

# Connecting Women to Local Government



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage

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## Foreword

I am delighted to welcome this publication 'Connecting Women to Local Government' which is a collaboration between Longford County Council, Longford Women's Link, See Her Elected and the Public Participation Network. The aim of this collaboration is to increase the participation and presence of women from diverse backgrounds in local government and its structures. It is important that we listen and respond to the rich diversity of ideas, opinions and insights that are present throughout the county. County Longford has become a vibrant and cosmopolitan place. Everyone brings something new to the county and everyone in the county can be enriched and enthused by the integration of this energy into the decision-making processes at local government level.



This booklet provides the women of County Longford with information on the functions and structures of Longford County Council. I believe that this knowledge will encourage and empower women to consider taking a more active role in the structures of local government. I also believe that their vision and their voices will make a positive contribution to the development of policies across a wide range of areas and services in the years ahead. I would like to congratulate and compliment everyone involved in bringing this booklet to fruition and I look forward to the greater involvement of women helping to build strong, vibrant and successful communities throughout the county.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Cathy Nolan'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council**

## Foreword

Longford County Council is fully committed to encouraging the participation of women in all its decision-making structures to further its aim of gender equality and the empowerment of women within their communities. We intend that this booklet will provide women with clear and concise information on the structures and services of the County Council and how they can best participate in those structures.

Longford County Council acknowledges the funding received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for this initiative.

On behalf of Longford County Council, I would like to thank Longford Women's Link, See Her Elected and the Public Participation Network in Longford for their work on the booklet and I look forward to the involvement of more women in local government.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Mahon', written over a horizontal line.

**Chief Executive of Longford County Council**

# Introduction

Longford County Council in collaboration with Longford Women's Link, See Her Elected and the Longford Public Participation Network wants to encourage the participation of women from a diverse range of backgrounds to become involved in local and national decision-making. All stakeholders acknowledge that the lack of voices of women, from all backgrounds, when decisions are being made in Longford (and elsewhere) means that women may not be adequately represented.

This booklet forms part of an initiative by Longford County Council to increase the participation and presence of women from diverse backgrounds in local government in 2024 and beyond. Its purpose is to inform and educate those wishing to learn more about Local Government and their local County Council.

It has been funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and developed by Longford County Council and the See Her Elected Programme (part of Longford Women's Link) in partnership with the Public Participation Network.



## What some of the terms used in this booklet mean

**Candidate** – a person who is nominated or puts themselves forward for election

**Canvassing** – all actions undertaken by a Candidate to persuade registered voters to vote for them in an election

**Cathaoirleach** – is the Irish word for Chairperson

**CEO** – Chief Executive Officer

**Council Executive** – the Management Team, who along with the CEO are responsible for the day-to-day running of Longford County Council

**County Councillor** – a politician who has been voted in as a member of a Council in a Local Election

**HSE** – Health Service Executive

**LCDC** – Local Community Development Committee, see page 18

**LEADER** - is a French acronym that is used for the EU's programme of funding to promote rural development

**Leas Cathaoirleach** – is the Irish phrase for Deputy Chairperson

**LECP** – Local Economic Community Plan. This is prepared by the Council every six years. It sets out objectives and local policies to promote economic and community development in the County of Longford, and affects everyone who lives, works, does business and visits County Longford

**Local Election** – when candidates can put themselves forward to be elected for a local County Council

**Local Government** – refers to the system of government in a particular county with decisions made by County Councillors elected by those who live there. Councils are sometimes referred to as Local Authorities

**Longford County Council (LCC)** – is the Local Authority responsible for local government in County Longford

**Municipal District (MD)** – is a sub-division of a County Council which can often be referred to as MDs. In Longford there are three Municipal Districts. They are Ballymahon, Longford, and Granard

**National Government** – is the political authority that runs the country. In Ireland the term Oireachtas or Houses of the Oireachtas is used when talking about the National Government. The Oireachtas consists of the President of Ireland, Seanad Éireann and Dáil Éireann. Dáil Éireann is the lower house of the parliament of Ireland and Seanad Éireann is the upper house

**Teachta Dála** – abbreviated as TD is a politician who has been voted in as a member of Dáil Éireann in a General Election

**PPN** - Public Participation Network, see page 15

**Programme for Government** – is a written plan of the actions that the Government intend to undertake

**Gender Quota** – is a law for General Elections where political parties have to make sure at least 30% of their candidates are men and at least 30% of their candidates are women. This does not apply for European or Local Elections.

