European Communities (Drinking Water) (No.2) Regulations 2007, Local Authorities are required to fulfil the functions of Supervisory Authority over Group Water Schemes (GWS) and Small Private Supplies (SPS). This is a greatly increased regulatory role.

Under the new Regulations the EPA is the Supervisory Authority for Public Supplies. Local Authorities must now report any non-compliance to the EPA immediately and may be directed to

develop and implement Action Plans under direction from the EPA.

The Council has prepared a Strategic Rural Water Plan, a Network Appraisal and Renewal Plan and a GIS Spatial Database/Complete Information System of the water and sewer networks in the county.

There are eleven public sewerage schemes in the County: Ballymahon, Kenagh, Lanesboro, Longford, Newtownforbes, Drumlish, Granard, Edgeworthstown, Legan, Abbeyshrule and Clondra.

The Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 are currently in force. All Water Services Authorities' waste water discharges are to be subject to the new Regulations.

The Water Services Act, 2007 will be brought into force in a number of stages. An Order was signed to bring the bulk of the Act into force with effect from 31st December, 2007.

WATER CONSERVATION:

Works continued on the Water Conservation Project Stage 2. All District Meter Areas (DMAs) have been set up and all telemetry for monitoring flows have been installed.

Leak detection and repairs were, also, continued. This project has significantly reduced Unaccounted for Water from 66% in January 2006 to 44% in May 2007.

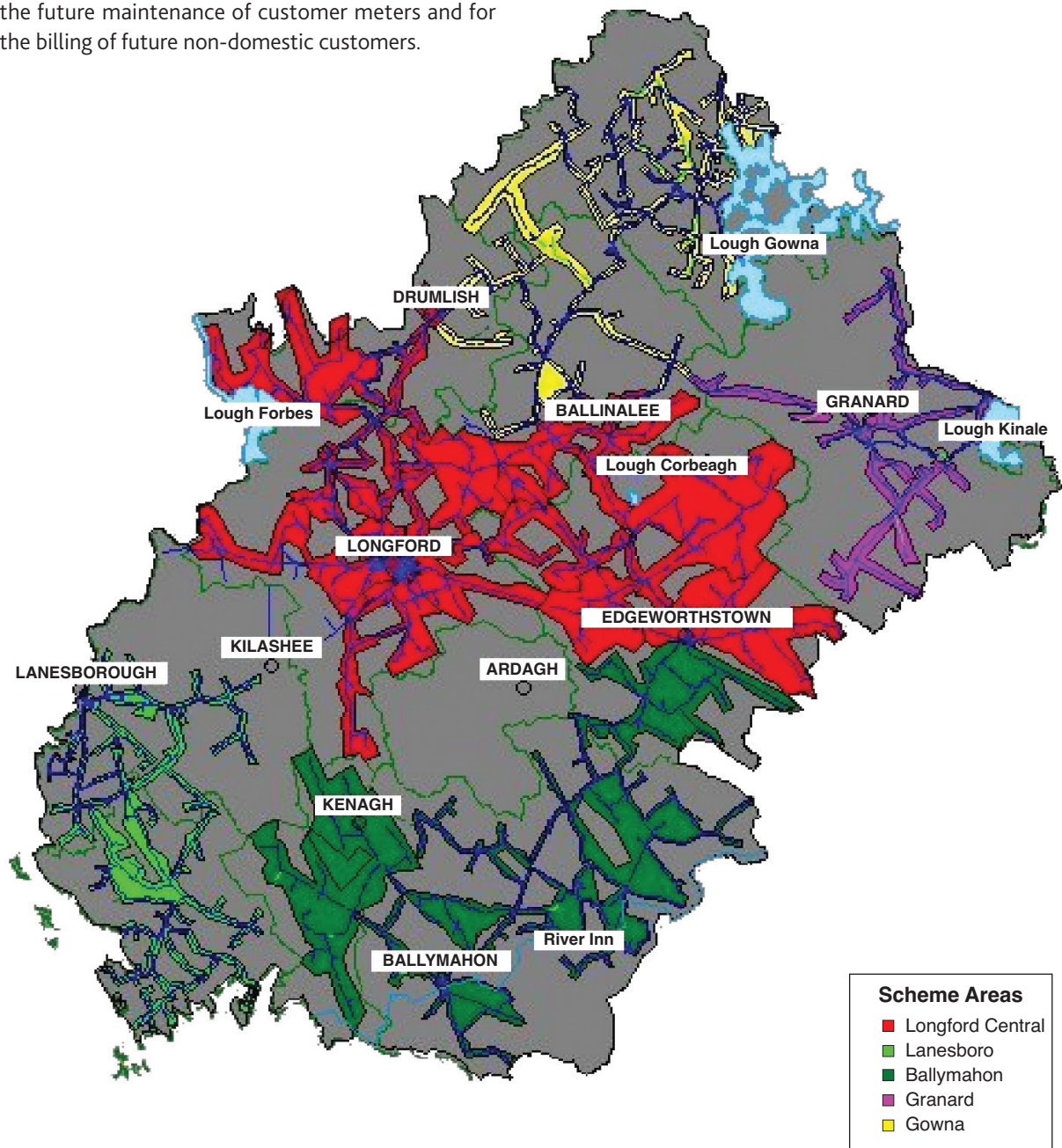
In total €1,672m has been spent on Stage 2 of the Water Conservation Project. Additional funding of €375,000 was approved by DOEHLG for further leakage detection and repairs and maintaining existing District Meter Area with Longford County Council providing the same amount from own funds.



Final approval for Stage 3 Phase 1 rehabilitation works to water supply pipelines has been approved by the DOEHLG. Contract documents and drawings have been prepared and will be ready to go to tender in early 2008.

Application for Stage 3 Phase 2 rehabilitation works has been submitted for approval to the DOEHLG.

The Non-Domestic Water Metering project has reached substantial completion and customer billing commenced in 2007. This project will be continued for the future maintenance of customer meters and for the billing of future non-domestic customers.



County Longford Regional Network Map

WATER SERVICES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2007 – 2009

	EST. COST €
SCHEMES TO START 2007 W/S	
Edgeworthstown Sewerage Scheme (Nutrient Reduction) S	600,000
• Works completed December 2007	
Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme (Reservoir and Pipelines) W	7,500,000
• Construction to commence March 2008	
SCHEMES TO START 2008	
Ballymahon Regional Water Supply Scheme (Improvement) W	4,500,000
• Approval to proceed with preparation of Contract Docs. Dec. 07	
Granard Regional Water Supply Scheme W	6,500,000
• Approval to proceed with preparation of Contract Docs. Aug. 07	
Longford Sewerage Scheme Phase 2 (New Sewers) S	5,700,000
• Preparation of Local Area Plan in Progress	
Schemes to start 2009	
Drumlish and Newtownforbes Sewerage Schemes1 S	8,300,000
• Network Construction to commence March 2008.DBO to follow	
Schemes to Advance Through Planning	
Lanesborough Regional Water Supply Scheme W	8,000,000
• Scheme to be advanced through planning stage	
Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme Phase 12 W	7,000,000
• Contract Documents for Stage 1 being prepared	
Longford Grouped Towns and Villages Sewerage Scheme Feasibility Study (Abbeylara, Abbeyshrule, Ballinamuck, Barry, Killashee, Ennybeggs, Legga, Moydow, Moyne, Newtowncashel, Stonepark and Taghshinny) S	8,060,000
• No Approval to proceed as per DOEHLG letter May 07	
Longford Town Sewerage Scheme (Network Review, Wastewater Treatment Plant and Hub Centre for Sludge) S	9,760,000

• Preparation of Contract Documents in Progress	
Rural Towns & Villages Initiative	
Ardagh/ Ballinallee/ Aughnaclyffe Sewerage Schemes1 S	4,000,000
• Network Construction to commence May 2008.DBO to follow	
Lanesborough Water Supply Stage 1 (Wellfield Development) W	1,400,000
• Contract Documents being prepared	
Water Conservation Allocation	
• Start Construction of Network Rehabilitation Contracts June 08	4,200,000
Asset Management Study	
• Network Mapping	30,000
Programme Total	75,550,000

1 Bundled together as a Grouped DBO Scheme

2 Works arising from the Strategic Review





WATER SERVICES CAPITAL:

Longford County Council continued to progress an ambitious Water Service Investment Programme throughout 2007. Works on the Clondra Sewerage Treatment Plant were finally completed with the official Ministerial Opening programmed for February 2008.

The Edgeworthstown Waste Water Treatment Nutrient Reduction Scheme was completed in 2007. This Scheme provides phosphate removal treatment in order to comply with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations. Work commenced in February 2007 and was completed in December 2007.

The Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme Stage 6 – Reservoir & Pipelines received Tender Approval from the Minister in November 2007 and construction works are due to commence on this Scheme in April 2008. The Scheme involves the provision of a new local water storage reservoir at Knockahaw for Longford Town and its environs and a water supply trunk main from existing storage reservoirs at Prucklish to the new reservoir at Knockahaw.

Work has progressed on the Five Villages Sewerage Scheme (Ardagh, Aughnacliffe, Ballinalee, Drumlish and Newtownforbes) with construction of the two network contracts for this Scheme due to commence in March and May 2008. The provision of the Treatment Plants will follow by Design, Build and Operate Contract and should be completed by the end of 2009.

Longford County Council sought approval from the DOEHLG in 2007 for funding for major infrastructural improvements in both Water and Wastewater Infrastructure.

Approvals received in 2007 for Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme Phase 1, Ballymahon Regional Water Supply Scheme, Granard Regional Water Supply Scheme and Longford Town Sewerage Scheme Network Review, Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade and Hub Centre for Sludge will ensure continued investment in Water Service Infrastructure.

This is a vital component in the longterm sustainable development of the County.

RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

Group Water/Sewerage Schemes:

In March 2007, Longford County Council was advised by the Department for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government that the Block Grant Allocation under Rural Water Programme Group Scheme measures was €1,350,000.

During 2007 applications for proposed schemes were received from Ballyclamay, Listraghee, Rathmore No. 2, Agharickard, Fermoyle and Terlicken GWSs.

The following Group Water Schemes were under construction in 2007; Clonmore/Kilmore, Gowlan, Esker/Cloncowley, Carrickduff, Camagh, Legga No. 2, Derrynabuntle, Cloonard, Freehalman/Clonahard.

Upgrade works continued on Ardagh and Moydow Group Water Schemes which are both connecting to the Public Water Mains.

The Longford Rural Water Monitoring Committee met in November, 2007 to review progress on the implementation of the Rural Water Programme. The committee were advised on the current work programme and commitments under the various measures. The E.C. Drinking Water Regulations 2007 were discussed in detail, as were applications for the take-over of Group Water Schemes and CLÁR funding. Information was given on the Water Services Act, 2007.

The Council submitted proposals to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for Block Grant funding for 2008 totalling €1,669,450 in respect of new and ongoing works for group water/group sewerage schemes as well as proposals for taking group water schemes in charge.

CLÁR funding was received from Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs for Carrickduff, Camagh and Derrynabuntale GWSs, while approval was sought for CLÁR funding on behalf of Listraghee GWS.

Group Water Scheme Subsidies and Individual Water Grants:

Longford County Council processed seven applications for subsidies towards the operational costs of group water schemes, total amount paid out was €12,557.51.

Twenty-four applications were received for grants for individual water supplies. Approval was given for twenty-three applications and 4 applications were refused. Grant payments totalling €23,832.30 were made to thirteen individuals.

Small Public Water and Sewerage Schemes:

In March 2007, Longford County Council was advised that the Block Grant Allocation under Rural Water Programme Small Schemes measure was €750,000.

The sewerage extensions at Granardkille and Carragh in Granard were progressed during the year. Special contributions were made to Freehalman/Clonahard GWS, Gowlan GWs and Ardagh GWSs towards upsizing

of pipes and to Cammagh GWS towards cost of linking of water mains network. The contract for 300 p.e. sewerage treatment plant at Abbeyshrule Waste Water Treatment Plant was completed during 2007.

The Council submitted proposals to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for Block Grant funding for 2008 totalling €4,603,500 in respect of Small Public Water & Sewerage Schemes. This submission included funding for final payments on Carragh & Granardkill sewerage extensions, special contributions to Gowlan & Mullinalaghta GWSs and Knockmartin Lane & Farnagh/Ballymakeegan GSSs, as well as funding for proposed sewerage works at Ballinamuck, Legan, Kenagh and Lanesboro and improvement works to Corbeagh water supply.

Water / Sewer Connection Licences:

During the year 2007, 159 licences were processed for connections to public sewerage, water and group water schemes.





TRANSPORTATION, ROAD DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE, AND ROAD SAFETY POLICIES

Core Objective: "Ensure that infrastructural transportation policies and investments assist and enhance the economic and social development of County Longford, and preserve and improve the physical attractiveness of the county and its background environment."

Longford is strategically located near the centre of Ireland and is traversed by National Primary Routes N4 and N5 and National Secondary Routes N55 and N63. These routes give rise to significant traffic flows throughout the county.

Fundamental to the proper development of County Longford is a requirement that the road network meets current and projected traffic volume and safety requirements. Strengthening economic activity requires the support of a good quality road network. It is recognised that for Longford to benefit effectively from this growth in industry, agriculture and tourism and the attractions of its lakes, rivers and scenic beauty, then the road network and particularly our regional and county roads must be of an appropriate standard, inviting and safe for visitor and locals alike.

Except for a limited number of roads under the authority of Longford Town Council, Longford County Council is responsible for the provision, improvement and maintenance of the public road network within the County.

Currently the breakdown of roads under the authority of the County Council is as follows:

Classification (km)	National Primary	National Secondary	Regional	Local	Total
North Area	-	13	53	654	720
Mid-Area	33	18	20	224	295
South Area	15	25	78	452	570
Total Kilometres	48	56	151	1331	1585

Finances available to the Council in 2007 were as follows:

1. National Roads
(National Roads Authority Grants):

Major Planning & Design	€ 3,600,000
Other Improvement Works	€ 3,440,000
Safety Barrier Program	€ 50,000
Traffic Calming Measures	€ 98,000
National Secondary Bridges	€ 70,000
Maintenance	€ 809,825
Total:	€ 8,017,825

2. Non-National Roads
(Department of the Environment & Local Government Grants):

Specific Improvement Works	€ 1,760,000
Restoration Improvement Works	€ 3,915,000
Restoration Maintenance Works	€ 1,334,000
Discretionary Improvement Works	€ 412,000
Discretionary Maintenance Works	€ 487,000
Low-cost Safety Improvement Works	€ 294,500
Local Improvement Schemes	€ 915,368
Local Improvement Schemes (Clár)	€ 158,282
Regional Road Signposting	€ 200,000
Training Programme	€ 23,100
Barrack St, Granard	€ 15,720
Total:	€ 9,514,970

3. Non-National Roads
(Council Contribution): € 1,032,000

TOTAL BUDGET: €18,564,795

In addition works funded by Roads Development Levies to the value of €374,845.21 was spent this year on footpaths, public lighting, traffic management projects throughout the county.

Design of National Road Infrastructural Projects has progressed with the assistance of the National Roads Authority Regional Design Office as follows:

- CPO for N5 Longford Town Bypass Scheme published November 2007
- Constraints study for N4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Scheme prepared and initial public consultations held
- National Secondary Roads Atkins/McCarthy Plan in continuing implementation stage.

All other Improvement and Maintenance Works were implemented through the two Area Engineering offices and the Council's Road Design office.

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES & CLÁR SCHEMES

€793,953 was spent on Local Improvement Schemes. A total of 35 schemes were completed.

€234,613 was spent on CLÁR Schemes. A total of 9 schemes were completed.

2 Community Schemes were completed.

ROAD SAFETY PROMOTION & SCHOOL WARDEN SERVICE

The Road Safety role of Local Authorities is wide and ranges from Road Construction to Safety Promotion to School Warden Schemes. They now have an expanded role in promoting road safety by developing more initiatives at local level such as:-

- Establishment of a working group to co-ordinate the activities of agencies and bodies involved e.g. Gardai and H.S.E.
- Development of a Road Safety Plan.
- Co-ordination with the National Safety Council – advertising, promotions, and media campaigns.
- The Junior School Warden Service is designed to provide safe crossing facilities for children in the vicinity of primary schools in provincial towns and villages.

The Local Authority is responsible for the introduction and operation of the service with the co-operation of

the Gardai, School Boards of Management, Teachers, Parents and Children. The Road Safety Council provides assistance with the initial organisation of the schemes. Longford County Council has 1 scheme in operation at present i.e. Scoil Mhuire National School, Newtownforbes. Adult School Wardens are, also, provided at St. Joseph's National School, St. Emer's National School, Longford and Lanesboro National School.





CORPORATE, ENVIRONMENT, EMERGENCY SERVICES, RECREATION AND AMENITY





CORPORATE, ENVIRONMENT, EMERGENCY SERVICES, RECREATION & AMENITY



Cllr. Gerry Brady,
Chairperson of Water & Environment SPC



Mr. Jack Kilgallen,
Director of Services

CORPORATE SERVICES

Freedom Of Information Requests 2007

A total of 14 FOI requests (9 Non-Personal and 5 Personal) was received by Longford County Council during 2007 from a mixed source of business, clients, staff and other. Four requests for internal review were received.

The Section 15 Freedom of Information Manuals for both Longford Town Council and Granard Town Council were published in 2007.

Franchise

Conditions for Registration:

A person must be at least 18 years of age on the day the Register comes into force (15th February). A person may be included on a Supplement to the Register if the person reaches 18 years of age between the 16th February and the day on which an Election or Referendum is held.

Every resident, irrespective of their nationality who is 18 years or older, is entitled to be on the Register of Electors.