**Referendum** – is when the electorate vote on amending the Constitution of Ireland

**Register of Electors** – is a list of names and addresses of everyone that is registered to vote

**SICAP** – Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme

**SHE** – See Her Elected. A programme to encourage and support women in rural constituencies into politics.

[www.seeherelected.ie](http://www.seeherelected.ie)

**SPC** – Strategic Policy Committee, see page 18



# National and Local Government in Ireland

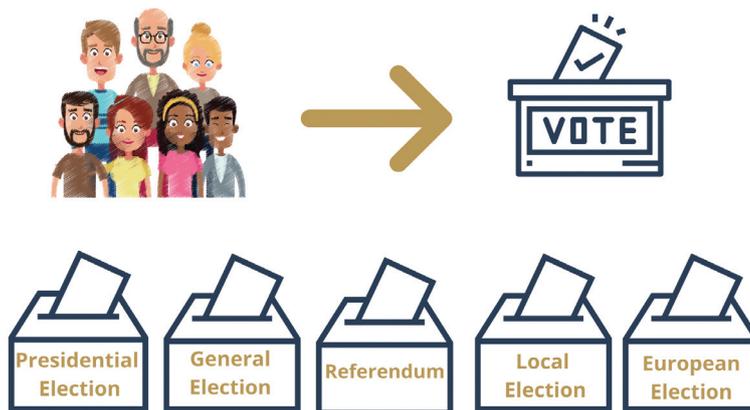
Every five years everyone who is registered to vote in County Longford can take part in elections to decide who will represent them on Longford County Council. These elections are called **Local Elections** and it is the only time that everyone in the country has **equal political rights**. This is because you do not have to be a citizen of Ireland to vote in the Local Elections.

Longford County Council is one of 31 Councils in Ireland and together these 31 Councils are known as Local Government. Another name for a County Council that you may hear used is a Local Authority.

## Where does Local Government fit in?

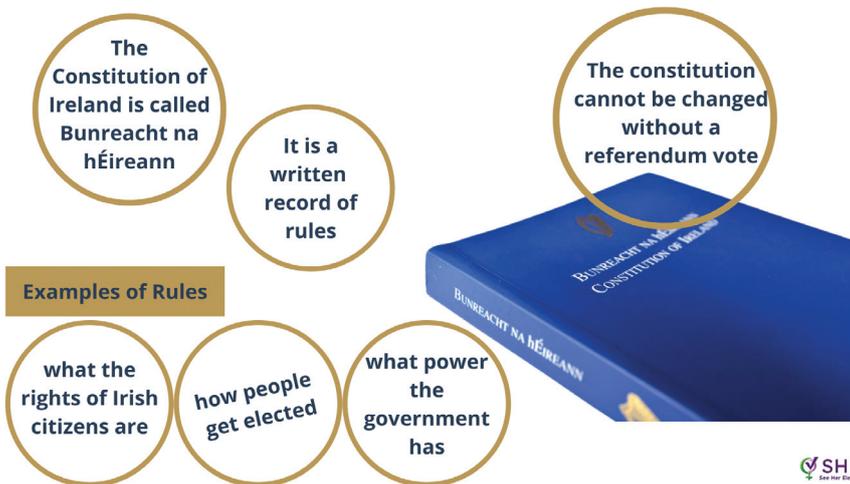
Irish citizens can vote in all of the elections. European Union citizens resident in Ireland can vote in European Elections. Everyone can vote in Local Elections once they are 18 years old or older and have been resident in Ireland since the September of the year prior to the election. We talk more about Local Elections in the next section.

The President of Ireland and the Upper House (called Seanad Éireann) and the Lower House (called Dáil Éireann) make up



the National Government in Ireland. Together these three are called the Oireachtas (sometimes referred to as the Houses of the Oireachtas)

There is an election every seven years to select the President of Ireland. The President represents the country internationally. The President can also bring about a General Election by dissolving Dáil Éireann. She or he signs bill into law and can refer a bill to the Supreme Court to check that it doesn't disagree with what is written in the Constitution of Ireland.



A referendum is required to change the Constitution of Ireland. It is like an election, but instead of voting for candidates, you are instead asked whether you agree or disagree with the proposed change.

A general election happens at least every five years to select 160 women and men to Dáil Éireann. They are called TDs which stands for Teachta Dála and translates from Irish as a Member of Parliament. The TDs vote to form the Government. General elections can happen more frequently if the government loses the support of a majority of TDs.

Dáil Éireann is where laws and policy are made. A bill is the starting point for something that (if passed) will become a national law. Before a bill can be signed into law by the President it is debated and agreed by both

Dáil Éireann and the Upper House which is called Seanad Eireann. Seanad Éireann translates from Irish as the Irish Senate. After every General Election there is an election to select 60 senators. They are mainly elected by County Councillors.

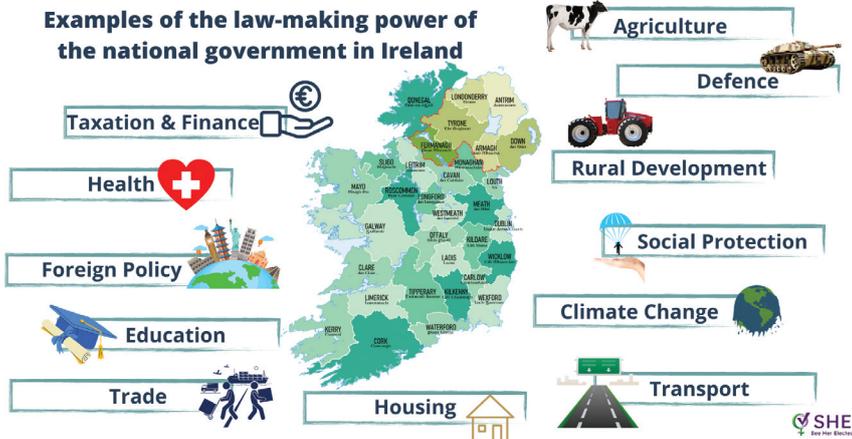
European elections are held every five years to select Ireland's members of the European Parliament.

## What gets decided where?

In Ireland, decisions are made at different levels of government. The National Government makes laws and policy decisions that apply across the country.

Local Government works within the parameters of National Government decisions and laws. Each Council provides services to the people who live in their area and makes decisions about investing in local communities, enabling local businesses to develop to make the county an attractive place to live, work, do business in and visit.

The full range of services provided by Longford County Council and the community initiatives you can become involved in are listed in Appendix 1.





Roads, traffic, parking



Planning



Recreation & Amenities



Community Development



Fire Services

Housing

(e.g. planning permission, social housing provision and allocation)



Example of services and decisions made by local government in Ireland



Most Councils are sub divided into smaller areas called Municipal Districts. Some of the work of the Council is carried out at the full Council level. Some of it is delegated to the Municipal Districts to carry out.

When you vote for a Councillor, you are voting for them to represent you at Municipal District meetings in decisions made at those meetings **AND** at Longford County Council meetings in decisions made at those full Council meetings.

Longford County Council has three Municipal Districts and the Councillors who most represent you are those elected to those Municipal Districts in which you live.