The numbers registered to vote on the 2007/2008 Register of Electors were as follows :-

Local Electoral Areas	No. Of Electors
Ballymahon	8,185
Drumlish	3,722
Granard	6,362
Longford	9,240
Total:	27,509

Section 4 of the Electoral (Amendment) Act, 2001 amends Section 13 of the Electoral Act, 1992 in relation to the Register of Electors. It provides for the preparation of an "edited" version of the Register of Electors. The Edited Register contains only the names of persons who have no objection to their names being used for purposes other than Electoral or other Statutory Purposes. The Statutory position since the 1st of November 2004 is that it is an offence to use details contained in the Register of Electors for anything other than Electoral or other Statutory Purposes.

County Council Meetings

Meetings of the County Council were held monthly with the exception of the month of August.

The meetings of the Council were held in the newly refurbished Council Chamber from March 2007.

The Annual Meeting of the Council was held on 20th June 2007. Councillor Peggy Nolan was elected Mayor and Councillor Adrian Farrell was elected Deputy Mayor.

At the Budget Meeting held on the 17th December 2007, the members adopted the Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2008.

Monthly Meeting - 18th April 2007.

Mr. Enda Thompson, Project Co-ordinator, Shannon River Basin Project, made a presentation on "Significant Water Management Issues.

Ms. Eunice Langley of DARA Ireland and Transition Year students from the County made a presentation on the use of Defibrillators.



Monthly Meeting - 18th July 2007.

Mayor Peggy Nolan, Councillor Mick Cahill and Councillor Larry Bannon were nominated to the Focus Group to consider proposals to provide a Midland Regional Airport at the existing Air Strip in Abbeyshrule.

Councillor Peggy Nolan was nominated to the Board of Backstage Theatre.

Monthly Meeting - 19th September 2007.

Councillor Seamus Butler and Councillor Alan Mitchell were nominated to the Audit Committee of the Council.

Monthly Meeting - 17th October 2007.

Mr. Kevin Kidney, Chief Executive, Midlands East Regional Tourism Authority, addressed the meeting on tourism issues in the County.

Mr. Fergus Kennedy, Arts Officer, made a presentation on the "per cent for art" scheme.

A presentation was made to Ms. Grainne Fox, County Longford's entrant in the Rose of Tralee Competition.

Mr. Maurice Inglis of Co-operation Ireland presented certificates to representatives from Dromard, Cullyfad and Rathcline Sustainable Energy Project who are representing County Longford in the National Pride of Place Competition. Mayor Peggy Nolan presented each group with a cheque on behalf of the County Council.

Special Meeting – 5th November 2007.

A Special Meeting of the Council was held on the 5th November 2007 concerning the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme.

Ms. Patricia Harrison and Ms. Teresa Ormsby from the County Longford Community Childcare Services addressed the meeting.

Deputies Peter Kelly, James Bannon, Mary O'Rourke and Senator Nicky McFadden were also in attendance.

Monthly Meeting - 21st November 2007.

Rathcline Sustainable Projects Group won the Pride of Place Special Category Environmental Projects award

which was announced at a Ceremony in Westport on the 9th November 2007.

Mr. Ray Hogan of the Rathcline Sustainable Energy Project addressed the Council meeting on the project.

Mr. Ian Patterson and Mr. Joe Corcoran from Grontmii Consultants made a presentation on Water Conservation and Mains Rehabilitation.

Excellence in Local Government Awards 2007.

Mr. M. Nevin, Chief Executive Officer, Longford County Enterprise Board, attended the Council meeting.

The Longford Local Authorities reached the shortlist in the following Award Categories:-

- County/City Development Board Integrated Service Delivery
- Social & Community Development (Cultural Diversity)
- Waste Management (Recycling Facilities on Little Water Street).

Longford Town Council won an award for the following:

- Environmental Initiative (Bio-diesel Project)

Monthly Meeting - 19th December 2007.

Councillor Gerry Brady was nominated to the Midlands Energy Agency.

Civic Receptions

A Civic Reception was held on the 26th September 2007 at which the Freedom of the County was conferred on Mr. Albert Reynolds, former Taoiseach, in recognition of the contribution made by him to the Northern Ireland Peace Process.

A Civic Reception was held on the 23rd November 2007 at which the Freedom of the County was conferred on Mr. Liam Mulvihill in recognition of his contribution to Irish sporting and cultural life during his term of office as Director General of the Gaelic Athletic Association.



The Mall Complex

During 2007 Longford County Council continued to work on the provision of improved sports and leisure facilities in the county. A state of the art Swimming Pool was opened at the Town Mall in Longford. Alongside this facility an All Weather Playing Pitch was completed and it is now open for public use. This facility is fully marked and floodlit and compares very favourably with similar facilities that are available elsewhere in the country. The Sports Hall at The Mall was fitted with a new floor which meets all of the most modern standards for surfaces on which indoor sports are played. In tandem with the fitting of the new floor the Sports Hall and the other accommodation that is linked to it was completely re-decorated.

Planning work relating to the provision of a new bridge at the access point to the Town Mall was also commenced. It is hoped that this new bridge will become operational towards the end of 2008. Work was also carried out in respect of planning the development of other facilities that are available at The Mall. In particular the rejuvenation of the Basketball Court and the extending of the Gymnasium were advanced. The fact that the facilities in The Mall are of such a high standard has been widely commented upon by visitors to the county.

Playgrounds Provision

During 2007 the provision of playgrounds throughout the county was continued. A playground was provided at Edgeworthstown and it was opened to the public towards the end of the year. Work relating to the design and provision at a number of other locations was also advanced during the year. Funding has been allocated in a variety of spending programmes that will facilitate the provision of further playgrounds in 2008 and beyond.

Environmental and Amenity Development Levies

During 2007 a number of projects were funded or partly funded on the basis that they qualified under the Council's Development Levies Funding Programme. Funding for projects was distributed which totalled in excess of €231,000.00. During the year work was undertaken with a view to developing a 3 Year Development Levies Spending Programme. A consultative process was undertaken in order to identify suitable projects which would, if undertaken, contribute to the enhancement of the county both for those living here and those visiting Longford.

Disability Strategy

Under the provisions of the Disability Act 2005 funding is being provided to enable the Longford Local authorities to undertake works which will facilitate participation by people with disabilities in activities that for reasons relating to access they have previously been prevented from participating fully in. The Longford Local Authorities are aiming to ensure that over time public buildings and services are accessible to people of all abilities.

Work has been ongoing for some months relating to the drafting of a Disability Action Plan that will outline the policies that will be pursued with the aim of improving access. In addition to setting out the policies the Disability Action Plan will contain details of specific works that are to be undertaken and which have been identified by customers and employees of the Council.

An initial allocation of €260,000.00 was made in 2007 by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government under the National Disability Strategy. Subsequently, a top up allocation of €50,000.00 was made. During 2007 works were carried out to improve physical access to buildings at the offices of Longford County Council at Áras an Chontae and Camlin Court. Improvements were also made to the offices of Longford Town Council and some Branch Libraries. The nature of the improvements included the installation of hearing induction loops, the redesign of reception desks and modifications to internal doors. Work was

also undertaken to improve access at a number of cemeteries throughout the county. It is hoped that in 2008 work will be undertaken relating to pavements, pedestrian crossings and parking spaces in a number of towns and villages in the county. In 2007 the new Longford Swimming Pool was opened and the facilities were developed in a manner which enables people of all abilities to access and use them.

Safety Health and Welfare at Work

Increasingly the necessity to provide for the Health and Safety of all is becoming evident. The Council takes very seriously its responsibilities with regard to Health and Safety. Employees are being trained and up skilled in order that they are as keenly aware as possible of the need to ensure that the undertaking of work is carried out in a planned and safe manner. In this regard additional resources are being targeted at planning the delivery of services and projects. In 2007 the following activities were undertaken with the aim of ensuring the Safety, Health and Welfare of employees and others: -

- The Corporate Safety Statement was reviewed and amended where necessary
- Ancillary Safety Statements were also reviewed where necessary
- The manual relating to the management of construction projects was updated

- Safety Policies and Procedures were reviewed where the need to do so was identified
- Scheduled inspections took place on site activities and at Corporate Buildings and Council properties
- Regular meetings of the Safety Management Committee and the Safety Monitoring Committees were held in a variety of service departments.
- Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority carried out a number of site inspections during the year
- A number of Visual Display Unit assessments were undertaken with office staff.
- The Council delivered Health and Safety training to many of its employees.

The fact that no employees were injured in the course of carrying out their work is a testament to the Health and Safety programmes that are being conducted. Significant resources were targeted at ensuring that employees received all of the necessary training and equipment that enabled them to work safely. The fact that employees have a responsibility to promote and engage in safe working practices is being embraced by all.

It is hoped that the safety record will be maintained in 2008. Further training will be delivered as the need for it is identified and procedures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with a view to protecting employees and members of the public alike.



Mall Playground



ENVIRONMENT

This section covers a diverse range of functions and services. The principal areas are:

- 1 Pollution Control and Water Quality Management
- 2 Litter Management and Street Cleaning
- 3 Waste Management
- 4 Fire and Emergency Services
- 5 Veterinary Services and Food safety
- 6 Dog Control
- 7 Civil Defence
- 8 Burial Grounds

Pollution Control and Water Quality Management:

Pollution control legislation covers areas such as water and air pollution, and noise nuisance. Specific activities undertaken in relation to pollution control include investigation of water pollution incidents, licensing of discharges to waters and the implementation of a monitoring programme for rivers, lakes and closed landfills.

River Water Quality:

According to the most recent E.P.A. data, 41% of all the rivers in Co. Longford are classed as unpolluted. 28% of rivers are classed as slightly polluted. 30 % are classed as moderately polluted and 1.9 % are classed as seriously polluted.

River Basin Management Systems:

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) was introduced in December 2000 in response to declining water quality throughout Europe and is the key European Directive under which Ireland's waters will be managed for the foreseeable future.

The WFD was adopted in Irish law by the EC (Water Policy) Regulations, 2003 under which River Basin Districts, (RBD), were established.

Longford is part of the North Western RBD and the Shannon International River Basin District. The overall objective is to achieve at least a good status in all waters by 2015.

Monitoring programmes have been developed to identify the status of the waters and to enable the measurement of future improvements. The production of a River Basin Management Plan for the Shannon and North Western RBD's is scheduled for 2009.

Camlin River Fisheries Restoration Project:

The Shannon Regional Fisheries Board (SRFB) in conjunction with Longford County Council undertook a joint work programme on rivers in County Longford. This involved Longford County Council assigning machine time to a fisheries rehabilitation programme in place of carrying out arterial drainage maintenance. The SRFB undertook the construction of vortex weirs, deflectors and gravel beds in the river. The Board also carried out tree planting and fencing where necessary. The works carried out over the past few years have yielded a considerable increase in juvenile trout stocks.

Environmental Laboratory:

The County Council Environment Laboratory is located at Park Road, Longford. It provides support to the Water Services and Environment Sections. The principal areas of activity are:

- 1 Water pollution monitoring and control.
- 2 Monitoring County Council Urban Wastewater Treatment plants.
- 3 Landfill monitoring.
- 4 Monitoring industrial effluent discharges.
- 5 River and lake monitoring.

Litter Management:

Enforcement of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 – 2003 is one of the key mechanisms in tackling the litter pollution problem in County Longford. Litter Control is conducted primarily by the Council's Litter Wardens assisted by the Council's Dog Warden and Longford Town Council's own Litter/ Traffic Wardens.

In 2007, Longford County Council issued 517 "On the Spot" litter fines, an increase of 26% on the figure for 2006 and this reflects the increasing national problem with regard to dumping and fly-tipping. A total of 21 prosecutions for non-payment of Litter Fines was initiated in 2007.

**Anti Litter Awareness Grants:**

Anti Litter initiatives, funded by a DoEHLG grant of €23,380 were enacted during 2007 by Longford County Council.

Longford Tidy Towns Committee (IBAL); Litter Bin Sponsorship Scheme; Schools Waste Recycling Competition; Litter Black Spot clean up; Purchase of litter pickers, bags, gloves, other material to assist in clean-ups in Co. Longford.

Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund:

This fund is a grant scheme funded by both the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Longford County Council to support innovative, community-based environmental projects. The fund of €10,640 was distributed to the following organisations:

Longford Tidy Towns Committee, Longford Environmental Alliance, Kelvin Moore, Mc Eoin Park Residents Association, School Book Exchange, Jumbletown, i.e., Lough Ree Summer School, Down to Earth, IBOTZ and Longford ICA.

Street Sweeping:

In 2007 the Council carried out a regular programme of Street Sweeping in the towns and villages of County Longford. This involved using mechanised equipment as well as manual sweeping of litter and servicing of litter bins in accordance with the County Longford Litter Management Plan. Total expenditure on street sweeping during 2007 was €313,590.

WASTE MANAGEMENT:**Waste Management Plan 2005 – 2010**

The Waste Management Plan for the Midlands Region 2005-2010, as adopted, sets out a framework for the sustainable management of waste within the five local authority areas (Offaly Co. Council, Laois Co. Council, Longford Co. Council, Westmeath Co. Council and North Tipperary Co. Council) and covers all non-hazardous waste arising in the region. Hazardous waste is managed in accordance with the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan, prepared by the EPA.

Provision of Facilities:

There are 26 bring banks in County Longford. Green, brown and clear glass as well as aluminium cans are accepted at all sites.

Over 504 tonnes of glass was collected in 2007 at the bring banks, an increase of 64 tonnes over the amount collected in 2006. Approximately, 45 tonnes of aluminium cans were collected in 2007, an increase of 18 tonnes over the amount collected in 2006.

Overall there was an increase in use in bring facilities in 2007 with a 15% increase in the tonnage of glass collected and an 66% increase in the tonnage of aluminium cans collected on the 2006 tonnage collection figure.

Enforcement:

Longford County Council has an active Waste Enforcement Team combining both technical and administrative disciplines. The Enforcement Team deal with areas such as Waste Facility Permits, Collection Permits, Packaging Regulations, Farm Plastics and all Unauthorised Waste Activities. During 2007 the Waste Enforcement Team continued to target large-scale incidents of burning and illegal waste disposal. A total of 23 prosecutions was initiated in 2007 with 15 cases resolved following remediation and clean-up works. A total of 9 cases will carry forward into 2008 for further action.

Longford County Council's Policy in the area of Waste Management is to increase awareness and improve compliance with Environmental Legislation.

Environmental Awareness:

During the year continued good work was accomplished in the following areas:

- 1 National Spring Clean
- 2 National Tree Week
- 3 Large Goods Collections
- 4 Green Schools
- 5 Composting
- 6 Hazardous Waste Collections
- 7 Farm Waste Audits

National Spring Clean:

The National Spring Clean campaign 2007 was a great success with over 35 groups and organisations taking part in the town and county areas. Approximately 2.8 tonnes of litter and waste was collected as well as 200kg of metal and 50kg of plastic bottles. Litter Pickers, gloves, bibs and colour-coded bags were provided for the community clean-ups.



Spring Clean Killasonna National School

Large Goods Collections:

Seven temporary Civic Amenity Collections were organised during the Spring and Autumn months of 2007 and a total of 32.12 tonnes of waste was collected. These took place in Granard, Longford, Ballinalee, Columcille, Ballymahon and Lanesboro.

It has been noticed that since the opening of the second civic amenity site in Longford town and the introduction of the WEEE regulations which introduced free take-back obligations on the retailers, that the tonnages of materials collected have steadily decreased over the years.





Green Schools:

Longford was once again very successful in increasing activity in Green Schools. The participation of schools in the Green Schools programme increased with 96% of national and secondary schools registered at the end of 2007. During 2007, St Joseph's N.S., Dublin Road, was awarded its first green flag, while four other schools renewed their green flags. This brings the total number of schools with Green Flags in Co. Longford to 12.

The schools that received Green Flags during 2007 were:-

- St Joseph's Primary School Longford.
- St Mels N.S. Ardagh.
- Scoil Mhuire Gan Small N.S. Lanesboro.
- Tashinny N.S. Tashinny Ballymahon.
- St Marys N.S. Newtowncashel.



Composting:

Compost sales in 2007 showed a decrease over the 2006 figure but as part of Longford County Council's commitment to recycling, the public are given the option of purchasing home composting units at a subsidised price of €25.00 and a rate of €15.00 is applicable to holders of pension books. To promote the sale and use of compost bins, all schools in County Longford received a complimentary composting unit.



Hazardous Waste Collection:

Hazardous Waste Collections were held on Saturday 8th December in Granard, Longford Town and Ballymahon. Paints, batteries, fluorescent tubes, detergents and aerosols were collected. The following is a list of hazardous materials collected:-

Longford Town		Ballymahon/Granard	
Waste Paint	470 kg	Waste Paint	94 kg
Aerosols	10 kg	Pesticides	20 kg
Lead Acid Batteries	300 kg		
Alkaline Batteries	210 kg		
Fluorescent Tubes	50 kg		

Farm Waste Audit:

Longford County Council is currently undertaking a pilot Farm Waste Audit Programme with four farmers in County Longford. This is a co-sponsored Programme with the Environmental Protection Agency and is due to continue until the end of 2008.

Farm Plastic Collection:

Waste farm plastic collections by private waste collectors continued throughout 2007. Collection dates and locations were notified to the County Council and these collections were monitored by staff to ensure no waste was left at the site.



Burial Grounds

There are a total of 74 cemeteries in Co. Longford of which 10 are closed. Longford County Council through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Longford Jobs Initiative Ltd., received approval from FAS to extend its existing Community Employment Scheme during 2007. The Scheme now employs an average of 10 participants on the maintenance of cemeteries and the carrying out of minor improvement works. During 2007, Longford County Council continued with the scheme of providing financial support for cemeteries in Co. Longford with 19 Parishes/Cemetery Committees receiving grant assistance towards cemetery maintenance.

Following public consultation, the Draft Bye-Laws for Cemeteries were amended and will be presented to the County Council for consideration in 2008.

Funding from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, as part of the National Disability Scheme, enabled the Council to continue providing wheelchair-accessible facilities at designated sites. Works were carried out at Edgeworthstown, Ardagh, Kilglass, Ballinroey, Abbeyshrule, Taghsheenod, Moydow and Clonbonny Cemeteries.

Construction work commenced in October on a new cemetery at Legan.

Veterinary Services and Food Safety

The Veterinary Section services a contract with The Food Safety Authority of Ireland on food safety and public health issues. The 4 licensed abattoirs and 2 low-throughput meat-manufacturing establishments in County Longford are supervised with a view to ensuring compliance with food safety legislation.

Locally produced cattle and sheep continued to be processed in the licensed abattoirs in County Longford in 2007. Each animal is inspected before and after slaughter. A sampling programme for harmful substances or bacteria in meat is carried out.

Low-throughput meat-manufacturing establishments in Longford town continue to work to the standard for approval achieved in 2006, producing a widening range of added value quality local meat products. There is buoyancy in this local food sector currently, with continuity in businesses where owners are retiring and new entrants preparing to come into the sector.

Staff training and development continues.

A register of liquid milk herds is kept by Longford County Council with farms inspected annually.

Animal By-Product disposal continues to be an important area of work. The County Veterinary Officer liaises with other public health agencies on the zoonoses committee.

Dog Control

Longford County Council Dog Wardens provide a full-time service in County Longford and operate the Dog Shelter in Little Water St. in Longford. Pound fees are charged.

272 stray dogs were picked up by the Dog Wardens in 2007 while 235 unwanted dogs were handed in to the pound. Of these, 46 dogs were reclaimed by their owners while 84 dogs were re-homed with the help of our website, "Save a Dog" www.longfordcoco.ie. The website has proved very popular, averaging 120 "hits" per week.



Unfortunately, the other dogs were put to sleep by a Veterinary Surgeon.

Longford County Council continues to advocate responsible animal ownership and operates a scheme in cooperation with Dogs Trust for subsidised neutering and health checks for dogs.

Longford County Council emphasises the need for a Dog License, costing €12.70 from any Post Office, as another important aspect of responsible dog ownership. A total of 1,940 Dog Licences were issued in 2007.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Civil Defence is part of a global organisation with the primary role of saving lives and the alleviation of suffering in time of war, while its peacetime role is to assist at natural disasters and man-made accidents. At local level, Civil Defence is responsible for the recruitment and training of volunteers and the provision of training centres in the community.



Assisting at Longford marathon 2007

The main activities, programmes, events and developments during 2007 were:

- 1 Two members achieved their Marine Radio Licences for use with the water search/rescue Service.
- 2 Boat crew members updated their training in relation to response to Avian Influenza.
- 3 New Avon 4.65 Meter inflatable boat purchased for use in the event of search or flooding.
- 4 There were 2 emergency call-outs during 2008.
- 5 Two members passed all their First Aid exams to become fully qualified Instructors.
- 6 First Aid refresher course was provided for existing members.
- 7 Radiation monitoring and reporting and communications course run locally.
- 8 Three new First Aid courses were completed with almost 60 new members achieving their First Aid Certificates.
- 9 Longford and Leitrim Civil Defence Services were chosen to host the National Exercise in 2008. The last such event was 1997.
- 10 Regional Exercises in Tullamore, Co. Offaly and Stradbally, Co. Laois
- 11 Personnel from Longford undertook duties at various events outside the County such as The Electric Picnic in Co. Laois.
- 12 Civil Defence members were called on to assist at 49 local community events during 2007, such as assisting at the Blood Transfusion Service, Longford Marathon (Pic below), Football Games, Horse Events and Civic Receptions.

FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Fire and Rescue Service has stations in the following locations: Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Lanesboro and Longford.

These stations are manned by 48 retained fire-fighters who respond to both fire and rescue incidents. The Fire Department was active in promoting fire safety in communities during Fire Safety Week. Such activities included a Fire Safety Competition on Shannonside Northern Sound Radio and the Fire Safety in School Programme where all primary schools were visited and talks given to third class students.



The Fire Department processed a total of 79 Fire Safety Certificates, 90 Planning Referrals, 58 Court Licence Application Referrals. Up to 50 Inspections of Places of Entertainment and Residential-type premises were carried out during 2007.

The new Fire Station in Granard was officially opened on 8th February 2007.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has sanctioned approval-in- principle for a new fire station in Edgeworthstown and an extension to Longford Fire Station. Consultants have been appointed for both projects.

Longford Fire Brigade got its new Class B Fire Appliance during 2007. (Capital funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government was provided).

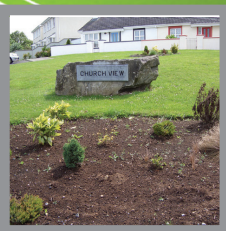
Mr. Tomás Ó'Maonaigh was appointed as Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer in August 2007.

A submission for funding was forwarded to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the building of a new fire station in Lanesboro. No decision has been made on this application to date.





HOUSING AND PLANNING SERVICES



HOUSING AND PLANNING SERVICES



Cllr. Victor Kiernan,
Chairperson of Housing & Planning SPC



Mr. James Clarke
Director of Services

HOUSING

Longford County Council continued to meet the requirements as set down in the Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008. The last Housing Needs Assessment which took place in 2005 had shown a drop in applicants to 247 households on the County list. This figure steadily increased to over 400 in 2006 and 840 in 2007.

Social Housing

Approximately €12m was spent on the Housing Construction Programme in 2007. This included a number of turnkey developments, purchase of individual houses, the construction of single rural cottages and various works under the Scheme of Improvements in lieu of Local Authority Housing.

The following schemes were in progress at the end of the 2007- Ballinamuck (16), Streamstown, Colehill (20), Killashee (23), St. Johnstown, Ballinallee (20), River Crescent, Ballinallee (5), Mosstown, Kenagh (12), Kenagh (11), Edgeworthstown Road, Ballymahon (6), Church Quarter, Granard (21).

The following schemes were completed in 2007 at - Kenagh (31).

45 individual houses were purchased and 8 rural houses were completed. Since the 1st January 2007 there were 138 allocations of tenancies.

Loan Applications

To facilitate house purchasers, a range of loan options continued to be offered throughout the year. The types of loans on offer included Annuity, Affordable, Caravan, Reconstruction, Shared Ownership and Tenant Purchase. A combined total of over 40 loan applications were received in 2007 with 13 loans

approved and 17 advanced. This amount does not include applications refused or withdrawn.

Interest rate increases continue to affect potential borrowers' affordability and this is reflected in the significant reduction in the amount of loan applications and approvals.

Affordable Housing

At the end of 2007, fifteen Affordable Houses had been allocated in Longford Town and County. These houses were acquired under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The Council continued to gauge the need for affordable housing and to date the main need has been identified in the Longford Town area. It is intended that this need will be sufficiently met by the provision of affordable housing under Part V. As a result of ongoing negotiations in 2007, several units are due to come on stream in 2008 under Part V. Part V will also be used to supplement the Social Housing Programme as appropriate.

Voluntary Housing

To supplement the rental option, the Council continued to encourage further involvement by the Voluntary Housing Sector particularly in the area of special needs. Further funding approval was granted to respond to provide 109 units of accommodation at Townspark, Longford. Negotiations are ongoing with a number of bodies in relation to the provision of sheltered housing.

Homeless Forum

In association with Longford Town Council, the Health Service Executive and St. Vincent de Paul, the provision of accommodation for homeless persons continued throughout 2007. Substantial funding, towards the provision of this Homeless Service was provided by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Maintenance/Refurbishment

In 2007, a sum of €630,000 was provided in the budget for the maintenance and repair of Local Authority Housing. This area will be examined to ensure that best practice and value for money are achieved at all times.

In 2007, Longford County Council continued its Central Heating Installation Programme and this will continue into 2008. In an effort to be innovative and progress the programme, Longford County Council continued with the use of wood pellet burners in some of the houses at Devine Crescent, Edgeworthstown, which allowed the Council to avail of additional funding from Sustainable Energy Ireland.



Church View Lanesboro – One of the prize winners at the "Best Kept Estate" 2007

Estate Management

The Housing Liaison Officer and the Social Worker continued to work with tenants and residents associations throughout 2007. Compulsory pre-tenancy courses are in place for all new tenants. The 'Best Kept Estate', was held again in 2007. The competition was highly successful and awards were presented in September 2007 to the successful residents associations.

Throughout 2007, Longford County Councils stepped up action under its Anti-Social Behaviour policy and at the end of the year there were four cases pending hearing within the courts system.

A detailed plan for the rejuvenation of Tromra Road, Granard was prepared and subsequently approved by the Council and then submitted to the Department in

2006. However, in 2007 additional information in relation to this plan was requested by the Department and is currently being collated.

Disabled Persons (DPGs) and Essential Repairs Grant (ERGs)

In 2007, a combined total of 256 applications were received. A total of 157 applicants received grant aid amounting to €877,651. The clawback provision still remains at €10,000.

In November 2007, a new grants scheme was introduced to replace the existing DPGs and ERGs administered by Longford County Council and the Aid of the Elderly grant administered by the Health Service Executive. There are now three grants available and all are administered through Longford County Council. The new grants are as follows; Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability, Mobility Aids Housing Grant and Housing Aid for Older People Grant.

Traveller Accommodation

In 2007, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee met on a quarterly basis. They continued to monitor the progress of the targets set out in the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2005-2008. Plans for the refurbishment of the Willow Park Halting Site, to include the construction of 4 transient bays are ongoing. It is hoped to go to tender in early 2008 with works to commence as soon as possible.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

In accordance with national policy, the transfer of long term recipients of rent supplement to the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) continued during 2007 with 93 households accommodated in private rented accommodation under the scheme at the end of the year. In addition 39 rent supplement recipients were allocated local authority tenancies.

As part of the transfer process 102 properties were inspected and where necessary works to bring properties up to the required standard for rented accommodation were notified to landlords.

The scheme operated on a self financing basis during the year.

RAPID

RAPID is the Revitalisation of Areas through Planning, Investment and Development; all of Longford town was selected for this programme. The Area Implementation Team (AIT) oversees this social inclusion programme locally and the Department of Community; Rural Gaeltacht Affairs directs the programme nationally. The AIT consists of statutory agencies; Development agencies that have a service remit in the town as well as community representatives. The programme is part of the new NDP and €67 million has been allocated nationally.

Longford Town Council received €175,000 for a community CCTV scheme RAPID provided 50% of these funds and this was a project identified by RAPID of being a priority. Locally in 2007 RAPID was granted €125,000 from the Dormant Accounts Fund and these

funds were allocated by the Area Implementation Team to a number of local initiatives.

The programme received €200,000 in leverage for estate enhancement and traffic calming. RAPID under the playground leverage spent €130,000 on a new adventure trail in the Mall park and a multi-sport facility in MacEoin Park. RAPID supported an application for the renovation of the existing Basketball courts in the Mall and contributed 30% of the funding. RAPID had highlighted the need for Community Gardai for Longford town in 2007 and four Community Gardai have been allocated. RAPID in partnership with the Gardai ran a very successful football competition for local children on the new all-weather pitch in the Mall. The RAPID programme in conjunction with a number of groups and agencies hosted an intercultural/play day event to coincide with national playday.



Ardnacassa Social Housing

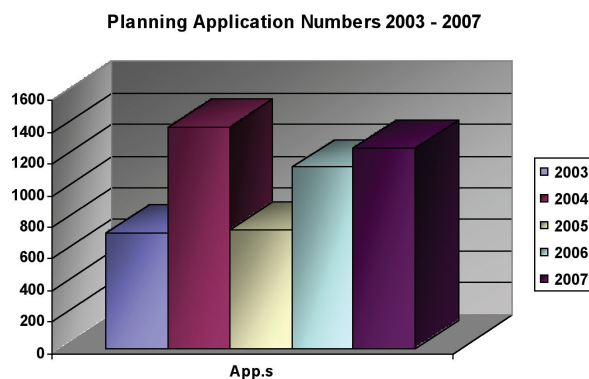


PLANNING

High levels of Planning Applications were sustained in 2007, maintained in part by grant aid schemes for agricultural buildings. Significant activities during 2007 are outlined below together with a broad Planning outlook for 2008.

Planning and Development Management

The Development Management Section is responsible for processing all Planning applications in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations.



The above chart indicates the numbers of applications received over the last 5 years. Peaks in 2004 and 2007 can be attributed to the rural renewal scheme and grant-aid for agricultural buildings respectively. While lower numbers of applications were experienced in 2003 and 2005, those received contained high numbers of complex applications, requiring significant personnel hours to address at all stages in the process from validation and assessment through to completion and compliance.

The workload in Development Management remains at a high level, arising from the sustained level of planning applications being received, the consistently high number of compliance submissions being submitted in respect of developments and other projects permitted in the proceeding years which are now only commencing. The time devoted to the assessment and agreement of compliance

submissions amounts to a substantial portion of Development Management and is expected to continue through 2008 and beyond.

Pre-Planning consultations are an integral part of the Development Management process and are utilised on an ongoing and increasing basis. These meetings are held to provide a higher quality and more transparent planning service to the general public. In 2007 over 180 pre planning meetings were held to facilitate discussion with potential applicants on the issues associated with their proposals. Pre-planning meetings are now recorded digitally to facilitate consistency, transparency and seamless integration with the decision-making process

The continued registration of quarries under Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, and the processing and issuing of license applications under Section 254 of the Act, principally for roadside signage, has also become a regular feature of the work carried out in the past 2 years, representing a substantial increase in workload over the previous years.

Development Contributions

Development contributions are levied in accordance with the scheme adopted by the Council under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Each grant of planning permission contains a condition requiring the payment of a relevant development contribution which becomes payable if and when the development commences. There are many cases where permissions granted have been superseded by alternative permissions on the same site and where permissions granted have not yet been activated. This can sometimes give an inaccurate impression of the amount actually due and owing to the local authority.

The total number of commencement notices received in 2007 was 324, an increase of 11 on 2006. The contributions collected amounted to €5,822,171. Facilities have been made available for the phased payment of contributions for larger developments where necessary.



NEW DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS		
Funding Available		
Cash Available for funding project at 1 January 2007		7,098,054.37
Development Contributions Received (less refunds) in 2007		6,592,707.65
		13,690,762.02
Funding Allocated to Projects in 2007		
Open Spaces and Amenities	231,310.45	
Roads	374,845.21	
Water and Waste Water Services	230,662.16	
Funding Committed to Projects at 31 December 2007	2,715,000.00	3,551,817.82
Cash Available for funding Projects at 31 December 2007		<u>10,138,944.20</u>
New Development Contribution Debtors		
Total Outstanding from Debtors at 1 January 2007		7,987,169.37
Development Contributions invoiced in 2007		3,391,668.58
		11,378,837.95
Total Received from December in 2007		6,617,347.65
Total Outstanding from Debtors at 31 December 2007		4,761,490.30
Provision for Doubtful Debts		692,942.73
Net Debtor Balance at 31 December 2007		<u>4,068,547.57</u>

Forward Planning

The Forward Planning Section is responsible for the research, preparation and production of all Development Plans, Local Area Plans and forward looking initiatives. The 2006-2007 period was a challenging phase in the forward planning area, with a wide range of projects which had commenced in 2005 being completed and yet another wide ranging portfolio of plans being instigated during 2007. The following activities are representative of the main projects completed in 2007 and those for which the foundations have been laid for completion as we move to 2008 and beyond.

Longford County Development Plan, 2003-2009

The review of the current Longford County Development Plan 2003 – 2009 commenced in April 2007 following substantial preparation work carried out in 2006. This review is essential in order to manage the

changing physical environment in the context of 10% population growth experienced in Longford over the 3 year period from 2003-2006 and the consequent physical implications for the future development of the county.

The following updated guidelines and documents have been incorporated into the draft CDP:

- i. Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines
- ii. Development Plans-Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities
- iii. Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines- Best Practice Guidance
- iv. Landscape and Landscape Assessment - DRAFT
- v. Quarries and Ancillary Activities
- vi. Retail Planning Guidelines
- vii. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- viii. Sustainable Rural Housing
- ix. Wind Energy Development Guidelines



Under the 2000 Act, regard must be had for the relevant Regional Planning Guidelines. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the midlands were adopted in May 2004 and have been included in the Draft County Development Plan.

The pre-draft document is currently with the elected members and encompasses a wide range of interlinked project reviews, some of which have been completed, others of which are ongoing, and includes, among other elements:

- i. A review of the current Housing Strategy for Longford, which was completed in late 2007.
- ii. Revised Retail Strategy completed 2007.
- iii. An updated list of structures worthy of protection within the county, which is substantially complete and awaiting statutory public consultation period.
- iv. The landscape assessment for County Longford which provides guidance on development design, siting and locational issues.
- v. The rural house Design Guidelines.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment was introduced for plans and programmes in Ireland in July 2004. This applies to plans and programmes that exceed stated thresholds (decided by regulation) or those that are likely to have significant environmental effects. An SEA for development plans is mandatory.

The SEA has been carried out in tandem with the review of the County Development Plan. This work has been conducted in association with Brady Shipman Martin and in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency and other prescribed bodies. This is now at the Draft Environmental report stage to coincide with the launch of the Draft CDP for its first formal public consultation phase which starts in early March 2008 and runs until August.

Local Area Plans

Local Area Plans facilitate the planned growth of designated towns and villages, through which development can be promoted to support existing communities particularly in rural areas.

A Local Area Plan for Edgeworthstown was adopted in early January 2008, following extensive work carried out in 2007.