To find out which Councillors represent you and your Municipal District, first of all check which Municipal District you live in from the map. Then check the list of Councillors on Longford County Council's website. To do this, go to [www.longfordcoco.ie](http://www.longfordcoco.ie) and select *Your Council* from the options on the home page. You can also follow this link. <https://www.longfordcoco.ie/YourCouncil/Council-Members/>

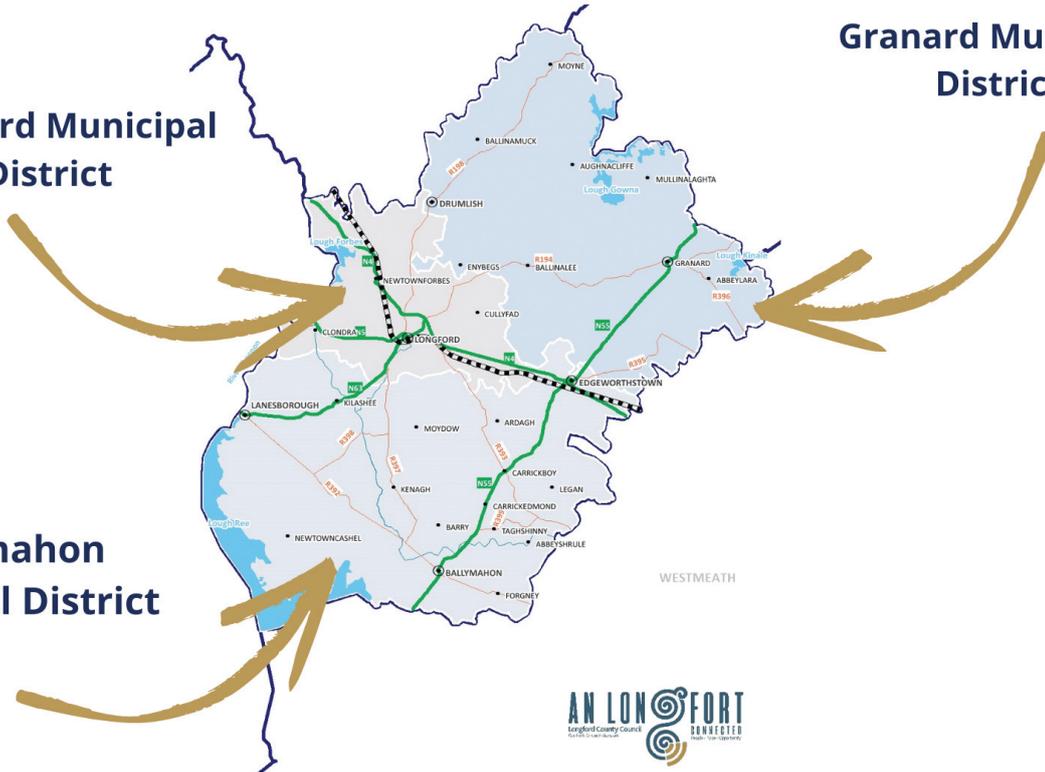
To find out which Councillors represent you and your Municipal District, first of all check which Municipal District you live in from the map on the next page.