Work on a Local Area Plan for Clondra is at an advanced stage, as are plans being prepared for the Northern and South-eastern environs of Longford town. It is expected to commence formal public consultation on these three projects in the first quarter of 2008.

Other Projects

The Longford Town Development Plan 2004-2010 is, also, under review by the Planning Section. The process was commenced by formal notice in December 2007 followed up with a public meeting in early January 2008. The TDP process will run in tandem with an accompanying SEA.

A land use and transportation study (LUTs) is currently underway for the Longford town and environs area which will feed into the provisions of the relevant plans.

Urban and Village Renewal

Longford County Council has had marked success in implementation of the Urban and Village Renewal Scheme. As 2007 marked the final year of the scheme, a number of projects have been fully completed during 2007, including environmental improvement works at Granard, Abbeyshrule, Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Ballinalee, Drumlish and Longford Town. Further projects were completed during the early stages of the scheme including improvement works at Lanesboro, Aughnaclyffe, Keenagh and Ardagh.

These schemes have provided an attractive and welcoming appearance to the many towns involved and will potentially provide economic benefits and add to the vitality of the towns and villages in the county.

Enforcement and Building Control

2006-2007 marked another active year for Longford County Council in the area of planning enforcement. During 2007 the Council issued 72 warning letters and 90 enforcement notices. Legal proceedings were commenced on 20 cases. The majority of the remaining cases were settled to the satisfaction of the Council.

2007 saw 5 building control enforcements served with 1 file referred to the solicitor.



Environmental Improvement works in Abbeyshrule



Environmental Improvement works in Granard



HUMAN RESOURCES, COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES



HUMAN RESOURCES, COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES



Cllr Barney Steele,
Chairperson of Economic Development,
Cultural and Recreational SPC



Mr Frank Sheridan
Director Of Services

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Department continued in 2007 in its role of supporting organisational performance in the delivery of corporate goals. The Department provided advice and guidance in relation to policy implementation, industrial relations and employee development. During 2007 the Human Resources Department continued to develop and adapt to meet organisational requirements, encouraging participation by employees, in building a well performing organisation.

Recruitment

During 2007, Longford Local Authorities Human Resources Section processed 591 applications for positions within the Authorities; interviewed 364 people and appointed 58 people to permanent positions, 78 people to temporary positions and made 155 acting appointments.

Equality / Diversity

Longford Local Authorities are fully committed to the principles of Equality as set out in the Employment Equality Acts of 1998 and 2004. Longford Local Authorities Equality Action Team, representative of Management, Unions and Employees, continued its work in 2007 in conjunction with our Equality Officer in promoting the Equality agenda within Longford Local Authorities.

During 2007 the Equality Action Team engaged in a number of key activities including:

- The provision of Equality and Diversity training to one hundred and sixty three employees.
- Formulation of a line manager referral procedure as

part of Longford Local Authorities Employee Assistance Programme.

- Through the support of the Equality Authority, in conjunction with other Local Authorities in the Western Region, the Equality Action Team provided employees with an equality themed bookmark to mark 2007 as the "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All".
- To promote cultural awareness and highlight "Anti-Racist Workplace Week" among employees, during November 2007 the Equality Action Team held a "Cultural Diversity Morning".
- The Equality Action Team also procured a new Counselling Service Provider for the Local Authorities "Employee Assistance Programme".

One of the highlights of 2007 was the Cultural Diversity Morning which was held during November to promote cultural awareness and highlight "Anti-Racist Workplace Week" among employees. The event was chaired by Ms Mary Carlton Reynolds, Longford County Librarian and was attended by approximately 50 employees from all grades and sections within Longford Local Authorities. Mr. Roger Timlin, Director of Services and member of the Equality Action Team opened the event with guest speakers from a number of organisations subsequently providing their views and experiences of life in Longford. The organisations involved included:

- Longford Community Resources
- Longford Traveller Movement
- Longford Citizen's Information Service
- Global Longford
- Community Policing Unit of An Garda Síochána Longford.

The event prompted very positive feedback from both employees and invited guests and provided attendees the opportunity to sample cuisine from many different cultures.

During 2007 the Equality Action Team conducted a review of Independent Counselling Service providers for the provision of Longford Local Authorities Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The review was designed to ensure the highest quality of assistance is available to employees in dealing with personal and work related problems that affect their quality of life. The service which is now provided by Abate Counselling through a confidential helpline and face to face interaction offers both counselling and information services and is a valuable tool in maintaining employee well-being and enhancing organisational performance.



Some of the Speakers who attended our Cultural Diversity Morning, from left to right Ms. Mary Carlton Reynolds, County Librarian, Mr. Roger Timlin, Director of Services, Mr. Jacob Cytaka, Information Officer, Longford Citizen's Information Service; Ms Noelle Murtagh, Integration Officer, Longford Community Resources; Garda James Donaldson, Community Policing Unit of An Garda Síochána Longford; Mr Mojtaba Pouladpour, Member of Global Longford.

TRAINING, PMDS & WORKPLACE PARTNERSHIP

TRAINING

Training and Development of our employees is crucial to maintain high levels of individual and organisational performance. During 2007 Longford Local Authorities continued to demonstrate its commitment in this area through the equitable provision of training and development activities for all employees.

A total of thirty four Training Programmes were delivered over six hundred and twenty training days, covering the following areas of interest:

- Customer Service
- Legal (Courtroom skills, employment law)
- Finance Management (payroll administration, internal auditing)
- Public Procurement
- Staff Development (line management, interview board training, supervisory skills)
- Roadworks and Technical
- Construction Skills and Certification
- Environmental Awareness
- Water Treatment & Safety
- Information Technology

Longford Local Authorities endeavoured where possible to offer training programmes in conjunction with neighbouring Local Authorities. This cost efficient practice allows us to maximise the impact of training provided, facilitates networking and the sharing of expertise.

In addition to the training courses detailed above, a comprehensive review of Health and Safety (H&S) training also took place during 2007. The Council continued its programme of statutory H&S training to employees in response to legislative requirements in this area. This was delivered over four hundred training days. Completed H&S training courses included:

- Introduction to H&S Legislation
- ISOH Managing Safely for Construction Managers
- Manual Handling/ Safety Awareness Training
- Health and Safety at Roadwork's
- Safe Pass
- First Aid Training
- Safety Lectures
- Tool Box Talk Vaccinations



To support the Council's Retirement Policy, a Retirement Planning Seminar was delivered to a number of employees approaching retirement. This seminar covered a number of areas including managing the changes the employee can expect to encounter in retirement, pension and investment opportunities, social welfare entitlements and other relevant health and social activities. Further seminars will continue to be delivered periodically to coincide with retirement dates.

Development of employees was also provided for through the Council's Open Learning, Training and Development Support Scheme during 2007. A total of fourteen employees were approved for support under this scheme to pursue part-time third level courses relevant to their role in the organisation.

Performance Management Development Systems (PMDS)

The Social Partnership Agreements "Sustaining Progress" and "Towards 2016" provide for the implementation and embedding of a Performance Management Development System in every Local Authority nationwide.

Longford Local Authorities continued in 2007 to deliver on this commitment. The H.R. Department have responsibility for the coordination of organisational implementation of PMDS ensuring that the Performance Management Development System is implemented throughout the organisation on a uniform and consistent basis in accordance with the Local Authority PMDS model.

The maintenance of PMDS throughout the organisation is achieved by the assignment of a key member of staff from each Directorate to coordinate the team meetings therein and to ensure that a record of the meetings is confirmed with the HR Department.

Ongoing communication, dialogue and feedback are fundamental elements of the PMDS process and this is particularly true of the individual Personal Development Plans (PDP). The training needs identified as part of PDP conversations form the basis of Longford Local Authorities' Training Plan for 2007 and were essential to ensure that training delivered is focused on responding to the organisational and employee needs.

Workplace Partnership

The Partnership Committee met seven times in 2007. Input into policy development was a key activity for the Committee. The following policies were discussed and feedback provided to the management team:

- Acting-up Policy
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Dignity at Work Policy

The Partnership Committee also looked at a number of work related areas and their implications for employees. The Committee made recommendations in relation to a number of these areas.

The most significant activity of workplace partnership in 2007 was the establishment of the Handling Significant Change committee. Management and trade union participants recognise that some of the issues addressed to date by the Partnership Forum had been non-contentious and that Partnership can as a mechanism be used to address more difficult substantive issues.

The Handling Significant Change committee, made up of the members of the Partnership Committee, Senior Management representatives and Union branch officials met three times in 2007.

In November 2007, the Partnership Committee organised the annual Remembrance Mass for Deceased Member and Staff. This was well attended and it is hoped to develop further in 2008.

The Partnership Committee recommended and secured financial assistance to offer health screening for all employees. This has been approved and will be rolled out to all employees in 2008.

Funding was also secured for the delivery of employee information seminars on relevant work topics.

Service Indicators

- % spent on Training & Development as a percentage of total payroll costs 6.71 %
- % of working days lost due to sickness absence:-
 - Certified leave: 3.34%
 - Uncertified leave: 0.55%



COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE

LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

There are 29 members on the Board drawn from four sectors and are as follows:

Local Government (7 members)

Cllr. Alan Mitchell, Chairperson of the Board, Cllr. Peggy Nolan, Cllr. Martin Farrell, Cllr. Barney Steele, Cllr. Adrian Farrell, Longford County Council. Cllr. Fintan Flood, Granard Town Council, Mr. Tim Caffrey, Longford County Manager.

Local Development (7 members)

Ms Monica O'Malley, Ms Tess Murphy, Mr. Charles Harrison, Longford Community Resources Ltd., Mr. Michael Nevin, Ms Beatrice Cunningham, Longford County Enterprise Board. Ms Josephine Stroker, Longford Acorn Project, Ms. Patricia Harrison, Longford County Childcare Committee.

State Agencies (10 members)

Supt. Dave Dowling (Garda Siochana), Mr. Kevin Kidney (Failte Ireland (Midland East Regional Tourism)), Ms Gillian Maunsell (IDA Ireland), Mr. Simon Cavanagh (Enterprise Ireland), Mr. Donie Murtagh (Health Service Executive), Ms. Marie Cullen (Department of Social Welfare), Mr. Gerry Johnson (FAS), Mr. Michael Lennon (Teagasc), Ms Josephine O'Donnell (County Longford VEC), Mr. Seamus Murray (Department of Education & Science).

Social Partners (5 members)

Mr. George Shedwell (Irish Congress of Trade Unions), Mr. Mark Casey, Ms. Fionnuala Spillane (Community & Voluntary Sector), Mr. James Brady (Farming Sector), Vacant (Business Sector).

Longford County Development Board Action Plan 2006-2008

Arising from the review of the CDB Strategy in 2005, the Board agreed an Action Plan in 2006, which prioritises 13 key issues, and subsequent actions for the period 2006-2008. Task groups have been established and a lead agency identified for each issue.

Endorsement of Local Development Agency Plans By The County Development Board

A key role of the County Development Board (CDB) is to bring about a more co-ordinated delivery of public and local development services at local level. Central to this co-ordination role is overseeing the implementation of a ten-year strategy through relevant agencies including local development plans. To facilitate better co-ordination the plans of the local development agencies were considered by the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group (SIMWG) and on their recommendation endorsed by the CDB.

Improving Co-Ordination of Local And Community Development Structures And Programmes- Cohesion Funding Round 2

In 2005 a submission was prepared by the local development agency in conjunction with the SIMWG and endorsed by the County Development Board. In July 2006 funding of €110,000 was allocated for a number of projects. This funding has supported the delivery of a number of projects during 2006-2008 including;

1. Development of Longford Volunteer Centre and appointment of Volunteer Coordinator.
2. Progress the establishment of a Helpline for Older People in Longford.
3. Provided integrated Counselling Services to a number of local community projects.
4. The delivery of FRIENDS mental health programme to 42 primary schools in County Longford.
5. Provide shared administrative position between local development groups.

Lone Parents Initiative

In October 2006, Longford County Development Board secured €100,000 from the Gender Equality Unit of the Department of Justice Equality & Law Reform to deliver a young lone parents project. An interagency steering group was established and the VEC acted as the lead agency in supporting the delivery of the project. Throughout 2007 the project continued to provide a range of individual and group supports to enable young lone parents to engage with and benefit from existing welfare, health and education services.

Longford Poverty Profile and Social Inclusion Strategy

Longford Community and Enterprise in 2007 drafted a terms of reference for the development of a Poverty Profile and Social Inclusion Strategy. The purpose of this project is to map geographically and visually the disadvantage that exists within our County. With funding under Cohesion Funding Round 2 an invitation to tender for the delivery of this project was nationally advertised. Exodea Europe Ltd. was the successful applicant and will work with the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group to complete the project.

Longford Inter-Cultural Strategy

The Community and Enterprise Section represented the Local Authority on a local steering group to develop an Inter Cultural Strategy for Longford. The four member steering group has overseen extensive consultations and research by the Integration Officer and consultants 'Green Hat'. The output of this work is a publication ready strategy for the County launched by the Minister for Integration Conor Lenihan on the 27th of February.

Local Sports Partnership

An interim Local Sports Partnership has been established to oversee the development of the wider Board and the appointment of a Sports Partnership Co-ordinator. Funding was received from the Irish Sports Council in 2007 to appoint the Co-ordinator and establish the office in Longford. Under the Dormant Accounts Fund, Sports Measure for Disadvantage Young People, €16,000 was allocated in the form of grants to local groups for sports equipment and skills development to increase participation in sporting activities by disadvantage youth.

Smoke Alarm Project

Community and Enterprise has secured funding from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to equip 500 private households with 'Home Smoke Alarms'. This is a unique initiative targeted at vulnerable households whom might not currently have existing fire alarm systems. In particular the scheme will focus on the elderly, people living with a disability, people living alone, people living in isolation, people living in rural areas and households whom have previously never had a Smoke Alarm system. The smoke alarms are being installed by the

Rural Social Scheme attached to Longford Community Resources Ltd.



Photograph includes: David Minton (Administrative Officer) Bernadette Doyle (Community and Enterprise), Tomás Ó Maonaigh (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Mayor of Longford County Council Cllr. Peggy Nolan, Con Halton (Rural Social Scheme) and Frank Sheridan (Director of Services)

Interagency Co-operation in the Delivery of Services and Supports to the Traveller Community

In April 2006, the County Development Board was requested to initiate the process of developing a strategic plan for Travellers. An interagency group of key stakeholders was established to agree how best this could be accomplished. This interagency group oversee the implementation of the Longford Traveller Interagency Plan which has four key areas:

1. Employment initiative.
2. Initiative to secure employment for Primary Healthcare trainees.
3. Employment of Traveller education and employment workers.
4. Initiative to build links between schools and Travellers.

FRIENDS Early Intervention Mental Health Programme

This innovative pilot project is the first of its kind in Ireland after proving massively successful in other parts of the world. The FRIENDS programme (funded through Cohesion) is a school-based early intervention and prevention program, proven to be effective in reducing the risk of anxiety disorders and building resilience in children. The FRIENDS programme incorporates all 43



primary schools (5th Class) in the County. The course is delivered by teachers as part of the curriculum over ten weeks for one hour a week. The course is supported by full training for teachers, course manual and workbook for each child. It is subsequently being monitored and



evaluated by the Psychology Department in the HSE and Longford SIMWG.

Photograph includes: Sheena Burke, Snr Clinical Psychologist HSE, Krister, FRIENDS Trainer, Colum Mac Mahon, HSE Psychologist, Niamh Clarke, HSE Snr Psychologist, Sean Aherm, SIMS Group, David Minton, County Development Board, Aedemar Bergin, HSE Clinical Psychologist.

Longford Community & Voluntary Forum

The Community and Voluntary Sector is one of the Social Partners and is represented on the County Development Board by 2 members. 145 organisations throughout the county are affiliated to Longford's Community & Voluntary Forum. A democratically elected Umbrella Forum of 29 members operates as a Steering Group at County level and fulfils a key link between the Board and the wider community. The steering group held eight meetings in 2007.

Membership of the Committee of the Steering Group is as follows:

Chairperson	Josephine Stroker
Vice Chair	Peter Clyne
Secretary	Edel Kelly
Assistant Secretary	Anne Maher
Treasurers	Rose Higgins Ponla Austin
Public Relations Officer	Nini Murray

Members of the Steering Group are nominated onto the following structures:

- Longford County Development Board.
- County Childcare Committee
- Regional Drugs Taskforce
- Strategic Policy Committees of the Local Authority
- Longford Community Resources Ltd
- Co. Longford Youth Service
- Citizens Information Service
- County Heritage Forum
- Longford Sports Partnership
- Traveller Interagency Group

The Community and Enterprise Section resources and supports the Community and Voluntary Forum. The section, also, maintains a database of registered Community and Voluntary organisations in the County. Community and Enterprise supported the Forum in a number of initiatives throughout the past year:

1. Audit of Volunteering in Longford
2. Strategic Policy Committee training with the IPA
3. Funding workshops for the community sector
4. Organisational review of the forum

Comhairle na nÓg

The National Children's Strategy has as its first goal that "Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity". The County Development Board has responsibility for organising the Comhairle na nÓg. This year's event was held in Longford Golf Club and attended by young people, aged between 12-17 years old from the post primary schools and training centres around the county. The issues discussed on the day were transport, drugs, youth facilities, subject choices, part time pay rates for students and poor work opportunities for young people finishing in training centres. A number of key recommendations were made to be included for discussion at the Dail na nÓg. Five young people were elected to represent County Longford at the Dail Na nÓg, which will be held on February the 15th 2008 in Croke Park.



Enhanced Programme of Activity for the Comhairle na nÓg

In 2007 funding was secured from the Office for the Minister of children to develop the Comhairle na nÓg. An Interagency Steering group of key stakeholders were established to advise and assist in the implementation of a number of initiatives to enhance the participation in, and the more effective running of the Comhairle na nÓg. Some of the initiatives are as follows:

County Longford Youth Council

Longford County Council has established a County Longford Youth Council. Which is representative of post primary schools and training centres in the county. The aim of the Council is to provide an opportunity for young people from across the County to raise and debate issues of concern to them. The youth Council will meet four times during the academic year to discuss issues of importance to young people and communicate the outcomes of those discussions to relevant local bodies and local representatives.



Members of Co Longford Youth Council with Laura Heneghan, Administrative Officer & Martin Kennedy, Facilitator



County Longford Youth Councils second meeting pictured here with Martin Kennedy, Facilitator, Noelle Murtagh, Co Longford Integration Officer, Karen Clabby, Longford Chamber of Commerce

Longford County Council Young Citizen Award 2007

A Young Citizen Award was designed to recognise the achievements of young people participating and contributing to their local communities. The young people were nominated by teachers and youth workers from schools and clubs across the county. Nine young people were selected by a steering group of young people nominated by the Youth Council. The young people are willingly involved in activities that support others and make a difference to how young people see themselves and their communities.



Recipients of Young Citizen Awards photographed with Tim Caffrey, County Manager, Mayor Peggy Nolan and Frank Sheridan, Director of Services



Pictured at Young Citizen Awards Ceremony, Tim Caffrey, County Manager, Shane Kiernan, Longford Coiste Representative, Patrick Gill, Steering Committee Member, Peggy Nolan, Mayor of Longford County Council, Avril Gilchrist, Steering Committee Member, Laura Heneghan, Administrative Officer, Frank Sheridan, Director of Services

Longford County Council Careers Day

On Friday the 9th of November the Community & Enterprise department played host to the Transition Year class from Moyne Community School. The visit was organised as part of the Enhanced Programme of Activity for the Comhairle na nOg and the Careers Guidance Programme for Transition Year. Students were introduced to the multitude of career opportunities that are available within the local authority. They met a number of employees including an Engineer, a Planner, a Health and Safety Officer and an Environmental Awareness Officer, IT Specialist and Administrative Officer. Presentations were given on the role and functions of the Local Authority and employees gave presentations outlining the college courses they had studied and the career paths that had taken them to this point. The students also visited the Fire station and the County Library. The feedback from the students was very positive. As well as learning about the structure of the local Authority, they also gained an insight into the careers that were discussed.



Moyne Community School students photographed at Longford Fire Station

National Pride of Place Competition

Pride of Place is a competition, which is directed towards recognising improvements by local communities to create civic pride in their area. The all island competition is hosted by Co-Operation Ireland in conjunction with the Local Authority Steering Forum comprising of officials from authorities in both parts of Ireland. The aim of the "Pride of Place" competition is to encourage best practice, innovation and leadership in providing vibrant sustainable communities that improve the

quality of life for all. Pride of place is a unique opportunity for community groups to be officially recognised, on an all island basis, for the valuable work undertaken in their local areas. The nomination process to the all island competition is undertaken through the Local Authorities. Five areas have been chosen in different categories to represent County Longford in the National Competition in 2007. They are as follows: Dromard, Cullyfad and Rathcline Sustainable Energy project. They were judged on Wednesday the 19th and Thursday the 20th of June. Each made a presentation highlighting the range of projects undertaken by the community and showed the judges around the area. The National Award Ceremony took place in Westport, County Mayo on the 10th of November 2007.

Dromard were nominated as runners up in their population category and Rathcline Sustainable Energy Project group won the Pride of Place Special category Environmental Projects Awards.



Rathcline Sustainable Energy Project

Pride of Longford Competition

The Pride of Longford Competition in the CDB Action Plan 2006-2008, addressing the issue of building local communities. The competition is modelled on the National Pride of Place Competition. 11 towns and villages entered the competition and were visited by a panel of judges in July 2007. This competition aims to acknowledge and recognise the voluntary work and commitment of local groups too enhancing their local communities. Community representatives informed the judges of the various activities and projects

undertaken in their areas. An Awards Ceremony was held on Tuesday the 2nd of October 2007 at which the winners were honoured with certificates and prize money across a number of categories.



Legan

CLÁR

CLÁR is a national programme addressing population decline and lack of services in rural areas. The CLÁR programme will fast track National Development Plan spending in selected rural areas and provide top-up funding to support projects that would not otherwise proceed. In 2006 the CLÁR area was increased by over 33% to include all but five D.E.D's in the mid Longford area. The County Development Board is assisting the Department in administering this programme locally. Throughout 2006 the Clár programme has delivered additional monies making significant impact in areas of lower population densities.

ARTS OFFICE

Goal: To enhance the quality of life of the individual citizen and the community as a whole by promoting access to, participation in and awareness of the Arts in Longford.

2007 Projects.

The following is a broad profile of the kind of art-form based projects undertaken by Longford County Arts Office in 2007:

Visual Arts: Supported the successful completion of a FETAC Level 4 Photography Course in partnership with Longford VEC – Established a FETAC Level 5 Digital

Photography Course in partnership with Longford VEC – Explored the feasibility of establishing an extensive photography education programme through a strategic partnership with Longford VEC – Developed Public Art Commissioning Guidelines for Longford County Council – Participated on Longford Town Council Public Art Working Group – Assisted in the design and production on county road signage.

Music & Dance: Assisted Longford musicians in participation in Midlands Youth Orchestra – Supported the Longford County Adult Choir – Contributed funding towards the development of Midlands Youth Orchestra – Organised Classical music appreciation classes – Continued support for Kindermusik pre-school music development programme – Supported the delivery of music development projects through the Midlands Musicians Club – explored the feasibility of developing schools traditional music through IT projects.

Drama: Worked with Backstage Youth Group – Worked with Boglane Theatre Group – Supported children's drama project through Aisling Children's Arts Festival

Festivals: Delivered the first National Writers Group Literary Festival – Assisted in the planning and delivery of INK the 2nd National Writer's Group Literary Festival – Assisted in the planning and organisation of the 10th Lough Ree Environmental Summer School & Arts Festival – Provided support to Edgeworth and Goldsmith Literary Festivals – supported the 10th Aisling children's Arts Festival.

Literature & Creative Writing: Established after Schools book club in Scoil Mhuire – Programmed ten week Creative Writing course for adults – continued working with the Schools Creative Writing Focus Group – Completed and submitted FETAC Creative Writing module for evaluation – produced creative writing DVD "The Awakened Life" – Launched the "DE-scribe" children's creative writing manual and DVD – Organised the Longford Schools Literary competition.

The Year Ahead

A broad programme of work has been planned for 2008 including the drafting of a new County Arts Development Strategy, initiatives in visual arts particularly in relation to photography and public art, in creative writing and information technology and in music development.

LONGFORD CULTURAL SERVICES

LONGFORD COUNTY LIBRARY

Introduction:

Six branch libraries are located at Longford, Ballymahon, Lanesboro, Edgeworthstown, Drumlish and Granard.

The library service has worked hard to promote equality of access for all through adopting the slogan: "Our Library Service : A Welcoming Space for all". This has resulted in an overall increase in membership across the county of 9%.

A number of issues aimed at making the service more inclusive and accessible to the whole community have been addressed. We have looked closely at who our customers are and adopted a more focused approach to the delivery of services to the community we serve e.g. children, older people, the "new Irish", disabled etc. A detailed user survey was carried out in September which was part of a national public library user survey. We do not have the official findings yet but the preliminary results are very positive with customers responding well to increased opening hours, better range of stock, free internet access and high levels of satisfaction have been expressed with our very helpful staff.

Infrastructure: Considerable progress has been made with the Ballymahon Library/Markethouse project. Sean Harrington Architects have been appointed as consultants and detailed design and cost plan has been approved by DOEHLG. A feasibility study and outline design and cost plan has been completed on the Granard Library and MarketHouse and has been submitted to the DOEHLG for grant approval to develop as Library one-stop information point and Granard Town Council Meeting Rooms.

PMDS: This process is now embedded in the organization and team meetings are held on a regular basis with every member of staff contributing in a more structured way to the development of the service. Small working groups have been established to deliver a

strategy for specific aspects of service development: Children and Youth services, Services to Older people, Cultural Diversity and a Stock Selection Policy.

Cultural Diversity/ Social inclusion: The library service has responded to the needs of the growing immigrant community in Longford by developing a number of services targeted at "the new Irish" such as free online access to 500 of the world's leading newspapers from 70 countries in 37 languages.



A growing collection of popular books in many languages and the English language learning material has been updated and expanded.

A project for schools called "*Living Together in Longford*" which explores different aspects of the culture of "the new Irish" in our community has been initiated in three schools in the town.

The Polish Mother and Toddler Group which was set up in Nov. 2006 continues to meet weekly.

Polish Language classes for English speaking Polish children now runs every Saturday in Longford library.

LARED "Longford Against Racism Embracing Diversity" an interagency network approach to delivering services to the "new Irish" hold their meetings monthly in the library.

The library supports language learning support teachers through the provision of a selection of suitable bookstock for their students.

Information Communications Technology:

The library service has continued to invest in modern ICT technology. During the year internet broadband was extended into all branch libraries and towards the end of the year free WIFI access has been introduced into four branch libraries. The Library website www.longfordlibrary.ie has been updated with a wide range of information on the history and heritage of County Longford and a number of searchable databases including the Placenames of the County, Ask About Ireland, Britannica Online and Newspapers Online.

Disability Strategy: Access audit carried out on all branch libraries. Remedial Work completed on doors, reception desks, lighting, toilets etc. in four branch libraries. Hearing loop systems have been installed in all branches.

Exhibitions, Book Launches, Information Evenings, Lectures, Readings, Drama:

- 15 Mar Bernard Canavan exhibition of paintings dealing with the Irish immigrant experience in London
- 29 Mar Templemichael College Transition year Photo Exhibition.
- 14 May Bealtaine Festival exhibition of arts and crafts.
- 6 June Brendan Duffy exhibition of paintings by this talented local artist.
- 26 July Mary Kennedy launch of Living with Schizophrenia booklet and exhibition .
- 1 Aug Mick Flavin launched his new book in Longford Library celebrating 20 years
- 20 Aug Longford Historical Society 40th Anniversary Exhibition in Longford Library.
- 24 Sep Phoenix Centre exhibition of paintings.
- 22 Oct Templemichael College Halloween exhibition
- 5 Nov St. Joseph's Launch of exhibition of work .
- 26 Nov Longford Women's Link Launch of Violence Against Women Week
- 27 Nov Hugh Farrell Launch of photographic exhibition commemorating Longford soldiers who fought in the World Wars.
- 6 Dec Reflections Art Group launch of art exhibition in Longford Branch Dr. Philip Brady also launched his latest collection of poetry in aid of Crumlin Children's Hospital.

**Groups:**

Paired Writing group started in Lanesboro branch on 8th January 2007.

Longford Writers Group met fortnightly regularly in Longford Branch from 7th February 2007.

Longford Environmental Alliance met twice in 2007 (4th April and 13th November)

Gary Brady gave an environmental talk on 10th May 2007 in Longford Branch.

Classes:

Spanish Classes started in Lanesboro Branch during January

French classes started in Longford branch on 12th February 2007.

Art classes started in Longford branch on 13th February 2007.

Spanish Classes started in Longford branch on 14th February 2007.

Classes in Music Appreciation started in Longford Branch on 10th September 2007.

Irish and Spanish classes started in Longford Branch on 3rd October 2007.



Events:

Bealtaine: Celebrating Creativity in Older People.

Throughout the month of May exhibitions, talks, quizzes, music, song and dance and an intergenerational project involving Active Age Groups (the children of yesteryear) in partnership with local schools (the children of today) completed a project comparing Ireland 70 years ago and today called My Place My World.

Children were definitely not overlooked either where events were concerned. In particular the annual **Summer Festival and Children’s Book Festival** held in October were a huge success.

The **Summer Festival** saw a number of events including Harry Potter magic shows, arts and crafts sessions including make your own book, pottery classes, and a reading tree. Younger children were catered for by storytelling sessions, bestselling children’s author Liam Farrell, everybody’s favourite rabbit Bunnyhop and multicultural storytelling.



Longford Town Twinning with Noyal Chatillon: The town twinning is coordinated by Longford town Council in partnership with Longford library. In February, 17 children and three teachers were hosted by Longford families for one week with French children attending St. Emer’s N.S. A return visit to Noyal was made by Longford children and their teachers in June. A group of twenty nine adults visited Longford for four days in May and were hosted by Longford families. They enjoyed the culture and friendship of Longford and a return visit by representatives of a broad range of statutory and voluntary organizations in the town and county enjoyed French culture and hospitality in September.

Library Membership Figures for 2007

LIBRARY BRANCH	ADULT	JUNIOR	2nd Level Student	3rd Level Student	Other	TOTAL	Inc/Dec %
LONGFORD	1848	1702	501	304	40	4395	+15%
GRANARD	220	236	51	17	6	530	-12%
LANESBORO	203	177	41	10	2	433	-5%
BALLYMAHON	130	141	20	3	1	295	-16%
DRUMLISH	83	139	27	18	9	276	+6.5%
EDGEWORTHSTOWN	119	176	22	12	2	331	+30%
TOTAL	2603	2571	662	364	60	6260	+9.3%



Library Membership Figures for 2006

LIBRARY BRANCH	ADULT	JUNIOR	2nd Level Student	3rd Level Student	Other	TOTAL
LONGFORD	2034	1172	361	202	35	3804
GRANARD	252	279	34	31	7	603
LANESBORO	203	202	41	11	1	458
BALLYMAHON	156	172	19	4	0	351
DRUMLISH	71	142	29	14	3	259
EDGEWORTHSTOWN	113	107	25	4	2	251
TOTAL	2829	2074	509	266	48	5726

Total Number of Items Borrowed 2007

LIBRARY BRANCH	Adult Fiction	Adult Non Fiction	Junior	Audio	Books In Foreign Language	Total 2007	TOTAL 2006
LONGFORD	19969	16,988	18,911	3,426	1,069	60,363	62,482
GRANARD	3,126	1,465	3,288	147	35	8,061	8,251
LANESBORO	3082	1,661	3144	27	32	7,946	8,430
BALLYMAHON	2696	718	2317	35	52	5,818	6,510
DRUMLISH	1711	1049	2,168	28	14	4,970	3,597
EDGEWORTHSTOWN	1,403	655	2,267	58	16	4,399	3,971
TOTAL	31,987	22,536	32,095	3,721	1,218	91,557	93,241

Public Access Internet Statistics for 2007

LIBRARY BRANCH	COMPUTER HOURS USED 2007	COMPUTER HOURS USED 2006
LONGFORD	14,404	16,132
GRANARD	1993	1792
LANESBORO	2853	2,292
BALLYMAHON	951	742
DRUMLISH	673	556
EDGEWORTHSTOWN	715	763
TOTALS	21,589	22,277

Schools Library Service 2007

No. of Primary Schools visited (twice yearly)	No. of Pupils	No. of Book Issues	New Books Purchased
39	4,443	52,786	2,681

LONGFORD HERITAGE OFFICE

The overall aim of the Longford County Heritage Plan is:- *"that our heritage will be part of life for everyone"*

This is being achieved through:

1. Establishment and management of the County Longford Heritage Forum
2. Co-ordination and Implementation of the Longford County Heritage Plan 2004-2009 which aims to:
 - Protect and enhance our archaeological and architectural heritage
 - Promote interest and pride in the county's culture
 - Develop a heritage education and awareness programme
 - Provide heritage information which is available to all
 - Protect and enhance the natural heritage of the county

In 2007 a number of major projects were delivered ensuring the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Longford County Heritage Plan 2004 -2009.

LONGFORD HERITAGE OFFICE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

Five projects which are a key to furthering the County Longford Heritage Plan were undertaken in 2007:

1 – Local Authority Staff Biodiversity Training

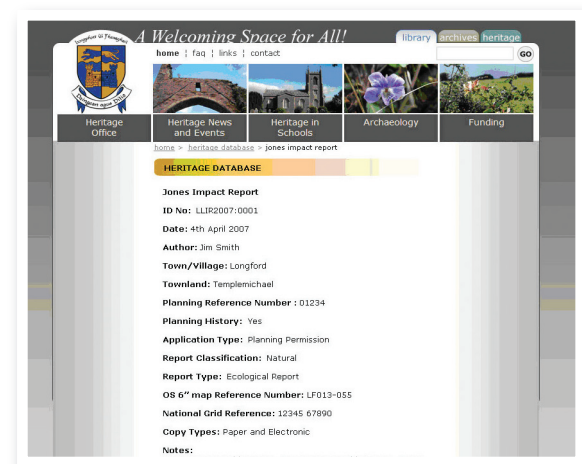
A scheme to train key staff members within Longford Local Authorities was set up in 2007 in association with Woodrow Wildlife Consulting. The purpose of the training was to make staff members, throughout all divisions of the Local Authority, aware of the significance of biodiversity in the county; threats and impacts on daily life and provide guidance on how to incorporate best practice in their work-methods and decision-making.

2 – Inventory of Local Authority Sources

The County Longford Heritage Plan 2004-2009 identified the need to collate information on all local heritage resources as a primary aim. The need for a centralised body of reference material pertaining to the

heritage of County Longford was identified this would allow all information relating to heritage within the council available from one source, avoid duplication of work and form a standardised starting-point for consultants.