# Granard Municipal District

# Longford Municipal District

# Ballymahon Municipal District

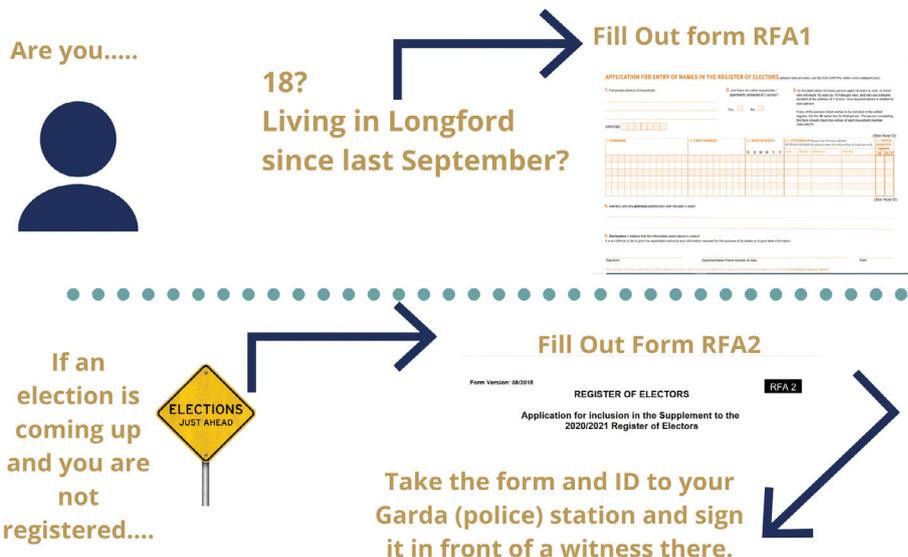


# How to register to vote

Everyone living in County Longford is entitled to register to vote in a Local Election, and everyone who is registered to vote can play a part in selecting the Councillors to represent them in the Local Elections.

Everyone in Longford should make sure that they are registered to vote. You should ALSO make sure that any candidate who wishes to get elected in your Municipal District knows what matters to you.

You do not need to have Irish citizenship to vote in the Local Elections. Everyone living in County Longford is eligible to vote. The register of everyone registered to vote (called the Register of Electors) is updated in February each year. Everyone who has applied to join since the previous February is added. You must be 18 to register to vote and to register to vote in Longford you must have been living in the county since the previous September.



To apply, you fill out a form called the **RFA1 Form or the RFA2 Form**, depending on when the next election is. You can get an application form in any Longford County Council office, library or Garda Station. Alternatively you can download the form from the Longford County Council website: <https://www.longfordcoco.ie/Services/Elections/Register-of-Electors/>

Completed application forms can be posted or dropped into Longford County Council, Great Water Street, Longford, N39HW52.

### How to make sure the candidates in a local election can represent you correctly

To represent you correctly the Councillors should understand what is important to you and any difficulties you face so that they can take that into account when they are making decisions at Municipal District and Council meetings.

Before an election happens, a list of everyone who is looking for your vote will be on Longford County Council's website. These people will also take part in canvassing. This means that they come to where you live and ask you for your vote. This is your opportunity to understand if they deserve your vote.

To be absolutely sure that the candidate you vote for deserves your vote, it is recommended that you listen to what they say and have a few questions ready, about what matters to you.

Some organisations in the County will organise events where voters can meet the candidates. The candidates will also make themselves available to local radio stations and local newspapers. Any group can ask candidates to come and speak to them about why they should vote for them.

# Who does what in Longford County Council?

Like all Councils, there are three separate groups of people who make up Longford County Council.

There will be overlap, for example elected Councillors and Council staff also sit on the Council committees. We look at the first two groups in this section and in the next, we explain some of the committees of Longford County Council.



## Council functions set out in law

Elected Councillors  
**RESERVED**  
functions



CEO and Staff  
**EXECUTIVE**  
functions

The functions of the Council (i.e. who is responsible for what) are divided between the elected Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).



## Elected Councillors and Reserved Functions

'Reserved functions' is the name given to the responsibilities that elected Councillors are given by law. Like all Councils, the responsibilities of Longford County Councillors can be grouped into five areas.

1. They are responsible for making policy decisions and ensuring that the Council is delivering services for the people of County Longford.
2. They need to carefully monitor the work being carried out by the Council staff, what is being prioritised and the justification for that.
3. They are responsible for the promotion of the economic, social and cultural development of County Longford, and to do that fully they need to represent the interests of the people of Longford to various government agencies that operate in the County.
4. They need to have a strong understanding of what various groups in the County are trying to achieve, and how the County Council can help them.
5. They can assist individual constituents with queries and issues that are brought to their attention.

Some of these functions and responsibilities are discussed, debated and decisions made at Municipal District meetings.

Anything to do with budgets, the amount of commercial rates and local property tax cannot be delegated and is decided at full meetings of Longford County Council.

### Did You Know

You can attend

- County Council Meetings
- Municipal District Meetings



Detail of when Council meetings are on and how to attend them is available on [www.longfordcoco.ie](http://www.longfordcoco.ie)



## Executive Functions

The Management Team in Longford County Council are responsible for the day-to-day running of the Council and its activities.