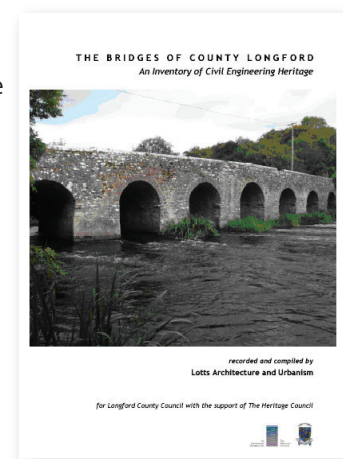
The work undertaken in 2007 dealt with the assembly of specialist heritage-related reports within planning files, from 2000-2005, including hydrological reports, archaeological reports, architectural assessments etc. The data will be collated on an accessible web-enabled database, currently being designed. It is intended to continue this work into 2008 using interested students/work-placement employees. This will provide an alternative means of learning about the role of the Local Authority and the relevance of all aspects of heritage within Longford.



3 – County Longford Bridge Survey

A high-quality architectural inventory of the significant bridges of County Longford was undertaken in 2007.

An Access-based database, compatible with that devised by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was devised containing the standard Core Data required of inventories, with a succinct description



of the nature, size, material and condition of each crossing. From this data, and background research, a report on Longford's bridges was written which also highlights issues in relation to the bridges and recommends practical methods for their conservation. This database and report is available on the "H-drive" at the following link, with a users guide also included. H:\Longford Bridge Survey 2007 (heritage)

4 – Graveyard Memorial Recording Scheme

Continuing from the Graveyard Recording Scheme undertaken in 2006, the memorials in two of Longford's historic graveyards at Agharra and Taghshinny were inventorised. These were mapped, measured, photographed and categorised and the information placed on a Microsoft Access database. The information will be available through Longford Library Services and copies are to be made available of the database and the mapping to the participating churches and communities, in order to give ownership of the information gathered back to the community.



5 – Heritage Week Programme

A broad range of events took place during Heritage Week 2007 organised by Longford County Council, state bodies and community/heritage groups within the county. These included exhibitions,



lectures and walking tours. A Longford-focused brochure to supplement the larger national programme was devised and widely distributed in August.

6 – Built Heritage Projects

In 2007, Longford County Council undertook emergency conservation works to Abbeylara Cistercian Monastery. The Heritage Office has also had input into proposals to conserve and adapt the former Ballymahon courthouse into a library. The building is a Protected Structure which retains many features of architectural interest.

The Heritage Office has applied to the Heritage Policy unit of the DOEHLG for funding to carry out conservation works on four structures of regional and national importance in the ownership or guardianship of Longford Local Authorities. These structures are: *Abbeylara abbey; Abbeyshrule abbey; Ballymahon courthouse; Granard market house.*

It is anticipated that news of any grant aid will be forwarded to the Heritage Office around April.

7 – Heritage Awareness

To further awareness of heritage within County Longford, the Heritage Office undertook the following:

- Commissioning of a brochure detailing twenty-six archaeological monuments and sites of particular importance in County Longford.
- Promotion of the county's natural heritage through sponsoring a hedgerow maintenance demonstration at the county Ploughing Championships.
- Support of the Edgeworth Weekend, as well as a commemorative plaque in honour of Abbé Edgeworth.
- Support of the commemoration of Fr. Mullooly, who commenced the excavations at the church of San Clemente in Rome.
- Undertaking of an inventory of Decorative Arts artefacts relating to county Longford within the National Museum.

8 – Ardagh Heritage Centre

As part of a commitment to the care and maintenance of Longford's heritage, a humidity monitor and light meter to monitor the artefacts housed in the Ardagh Heritage Centre was purchased. A museum-grade dehumidifier is to be purchased in 2008.

PROJECTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN 2008

- **Survey of Bats in County Longford** – this will provide accurate data on the bat population of Longford and their habitats.
- **Industrial Archaeology Survey** – this will be primarily a desk-top survey identifying the range and location of sites of industrial importance throughout the county
- **Heritage Week** – building on the success of Heritage Week in 2007
- **Secondary Schools Education** – the focus of this will be Architectural Heritage
- **Inventory of Longford Historical Society Artefacts** – a detailed inventory of the collection, with a report highlighting best practice conservation and finds management will be undertaken.

These projects will be part-funded by the Heritage Council.

Also to be undertaken in 2008 is the review of the county Heritage Plan and the commencement of the production of the Longford Heritage Plan 2010 – 2015.

The Heritage Officer Programme is a partnership arrangement between The Heritage Council and Longford County Council.



Midir agus Etain Ardagh Heritage Centre



ARCHIVES SERVICE REPORT 2007

The development of Archives and Records Management services continued in 2007, with a number of new initiatives and the continuation of other projects.

Archives

The minutes of the board of guardians of Longford Poor Law Union, 1839-1922, consisting of 128 volumes, were microfilmed.

A rare map of the section of the river Camlin flowing through Longford Town, from 1834, underwent conservation work.

The following donations were received:

- Papers of the Edgeworth Society, 1960s
- Registers, roll books and photographs from Lanesborough Boys' N.S., 1958 – 2007, and records from Lanesborough Mixed N.S., 1889-1953
- Tape recordings of interviews conducted by the I.C.A. for the preparation of the book *Longford Women's Voices*
- Papers of the late Dr Alfred Delaney, Longford and Dublin
- Minute book of Longford District Local Security Force, 1941-'43
- Two account books of Ellen Farrell, Lanesborough
- Papers of the Skelly family, Killashee, 1880-1929

All of those items were sorted and cleaned and all will be fully processed in due course.

The Archivist worked on the cleaning and listing of archives, books, photographs and artefacts in Ardagh Heritage Centre, and organised the exhibition of items in preparation for its re-opening in May.

Records Management

The Archivist worked with senior staff in the Corporate Services Department in preparing a classification scheme and coding system for the files of that department. The scheme will apply to all paper and electronic files and is capable of development.

Outreach and educational activities

The Archivist co-ordinated the planning of the commemoration of the bi-centenary of the death of Abbé Henry Essex Edgeworth (1745-1807) in Edgeworthstown (1 May and 21-23 September 2007).

The Archivist assisted with preparations for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Roman excavations of Fr Joseph Mullooly O.P., Leherly, Lanesborough (8-10 June 2007).

The Archivist assisted Shannonside Heritage with its exhibition on the Great Famine in Lanesborough during Heritage Week (24-31 August 2007).

30 August 2007: talk on 'Historic maps of Granard' in Granard Library for Heritage Week.

5 September 2007: talk on the Magan Estate Maps to Longford Active Retirement Group, Teallach Íosa.

26 and 28 September 2007: guided walking tours of Longford Town for Transition Years in Scoil Mhuire, Longford.

28 September 2007: visit to Edgeworthstown N.S. with Canon Janet Catterall to speak to students about the Edgeworth family.

9 November 2007: talk on the work of the Archivist to Transition Year students of Moyne Community School.

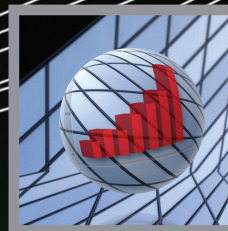
16 November 2007: workshops on Archives with first year classes in Moyne Community School.

6 December 2007: talk on 'Sources for local history' to Ballymahon Local History Group, Dean Egan Hall.

The Archivist is a member of the Education Subcommittee of the Society of Archivists, Ireland, and contributed to the development of the website www.learnaboutarchives.ie, which was launched on 27 August 2007.



FINANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS





FINANCE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS



Tommy McDonald
Head Of Finance

FINANCE

Functions:

The main functions of the Finance Department of Longford County Council are to:

- Achieve the financial objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- Manage the financial affairs of the Council.
- Ensure that adequate internal controls are in operation to safeguard the assets of the organisation, and to ensure, the accuracy and reliability of the accounting records.
- Ensure as far as possible that value for money is achieved throughout the organisation.

Services:

- Motor Taxation
- Rates
- Higher Education Grants
- General Office – processing payments to suppliers and payroll.

Payment Practices:

We have implemented an Electronic Funds Transfer system for suppliers.

This allowed us to pay creditors payments directly to a nominated bank account.

The provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations, 2002 applies to Longford County Council and Longford Town Council.

Both Local Authorities have systems in place to ensure that interest penalties are not incurred. However, in a small number of cases, late payments occurred in 2007, as follows:

Longford County Council:

Total number of late payments	145
Total value of late payments	€829,988
Value of all late payments as a proportion of total payments to suppliers	1.17%
Total amount of interest penalties	€7,951
Average delay in late payments	41days

Longford Town Council:

No interest penalties were paid in 2007.

Every effort is made to ensure compliance with the Act and Regulations and avoidance of interest penalties. However, the procedures can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the legislation.

Internal Audit:

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function charged with reviewing activities across all areas within Longford County Council. It objectively examines and reports on management of risks, the adequacy of internal controls, the achievement of proper, efficient and economic use of resources. An Internal Audit Charter sets out the role and responsibilities of the Internal Auditor and Management.



HIGHER EDUCATION GRANTS

Prior to 1968 Councils and County Borough Corporations awarded grants to students pursuing second and third level courses. The Local Authorities (Higher Education Grants) Act, 1968 abolished the making of grants for second level education and revised the system of grants for third level education. Grants are on a graduated basis and may contain a maintenance element as well as fees where exemption from fees does not apply. The bulk of the cost is recouped from the Department of Education with the Local Authority being responsible for a sum equal to the value of the grants awarded by the Council in the 1967 financial year.

Academic Year 2006/2007:

Number of new awards issued	91
Number of renewals issued	211
Total number of students in receipt of Higher Education Grants	302
Number of students attending Irish colleges	288
Number of students attending UK colleges (including Northern Ireland) and EU colleges	14

EXPENDITURE

Local Government Act 2001 – Section 142 Expenditure	
Mayor and Other Allowances	76,373
Entertainment and Associated Expense	8,017
Representational Payments, Expenses of Member and Representation at Conferences	660,597
Expenses of Members attending conferences abroad	35,148
Total	780,135

MOTOR TAX

The Motor Taxation Office issues vehicle licences (tax discs), driving licences and associated documents such as certificates of roadworthiness, vehicle licensing certificates, trailer licence cards, receipts, etc. The income derived is transferred to the Local Government Fund, which is under the control of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In 2007 total receipts amounted to €6,642,877.

Motor Tax – statistics 2007

	No of Transactions	Amount
Vehicle Licences (discs)	31,147	6,343,474.00
Driver Licences	4,853	74,200.00
Road Worthiness Certificates	3,039	22,340.00
Trade Licences	83	22,041.00
Miscellaneous Receipts	3,618	180,822.00
Total	42,740	6,642,877.00

Vehicle Licences Issued – 2007

Private	24,101
Goods	5,078
Cycles	136
Tractors	1071
PSV	145
Other (incl. dupl.)	616
Total	31,147

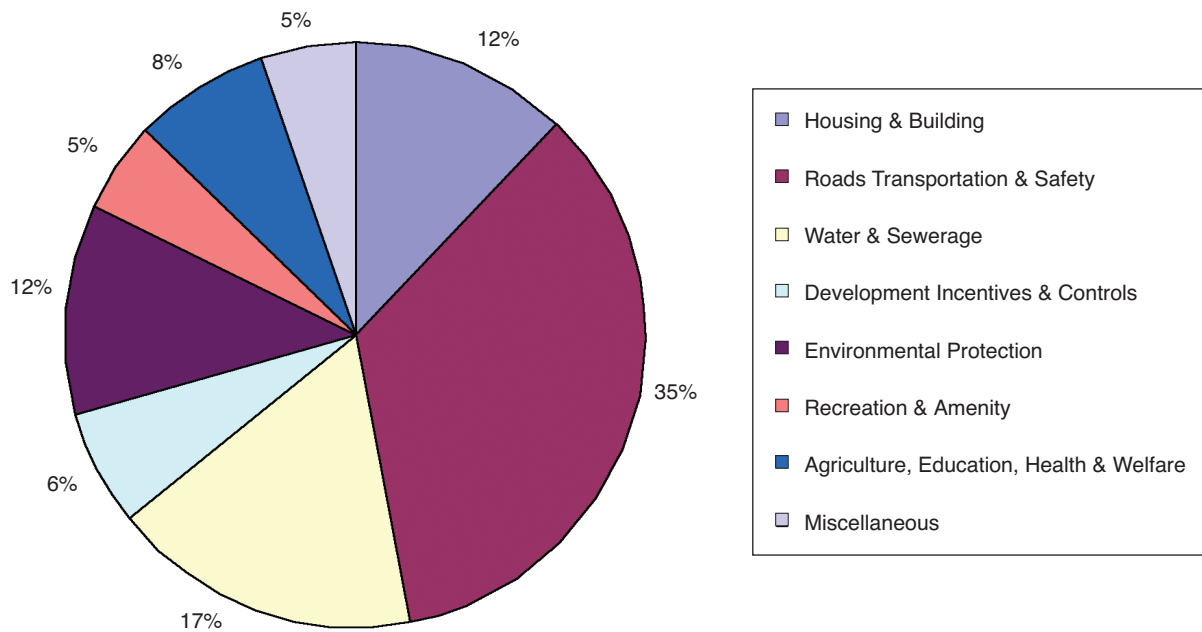
Drivers Licences Issued – 2007

1 Year Driving Licences	40
3 Year Driving Licences	603
10 Year Driving Licences	1,834
1 Year Provisional	608
2 Year Provisional	1,768
Total	4,853

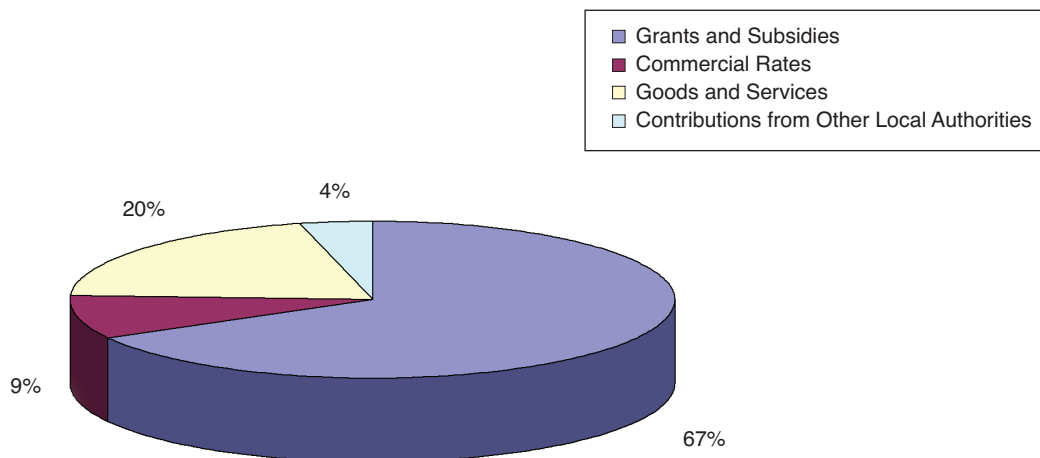
In addition, 5,592 vehicle Licences were issued by Motor Tax Online Service during 2007. (This 5,592 represents 15.19% of overall business on Vehicle Licences only for County Longford). These vehicle Licences are issued directly from the Vehicle Registration Unit in Shannon, Co Clare.



REVENUE EXPENDITURE

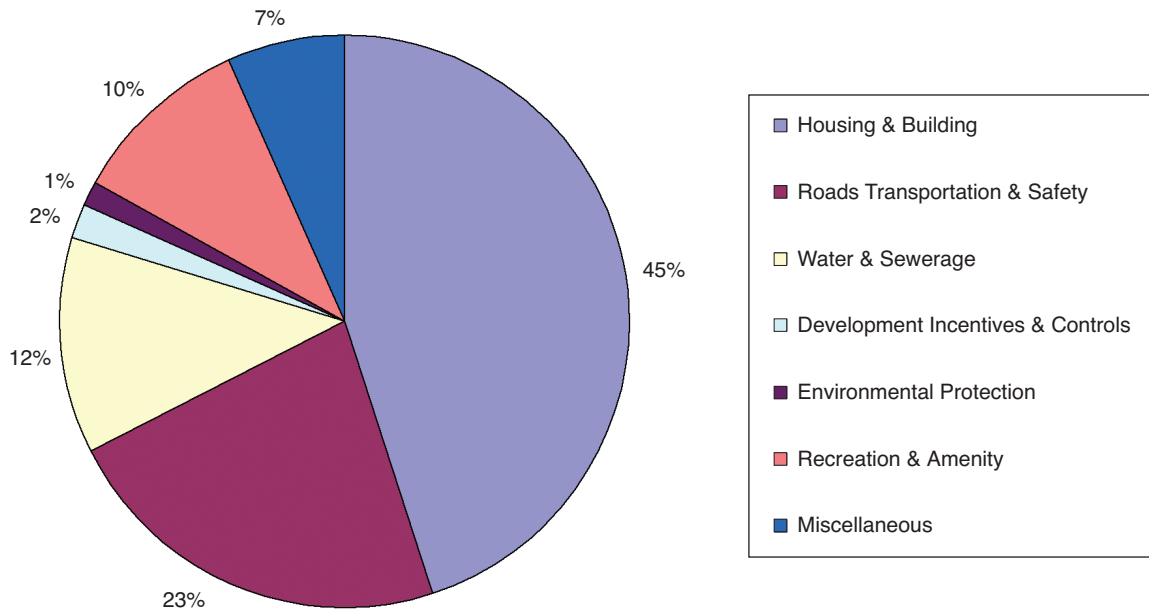


SOURCES OF REVENUE INCOME

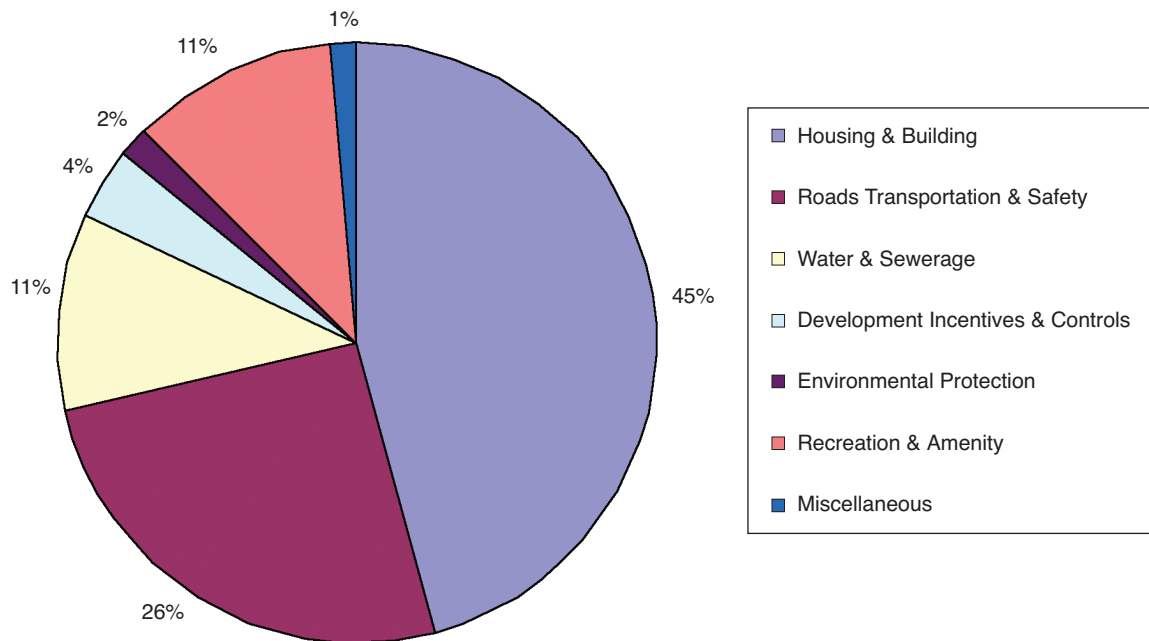




CAPITAL EXPENDITURE



CAPITAL INCOME

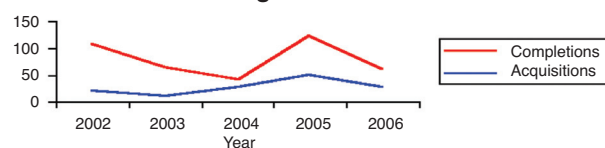




LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSE COMPLETIONS AND ACQUISITIONS 2002 - 2006

	COMPLETIONS					ACQUISITIONS					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
County Councils											
Donegal	549	181	164	306	128	11	5	13	29	26	1,412
Cork	209	270	168	167	67	87	60	113	114	47	1,302
South Dublin	93	61	244	261	428	15	3	20	9	20	1,154
Kerry	160	253	106	215	155	6	1	55	58	32	1,041
Wexford	278	151	185	128	70	21	9	21	19	0	882
Fingal	132	248	175	95	143	5	0	0	7	4	809
Kildare	148	107	104	170	172	7	27	11	15	5	766
Louth	156	172	126	137	4	6	2	44	27	32	706
Cavan	210	100	196	57	101	4	2	4	0	10	684
Meath	138	160	99	183	71	4	5	1	7	0	668
Galway	103	85	93	129	79	22	14	26	25	50	626
Laois	54	54	203	162	51	9	3	21	30	27	614
Limerick	134	155	53	89	107	14	4	15	17	16	604
Wicklow	151	130	88	163	30	25	4	5	8	0	604
Sligo	66	94	127	65	69	22	15	33	28	14	533
Longford	107	64	41	122	61	20	12	27	51	27	532
Roscommon	78	105	22	46	195	11	4	5	12	10	488
Clare	49	84	19	112	48	55	19	53	37	11	487
Waterford	152	74	54	25	99	0	0	19	38	19	480
North Tipperary	97	65	131	69	67	4	2	10	8	12	465
South Tipperary	69	123	78	136	28	5	0	10	3	0	452
Offaly	110	127	29	82	26	11	3	11	24	11	434
Westmeath	54	100	113	27	37	10	1	25	25	14	406
Mayo	25	64	97	134	61	0	1	2	4	4	392
Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown	59	180	50	15	33	26	4	1	1	1	370
Kilkenny	26	40	51	62	47	16	9	40	23	41	355
Carlow	12	111	54	48	14	18	6	16	40	7	326
Monaghan	38	40	56	47	100	9	13	5	1	5	314
Leitrim	52	25	80	20	47	5	0	2	3	1	235
City Councils											
Dublin	500	531	278	583	436	180	157	219	116	194	3,194
Cork	148	62	172	168	187	24	53	109	95	103	1,121
Galway	77	320	25	52	70	0	0	9	2	28	583
Waterford	156	164	26	72	64	3	1	0	17	30	533
Limerick	13	16	32	62	19	16	17	26	25	28	254
Total	4,403	4,516	3,539	4,209	3,314	671	456	971	918	829	23,826

**Longford County Council
Housing Statistics**





LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND ALLOCATION

	2007	2008	Change %	Census 2006	2007	2008
County Councils						
Longford	14,657,063	15,522,985	5.9%	26,749	548	580
Leitrim	15,465,369	16,332,646	5.6%	28,837	536	566
South Tipperary	23,696,915	25,062,115	5.8%	54,612	434	459
Waterford	22,848,496	24,259,293	6.2%	54,336	421	446
Sligo	17,723,150	18,731,673	5.7%	42,969	412	436
North Tipperary	19,357,349	20,481,309	5.8%	49,135	394	417
Mayo	38,012,273	40,257,276	5.9%	97,633	389	412
Roscommon	22,198,317	23,308,308	5.0%	58,700	378	397
Monaghan	15,718,151	16,610,930	5.7%	44,408	354	374
Carlow	12,536,458	13,171,854	5.1%	36,573	343	360
Cavan	19,526,749	20,690,378	6.0%	60,007	325	345
Donegal	41,556,957	44,097,787	6.1%	134,948	308	327
Westmeath	21,387,695	22,711,775	6.2%	72,433	295	314
Offaly	16,230,539	17,222,857	6.1%	55,600	292	310
Laois	18,336,335	19,360,800	5.6%	67,012	274	289
Kerry	27,600,743	29,139,561	5.6%	102,037	270	286
Kilkenny	20,827,594	22,021,918	5.7%	78,769	264	280
Wicklow	20,291,251	21,974,808	8.3%	80,789	251	272
Galway	38,490,666	40,632,067	5.6%	153,001	252	266
Louth	13,390,136	14,070,960	5.1%	52,990	253	266
Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown	39,451,937	41,261,666	4.6%	193,688	204	213
Limerick	26,101,406	27,483,240	5.3%	131,303	199	209
Wexford	22,172,296	23,425,682	5.7%	114,700	193	204
Meath	28,583,173	30,297,653	6.0%	155,045	184	195
Clare	15,672,190	16,476,569	5.1%	87,936	178	187
Cork	54,809,504	57,368,547	4.7%	322,925	170	178
Kildare	26,476,801	28,176,862	6.4%	158,145	167	178
Fingal	32,231,264	33,756,001	4.7%	239,813	134	141
South Dublin	26,194,505	27,396,258	4.6%	246,919	106	111
City Councils						
Cork	26,892,180	28,383,759	5.5%	119,143	226	238
Limerick	11,721,449	12,258,639	4.6%	52,560	223	233
Dublin	100,310,537	105,039,762	4.7%	505,739	198	208
Waterford	8,537,496	8,941,951	4.7%	45,775	187	195
Galway	9,357,649	9,795,964	4.7%	71,983	130	136



**REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROAD GRANT ALLOCATIONS
NOTIFIED TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES
Excluding Local Improvement Scheme
2007 - 2008**

	Km	2007 Allocation	Per Km	2008 Allocation	Per Km	%
Change County Councils						
Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown	596	14,841,650	24,902	9,384,150	15,745	(37%)
South Dublin	708	12,594,380	17,789	10,702,000	15,116	(15%)
Kildare	2,086	23,531,054	11,280	28,101,630	13,471	19%
Wicklow	1,964	19,590,033	9,975	23,687,866	12,061	21%
Westmeath	1,997	15,892,060	7,958	21,166,314	10,598	33%
Fingal	954	7,119,239	7,463	9,824,235	10,298	38%
Meath	2,906	29,486,200	10,148	28,301,945	9,740	(4%)
Louth	1,147	8,614,700	7,511	9,932,750	8,660	15%
Carlow	1,106	7,432,150	6,720	7,579,650	6,853	2%
Donegal	5,996	40,660,967	6,781	41,018,300	6,841	1%
Monaghan	2,366	15,099,650	6,382	16,080,650	6,796	6%
Waterford	2,481	15,701,983	6,328	16,058,650	6,472	2%
Laois	1,946	12,188,682	6,264	12,267,642	6,305	1%
Offaly	1,838	11,125,817	6,053	11,249,649	6,120	1%
Cavan	2,858	16,844,616	5,894	17,260,531	6,040	2%
Longford	1,422	8,441,320	5,938	8,518,100	5,992	1%
Leitrim	2,109	11,869,150	5,628	11,812,650	5,602	0%
Sligo	2,549	14,246,503	5,589	14,272,702	5,599	0%
Cork	11,582	58,016,882	5,009	63,811,744	5,510	10%
South Tipperary	2,700	14,217,706	5,266	14,758,200	5,466	4%
Wexford	3,197	16,877,850	5,279	17,393,026	5,440	3%
Kerry	4,220	22,281,800	5,279	22,697,813	5,378	2%
Limerick	3,392	17,574,205	5,182	17,986,200	5,303	2%
Clare	3,905	20,142,783	5,158	20,659,750	5,290	3%
Kilkenny	2,850	14,476,900	5,080	14,775,764	5,185	2%
North Tipperary	2,454	12,340,700	5,030	12,717,200	5,183	3%
Galway	6,055	31,509,556	5,204	30,594,625	5,052	(3%)
Mayo	5,767	27,274,625	4,730	28,120,625	4,876	3%
Roscommon	4,000	17,197,750	4,299	18,060,200	4,515	5%
City Councils						
Waterford	146	6,060,859	41,456	7,300,075	49,932	20%
Limerick	162	5,590,655	34,446	4,150,000	25,570	(26%)
Cork	363	7,797,795	21,499	7,544,000	20,800	(3%)
Galway	194	2,795,000	14,415	3,305,000	17,045	18%
Dublin	1,134	14,727,000	12,982	14,934,061	13,165	1%



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2007

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure. It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year

Expenditure by Programme Group	Gross Expenditure € 2007	Income € 2007	Net Expenditure € 2007	Net Expenditure € 2006
Housing & Building	5,216,749	5,544,971	(328,222)	433,843
Roads Transportation & Safety	14,939,943	10,148,901	4,791,042	4,209,681
Water & Sewerage	7,394,286	2,512,460	4,881,826	3,941,068
Development Incentives & Controls	2,787,587	1,094,996	1,692,592	966,999
Environmental Protection	4,958,057	1,016,879	3,941,178	3,204,836
Recreation & Amenity	2,144,496	288,839	1,855,656	1,736,548
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	3,319,714	2,769,674	550,040	523,071
Miscellaneous	2,227,597	1,511,531	716,066	1,245,359
Total Expenditure / Income	42,988,428	24,888,251		
Net Cost of Programmes to be funded from County Rates and Local Government Fund		18,100,178		16,261,405
Rates		3,974,245		3,782,333
Local Government Fund - General Purpose Grant		14,718,563		13,296,084
County Charge		1,106,400		1,106,400
Surplus / (Deficit) for Year before Transfers		1,699,030		1,923,412
Transfer to / from Reserves		(1,466,644)		(1,896,911)
Overall Surplus / (Deficit) for Year		232,386		26,501
General Reserve at 1 January 2007		1,267,409		1,240,908
General Reserve at 31 December 2007		1,499,795		1,267,409



BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2007

	2007 €	2006 €
FIXED ASSETS		
Operational	146,254,941	133,188,414
Infrastructural	871,271,437	867,579,930
Community	147,672	165,001
Non Operational	5,650,173	5,830,740
	<u>1,023,324,223</u>	<u>1,006,764,086</u>
Work in Progress and Preliminary Expenses	18,422,973	17,958,999
Long Term Debtors	28,099,875	30,036,530
Current Assets		
Stock	58,677	58,200
Trade Debtors and Prepayments	12,180,950	16,726,658
Bank Investments	21,000,036	19,000,036
Cash at Bank		
Cash on Hand	72,243	111,690
Urban Account		
	<u>33,311,905</u>	<u>35,896,583</u>
Current Liabilities		
Bank Overdraft	2,327,542	1,975,711
Creditors and Accruals	6,551,898	7,951,603
Finance Leases		
	<u>8,879,440</u>	<u>9,927,314</u>
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)	24,432,466	25,969,269
Creditors - Amounts falling due after more than one year		
Loans Payable	35,548,991	33,861,507
Finance Leases		
Refundable Deposits	783,961	463,143
Other		
	<u>36,332,952</u>	<u>34,324,649</u>
Net Assets	1,057,946,584	1,046,404,235
Financed By		
Capitalisation Account	1,023,324,226	1,006,764,086
Income Work in Progress	19,220,021	22,630,364
Specific Revenue Reserve	17,750	17,750
General Revenue Reserve	1,499,795	1,267,409
Other Balances	13,884,793	15,724,626
Total	1,057,946,584	1,046,404,235

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Longford Local Authorities ICT Department supports approximately 300 internal clients. We provide and support diverse systems including

- Electronic mail, Internet, Intranet and Extranet
- Web based systems
- Agresso Financial systems that support the local authorities' financial management information systems and transaction processing.
- Geographical information systems that provide essential information on roads, water mains etc. in the county.
- Planning administration systems
- Housing administration systems
- Various small database systems.

Network Infrastructure

The network is made up of several complex components which require on-going management, maintenance and monitoring. Responsibility for managing the network also includes maintaining a wide area network which connects all off site office back to Aras and Chontae, using leased lines, wireless and fibre optic links. There are a total of 12 sites including Libraries, Fire Station, Town Council and offices in Longford Town.

Internet Access via a Virtual Private Network from Eircom

At the heart of the information structure are Servers that support the applications and a number of those have been upgraded and replaced during 2007. Work commenced on a Disaster Recovery Plan in 2007 and ongoing work will continue in this area. A security audit of the complete Network was carried out at the end of 2007 and the recommendations from this assessment will be implemented in 2008.

New Systems

The IT Department was very involved in the tendering for a Traffic Management System for Longford Town Council. A vendor was selected and the system will be operational from January, 2008. The system has an online payment facility for payment of traffic fines on the Internet.

The online Planning system was enhanced during the year with the addition of maps. This system allows public access to the planning Geographical Information System through the Internet from the Longford Local Authorities website.

A swipe card lock system for the office building was installed during 2007 and is managed by IT staff.

Websites

Work commenced on a major project of revamping all Local Authorities Websites. The Portal Site www.longford.ie was completed in the last quarter of 2007 and all other sites will come to fruition in 2008. The websites will cater for the needs of users with disabilities and will be fully AA compliant.

A new website was developed for Longford Sports and Leisure: www.longfordsportsandleisure.ie





Longphort Uí Fhearghail





ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON CORPORATE PLAN





ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON CORPORATE PLAN

INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES

Core Objective: *Provide environmentally sustainable water services and environmental infrastructure to secure economic and social development and to lobby for increased capital funding.*

Schemes to start 2007 W/S

Edgeworthstown Sewerage Scheme (Nutrient Reduction) S

- Works completed December 2007

Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme (Reservoir and Pipelines) W

- Construction to commence March 2008

Schemes to start 2008

Ballymahon Regional Water Supply Scheme (Improvement) W

- Approval to proceed with preparation of Contract Docs. Dec. 07

Granard Regional Water Supply Scheme W

- Approval to proceed with preparation of Contract Docs. Aug. 07

Longford Sewerage Scheme Phase 2 (New Sewers) S

- Preparation of Local Area Plan in Progress

Schemes to start 2009

Drumlisk and Newtownforbes Sewerage Schemes 1 S

- Network Construction to commence March 2008. DBO to follow

Schemes to Advance Through Planning

Lanesborough Regional Water Supply Scheme W

- Scheme to be advanced through planning stage

Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme Phase 12 W

- Contract Documents for Stage 1 being prepared

Longford Grouped Towns and Villages Sewerage Scheme Feasibility Study (Abbeylara, Abbeyshrule, Ballinamuck, Barry, Killashee, Ennybeggs, Legga, Moydow, Moyne, Newtowncashel, Stonepark and Taghshinny) S

- No Approval to proceed as per DOEHLG letter May 07

Longford Town Sewerage Scheme (Network Review, Wastewater Treatment Plant and Hub Centre for

Sludge) S

- Preparation of Contract Documents in Progress

Rural Towns & Villages Initiative

Ardagh/ Ballinalee/ Aughnaclyffe Sewerage Schemes 1 S

- Network Construction to commence May 2008. DBO to follow

Lanesborough Water Supply Stage 1 (Wellfield Development) W

- Contract Documents being prepared

Water Conservation Allocation

- Start Construction of Network Rehabilitation Contracts June 08

Asset Management Study

- Network Mapping

1 Bundled together as a Grouped DBO Scheme

2 Works arising from the Strategic Review

MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OF ROADS:

Core Objective: *"Ensure that infrastructural transportation policies and investments assist and enhance the economic and social development of County Longford, and preserve and improve the physical attractiveness of the county and its background environment"*

The Compulsory Purchase Order for Longford N5 Bypass was published in November 2007. Longford to Drumsna N4 2 + 2 rate scheme bypassing Dromod and Rooskey and projecting 1 km into County Longford has been substantially completed and open to traffic in December 2008.