1. They are in charge of delivering all the services outlined in Appendix 1.
2. They are responsible for all the staff.
3. They manage the finances for Longford County Council.
4. They provide research and advice to the elected Councillors to help them with their policy decisions.
5. They are in charge of implementing all of the decisions made.
6. Each of the Directors has responsibility for one of Longford's Municipal Districts. This is an important part of Local Government because it ensures that there is a consistent approach taken across all three districts and that issues concerning Municipal Districts are prioritised on the agenda of the County Council management team.



**Paddy Mahon**  
Chief Executive,  
Longford County  
Council



**John McKeon**  
Head of Finance

Finance and Regeneration

Executive Director  
Ballymahon Municipal  
District



**Barbara Heslin**  
Director of  
Services

Economic & Community  
Development, Heritage,  
Libraries, Arts & Cultural  
Services, Recreational  
Services, Human Resources  
and Corporate Services

Executive Director Granard  
Municipal District



**John Brannigan**  
Director of  
Services

Strategic Infrastructure and  
Climate Change

Executive Director Longford  
Municipal District

Longford County Council  
Management Team

# How people living in County Longford can get involved

## The Public Participation Network

People living in Longford can get directly involved in County Council decision making. This is because some of the Council's committees have places reserved for members of the public to join the elected Councillors and council staff. This happens through a structure called the Public Participation Network (PPN).

Each Council has a Public Participation Network. All community groups and clubs in Longford (except for political parties) can join.

The PPN website has detailed information about joining the network with contact details if you have any questions: <https://www.longfordppn.ie/>

Reasons you might decide to be part of a group and join the County Longford PPN include:

- It is how your group will receive information about training and funding

### To Join the Public Participation Network

**Have a postal address in the area**

**Volunteer Led**

**Independent**

**Not a political party or associated with one**

**Have governance structures**

**GOVERNANCE**

**SHE**

- The PPN is the point of contact everytime Longford County Council, any Government Department and any public body needs Longford Community voices
- By law, some of the more important County Council committees **MUST** have representatives from the PPN as members

## Meet someone who is already involved

Nagea Masoud is a member of the Longford Asian African Group and the inter-cultural representative for the PPN.

*“Since we joined the PPN (Public Participation Network) we are really becoming a part of the Longford Community, not just living within the area. The PPN has given us a better understanding of the role of the County Council within the community and the national framework of the country. PPN has acted as a liaison on our behalf and allowed us to get a better understanding of everyone’s issues and needs.*

*We are becoming involved with other organisations and joining a range of activities. The members of the PPN have listened and supported all our plans and ideas. They have supported all the groups but also let each group retain its own identity, bringing forward their own ideas and input.*

*The PPN is very good at circulating information to all members and groups. They use all means of communication by phone, email, post and now by virtual meetings to keep us in touch with new developments or activities that are taking place in the community.”*

*The plenary meeting of Longford Municipal District Public Participation Network, February 2020.*



When a vacancy arises for a Council committee position, the PPN will be notified and will invite everyone interested to get themselves nominated. The PPN staff will explain how to do this. If there are more people interested than there are committee places available, the PPN will hold an election. Even if you do not wish to be nominated or don't get elected, your voice and views can still be heard by joining that committee's PPN Linkage group. Whoever is elected will then represent your views on the particular topic you are interested in (for example Housing, Infrastructure, Environment, Sport etc). Everyone also has an opportunity to go forward for a seat on the PPN Secretariat.

The PPN organises itself into pillars. All groups must decide which pillar they want to belong to.

## Public Participation Networks

Social  
Inclusion  
Groups

Community  
&  
Voluntary  
Groups

Environ-  
mental  
Groups

### PPN Secretariat

This is a nine-member voluntary board that oversees the day-to-day running of the PPN on behalf of all member groups. The PPN Secretariat holds meetings called plenary meeting to update members on progress and give them an opportunity to set the direction of the work plan, approve various plans and strategies and network with each other.