Pavement strengthening was carried out on national routes and major restoration was carried out on Ballymahon Street, Longford on the N5.

Specific Grant Schemes were advanced at Gaigue on the R198, between Edgeworthstown and Lisryan on the R395, at Ferefad, Longford on the R393.

The Multi-Annual Road Restoration and Surface Dressing programmes are ongoing.



Road Safety:

Low-cost Safety Remedial schemes have been advanced and are at various stages of completion at Carragh, Grillagh, Ballymacormack, Drumlish, Stonepark, Ardagh, Kenagh and Longford.

Road safety recommendations relating to Planning Permissions are ongoing.

Implementation of the multi-annual Public Lighting and Non-National Roads Flashing School Lights Plan is ongoing.

The Council continued to promote, facilitate and participate with the Gardai, Schools and National Safety Council in the operation of Junior School Wardens.

The Council continued to monitor effective implementation of the EU Commercial Vehicle Regulations in close consultation with the 2No. authorised test-centres in the county.

Traffic Management:

Implementation of the multi-annual Non-national Road Signage Plan is ongoing.

Development of off-street parking in Granard is ongoing.

Access to Passenger Transportation for All:

Facilitation of the recommendations of the County Longford Rural Transport Audit adopted by the Council continued.

Current Policies:

Quality road design standards were promoted for implementation.

Access for the disabled was promoted in accordance with recommended guidelines in consultation with stakeholders, as in the case of R393 Dublin Road and R392 Kenagh.

Participation continued in the Steering and Technical Groups managing the National Roads Authority Regional Design Office.

Appropriate liaison was promoted between transportation development stakeholders such as

public representatives, representative bodies, the general public, the Department of Transport, the National Roads Authority, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Gardai, the National Safety Council, Iarnród Éireann, Waterways Ireland, etc.

Implementation of Local Improvement Schemes and Community Schemes continued.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Services has continued to expand its area of activity. The following measures were put in place to facilitate delivery of the objectives set out in the plan:-

1. Seven temporary Civic Amenity collections were organised during 2007 as part of the National Spring Clean operation.
2. Very successful Hazardous Waste Collections were held in 3 locations in December 2007 with 1,154 kg of Hazardous Waste collected.
3. During 2007 the Waste Enforcement Team received 933 complaints all of which were investigated and appropriate enforcement actions taken.
4. Longford is one of the only Counties in Ireland to have 100% participation from Secondary Schools in the Green School programme and 97% participation from Primary Schools.
5. Following on from Derelict Site surveys undertaken in the county a number of sites were identified for inclusion on the Derelict Sites Register.
6. Over 19 cemeteries availed of financial assistance under the Cemetery Support Scheme with the remaining Council owned cemeteries being maintained by LJI Ltd.
7. The new Fire Station for Granard was officially opened in February 2007.
8. The council participated with the Rivers Shannon and Erne District Basin Management Systems.
9. Longford County Council participated in the National Litter Monitoring System.



HOUSING AND PLANNING SERVICES

Core Objectives: *"Provide and maintain an acceptable standard of Social and Affordable housing in a planned environment that meets the needs of the people of County Longford and promotes social inclusion."*

Social Housing

Longford County Council continued to meet the requirements as set down in the Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004-2008. The last Housing Needs Assessment, which took place in 2005, had shown a drop in applicants to 247 households on the County list, this figure steadily increased to over 400 in 2006 and 840 in 2007.

Longford County Council's housing programme continued throughout 2007. There were 138 allocations of tenancy in the year.

Housing Maintenance / Refurbishment

In 2007, Longford County Council continued its Central Heating Installation Programme and this will continue into 2008.

Estate Management

The Housing Liaison Officer and the Social Worker continued to work with tenants and residents associations throughout 2007.

In 2007, Longford County Council also stepped up action under its Anti-Social Behaviour policy and at the end of the year there were four cases pending hearing within the courts system.

Voluntary Housing

The Council continued its association with the Voluntary Housing Sector. Negotiations are ongoing with a number of bodies in relation to the provision of sheltered housing.

Affordable Housing

At the end of 2007, Affordable Houses had been allocated at Stonepark and Longford Town. These houses were acquired under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

Loans / Grants

A combined total of over 40 loan applications were received in 2007 with 13 loans approved and 17 advanced. This amount does not include applications refused or withdrawn.

Homelessness

An integrated approach in the provision of accommodation by the various statutory authorities and voluntary agencies continued in 2007.

Traveller Accommodation

The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee met on a quarterly basis and monitored the progress achieved in relation to targets set out in the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2005-2008.

Rental Accommodation Scheme

By the end of 2007, 93 households were accommodated in private rented accommodation under the scheme. In addition, 39 rent supplement recipients were allocated local authority tenancies. The scheme operated on a self financing basis during the year.





HUMAN RESOURCES, COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Core Objective: *"Longford County Council will lead the Economic Social and Cultural Development of County Longford."*

Economic Strategy:

The economy of County Longford achieved rapid growth in 2007. Economic growth was importantly achieved across all sectors and throughout the county. Important commercial developments include the opening of Dunnes Stores and the progressing of the commercial developments on Bridge Street Longford and at Granard. The continued expansion of productive employment creating enterprises and the opening of the Prison Services Headquarters significantly strengthen the local economy and provides a high level of confidence in the sustainability of the counties economy. Much of the economic success is facilitated by a proactive approach from the Longford Local Authorities in encouraging and assisting investment in County Longford.

Social:

Longford County Council has prioritised the social agenda heavily throughout 2007. Longford County Council has secured cohesion funding to conduct a 'Poverty Profile and Social Inclusion Strategy'. Consultants were appointed towards the end of 2007. Longford County Council established a Youth Council under the Comhairle na nÓg initiative to address the democratic deficit for young people. Longford County Council in partnership with the Rural Social Scheme equipped over 200 vulnerable houses with smoke alarms. Longford County Council supported the development of Longford's first Intercultural Strategy.

Longford County Development Board completed the FRIENDS project. This unique programme is being rolled out with primary schools through a partnership of the Health Service Executive

Longford Community Psychology Department and the Longford County Development Board. The programme enhances children's resilience, teaches social and emotional skills and provides children with essential skills for coping with life's challenges. It targeted over 450 students in 42 primary schools across the County.

Longford County Council continues to implement the designated disadvantage CLÁAR and RAPID programmes that in addition to specific funding measures prioritise expenditure under The National Development Plan. Longford County Development Board completed the Lone Parents Initiative from the NDP gender equality unit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Longford Volunteer Centre was also established in 2007 with the appointment of a full time co-ordinator. In partnership with the Community and Voluntary Forum a Volunteer Audit was conducted.

Longford County Council led the Traveller Interagency Initiative in 2007. It has set four key priorities. Some of the key achievements of the Interagency group has been the placement of members from the Travelling Community in a number of Health Promotion positions. The Interagency group has also been integral in combating early school leaving within the Travelling Community.

Cultural Services:

Longford County Council provides an integrated cultural service incorporating Libraries, Arts, Heritage and Archives in a customer centred manner. The Libraries provide a valuable support towards integration of the foreign national community through Internet access and language training. Initiatives with schools include writing and poetry projects. The adopted Heritage and Arts Plans are being implemented in accordance with the agreed programme.

Sports and Recreation:

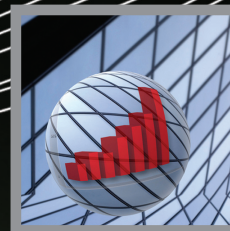
The joint local authorities Longford Swimming Pool Project was completed in the Mall town park in mid 2007. The continued delivery of the councils play policy



resulted in a new playground in Edgeworthstown and Ballymahon. Longford County Development Board has established the Longford Sports Partnership and is currently in the recruitment process for the position of Coordinator. Longford County Council secured funding from the Irish Sports Council for this position in 2007. Longford County Council also administered €16,000 in grant aid to disadvantaged Sports Clubs in 2007.



SERVICE INDICATORS LONGFORD LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2007 & 2006





SERVICE INDICATORS LONGFORD LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2007 & 2006

	2007	2006
A & C: ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES		
A & C.1 Arts Grants		
- number of arts grants paid	45	45
- total value of arts grants paid	€80,570.00	€2,315.00
CP: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION - YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY		
CP.1 Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/ Comhairle na n-Og scheme		
	89%	89%
C: CORPORATE ISSUES		
C.1 Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through		
- certified leave	3.34%	3.66%
- uncertified leave	0.55%	0.58%
C.2 Expenditure on Training and Development as a percentage of total payroll costs		
	6.71%	7.99%
E: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES		
Water		
E.1 Percentage of river channel which is		
(a) Unpolluted		
(b) Slightly polluted		
(c) Moderately polluted		
(d) Seriously polluted		
	The LGMSB Obtains These Figures Directly From the EPA	
E.2 Percentage of drinking water analysis results in compliance with statutory requirements with regard to		
- public schemes	EPA	95.80%
- private schemes (where appropriate)	EPA	94.84%
Fire Service		
E.3 Average time, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in		
- full time stations	No Full Time Fire Stations	
- part time stations (retained fire service)	5.54	4.11
E.4 Percentage of attendances at scenes where		
- first attendance is at scene within 10 minutes	32.98%	33.99%
- first attendance is at scene after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	48.40%	52.52%
- first attendance is at scene after 20 minutes	18.62%	13.49%
E.5 Fire prevention - Total number of fire safety certificate applications		
- received	78	135
- processed	53	102



Waste Management

E.6 Percentage of households provided with segregated waste collection

Waste Collections is privatised in Longford

Services Privatised in Longford

E.7 Household waste collected which is sent for recycling

- tonnage	5385	4172.08
- percentage of household waste collected	56.16%	57.90%

E.8 Household waste collected which is sent to landfill

- tonnage	4203	3033.55
- percentage of household waste collected	43.84%	42.10%

E.9 Recycling facilities

GLASS

Number of Bring Sites	26	26
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	2	1
Total Number of Facilities	28	27
Total number of locations	28	4.35
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling	3424.34	72.22

CANS

Number of Bring Sites	26	26
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	2	1
Total Number of Facilities	28	27
Total number of locations	28	4.35
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling	306.39	5.54

TEXTILES

Number of Bring Sites	2	0
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	2	1
Total Number of Facilities	4	1
Total number of locations	4	0.016
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling	164.44	2.57

BATTERIES

Number of Bring Sites	0	0
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	0	0
Total Number of Facilities	0	0
Total number of locations	0	0
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling	0	0

OILS

Number of Bring Sites	0	0
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	0	0
Total Number of Facilities	0	0
Total number of locations	0	0
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling	0	0

OTHERS

Number of Bring Sites	0	0
Number of Civic Amenity Sites	2	1
Total Number of Facilities	2	1
total number of locations	2	0.16
Tonnage of waste collected for recycling	6466.12	125.53



LITTER PREVENTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

E.10 Litter - Number of Litter Wardens

Total number of full-time litter wardens	3	4
Total number of part-time litter wardens	1	5
Total number of litter wardens (both full and part-time)	4	9
Number of on-the spot fines	722	630
Number of prosecution cases taken because of non-payment of on-the-spot fines	24	25
Number of prosecutions secured	12	5

Percentage of areas within the local authority that are

- unpolluted (i.e. litter- free)	4.35%	6.00%
- slightly polluted with litter	67.83%	63.00%
- moderately polluted with litter	23.48%	28.00%
- significantly polluted with litter	1.74%	4.00%
- grossly polluted with litter	2.60%	0.00%

E.11 Environmental Complaints and Enforcement

- total number of cases subject to complaints concerning environmental pollution (relating to waste, litter, water pollution, noise pollution, air pollution)	1270	1075
- number of complaints investigated	1270	1075
- number of enforcement procedures taken	769	1075

E.12 Percentage of Schools participating in environmental campaigns

- primary schools	97.30%	92.50%
- secondary schools	100.00%	100.00%

H: HOUSING

H.1 Housing Vacancies

Total number of dwellings in local authority stock	1662	1551
Overall % of dwellings that are let	96.86%	97.24%
Overall % of dwellings that are empty	3.14%	2.76%
% of empty dwellings subject to major refurbishment schemes	1.91%	0.00%
% of empty dwellings unavailable for letting	56.10%	80.12%
% of empty dwellings available for letting	43.90%	19.88%

H.2 Average time taken to relet dwellings available for letting (in weeks)	1	1
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H.3 Number of repairs completed as a percentage of the number of valid repair requests received	90.72	88.37
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H.4 Average time taken to inform applicants of local authority's decision on applications for:

- the shared ownership housing scheme (in days)	5	5
- housing loans schemes (in days)	5	5
- local authority housing (in days)	10	10

H.5 Traveller Accommodation

Total number of traveller families accommodated as a percentage of the targets set in the local traveller accommodation programme	100.00%	133.33%
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L: LIBRARY SERVICES

L.1 Public opening hours

- average number of opening hours per week for full-time libraries	39.6	44.6
- average number of opening hours per week for part-time libraries (where applicable)	18.5	18.6

L.2 Number of registered library members

6260	18.40%
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L.3 Total number of items issued (county/city wide) for

(a) Books	89016	3.10%
(b) Other items	3737	0.13%

L.4 Percentage of libraries that offer Internet access to the public

100.00%	100.00%
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L.5 Total number of Internet sessions provided

21589	717
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M: MOTOR TAXATION

M.1 Number of motor tax transactions which

- are dealt with over the counter	37277	35459
- are dealt with by post	4786	4607
- are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	Awaiting Figures for online	4236

Percentage of motor tax transactions which

- are dealt with over the counter	88.62%	80.00%
- are dealt with by post	11.38%	10.00%
- are dealt with in other ways (e.g. online, by telephone)	Awaiting Figures for online	10.00%

M.2 Number of postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc/driver licence issued) from receipt of the application

(a) On the same day	4646	4471
(b) On the third day or less	75	85
(c) On the fifth day or less	22	0
(d) Over 5 days	43	51

% of overall postal applications which are dealt with (i.e. disc/driver licence issued) from receipt of the application

(a) On the same day	97.07%	97.10%
(b) On the third day or less	1.57%	1.90%
(c) On the fifth day or less	0.46%	0.00%
(d) Over 5 days	0.90%	1.10%

M.3 Public opening hours

- average number of opening hours per week	35	35
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P: PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

P.1 Planning Applications - Decision Making

INDIVIDUAL HOUSES

No. of applications decided	402	440
No. of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	272	304
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	128	132
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000	2	4
Average length of time taken (in days) to decide a case where further information was sought	78	77



% of grants	79.85%	79.55%
% of refusals	20.15%	20.45%
% of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	58.33%	22.22%
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	41.67%	77.78%

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

No. of applications decided	66	73
No. of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	39	49
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	26	23
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000	1	1
Average length of time taken (in days) to decide a case where further information was sought	80	86
% of grants	77.27%	80.82%
% of refusals	22.73%	19.18%
% of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	40.00%	80.00%
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	60.00%	20.00%

Other: NOT REQUIRING EIA

No. of applications decided	626	412
No. of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	524	314
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	100	97
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000	2	1
Average length of time taken (in days) to decide a case where further information was sought	78	77
% of grants	94.89%	95.15%
% of refusals	5.11%	4.85%
% of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	73.33%	63.64%
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	26.67%	36.36%

Other: REQUIRING EIA

No. of applications decided	5	2
No. of decisions which were decided within 8 weeks	3	2
No. of decisions which required the submission of further information	2	0
No. of decisions where an extension of time was agreed to by the applicant, under section 34(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000	0	0
Average length of time taken (in days) to decide a case where further information was sought	122	0
% of grants	80.00%	100.00%
% of refusals	20.00%	0.00%
% of cases where the decision was confirmed, with or without variations, by An Bord Pleanala	100.00%	100.00%
% of cases where the decision was reversed by An Bord Pleanala	0.00%	0.00%

P.2 Planning Enforcement

- total number of cases subject to complaints that are investigated	142	122
- total number of cases subject to complaints that are dismissed	0	3
- total number of cases subject to complaints that were resolved through negotiations	4	15
- number of enforcement procedures taken through warning letters	83	105
- number of enforcement procedures taken through enforcement notices	106	37
- number of prosecutions	19	3



P.3 Public opening hours		
- average number of opening hours per week	35	34.38
P.4 Consultations		
Number of pre-planning consultation meetings held	206	320
Average length of time (in days) from request for consultation with local authority planner to actual formal meeting for pre-planning consultation	12.32	9.93
P.5 Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	29.00%	11.93%

REC: RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Rec.1 Number of children's playgrounds		
- directly provided by the local authority	6	0.10
- facilitated by the local authority	0	0.03
Rec.2 Number of visitors to local authority facilitated swimming facilities	80619	2215

REV: REVENUE COLLECTION

Rev.1 House Rent		
(a) Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	89.28%	91.96%
(b) Percentage of arrears		
(i) 4-6 weeks old	10.00%	10.00%
(ii) 6-12 weeks old	14.00%	12.00%
(iii) more than 12 weeks old	65.00%	66.00%
Rev.2 Housing Loans		
(a) Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	85.31%	83.37%
(b) Percentage of arrears		
(i) 1 month old	13.00%	13.00%
(ii) 2-3 months old	4.00%	3.00%
(iii) more than 3 months old	79.00%	78.00%
Rev.3 Commercial Rates		
Amount collected at year-end as a percentage of amount due	92.04%	91.53%
Rev.4 Refuse Charges		
Percentage of households paying refuse charges at year end	Service privatised in Longford	
Rev.5 Non-Domestic Water Charges		
Amount collected at year end as a percentage of amount due	59.91%	60.11%

R: ROADS

R.1		
Local and regional roads surface dressed per annum (square meters)	392877.8	346311.45
Percentage of local and regional roads surface dressed per annum	6.22%	5.47%