It is important to note that the PPN is a flat structure where all member groups are equal and receive information on committee vacancies, consultations and funding at the same time. Each member group of the PPN has one vote on all matters important to them.



# Local Community Development Committees (LCDC)



Usually 15-20 members. At least 5 places are held for PPN members

Responsible for Community Development



Manages funding from EU and Irish state bodies



# Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)

Responsible for formulating and developing policy

2/3rds of the members are elected councillors

There are 4 or 5 of these in every council

PPN members have a number of seats on each committee

County Longford SPCs are:

1. Climate Action
2. Governance
3. Placemaking
4. Strategic Infrastructure



## County Council Committees

Here are examples of two County Council committees that members of the public can be part of, through the PPN.

The County Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is responsible for making sure there is a clear and coordinated approach to community development in the county. It must have at least five members from Longford's Public Participation Network, with representation from each of the three pillars. State members (such as County Councillors, Longford Council Staff, people representing the HSE and Government Departments) must be in the minority so that the majority are members representing community groups via the PPN and other interest groups such as business owners, tourism operators and farmers.

Longford County Council has four Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs). The job of these

# Corporate Policy Group



Links the work of the SPCs

Consulted in the preparation of the Council's budget



Consulted in the preparation of the Council's plans

committees is to advise and assist Longford County Council in making policy decisions. Apart from elected councillors, the remaining third of the committee is made up of people from community groups who are elected to the committees by the Public Participation Network. The Strategic Policy Committees are a way for people from communities in County Longford to have their voices heard when policy recommendations are being made.



The four Strategic Policy Groups on

Longford County Council are linked together by a committee called the Corporate Policy Group. The membership of the Corporate Policy Group is the Chairperson of the County Council and the Chairpersons of each of the four Strategic Policy Committees. In addition, a councillor can be added to the membership to represent a Municipal District, if they are not already represented by the existing members. If the Public Participation Network members of a Strategic Policy Committee make a recommendation, it goes to the Corporate Policy Group for approval.

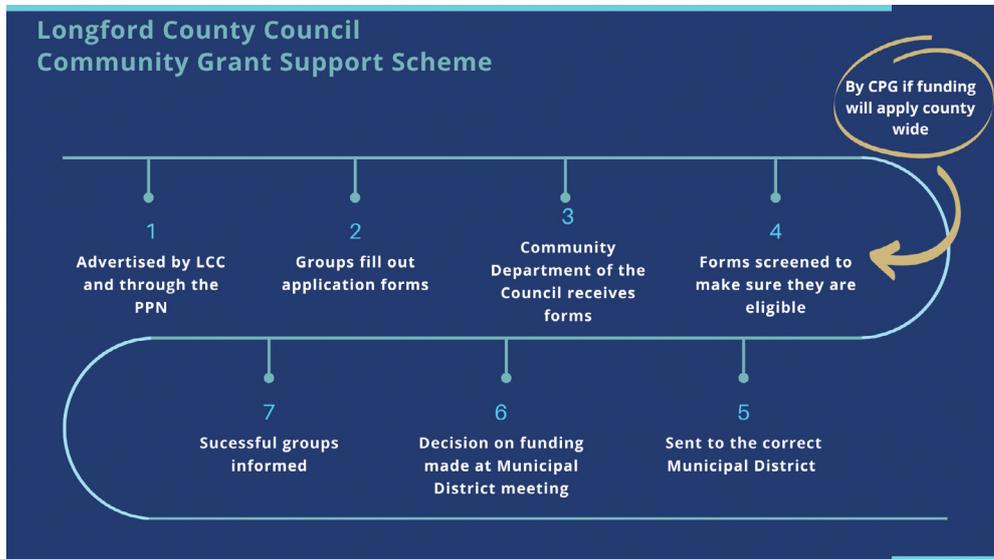


# How are decisions made by Longford County Council?

To show how a County Council decision is made, we use the example of a community group applying to Longford County Council for a grant under the Longford County Council Community Grant Support Scheme.

The Community Grant Support Scheme supports activities and projects that:

- Make a positive contribution to County Longford
- Promote the development of strong local communities
- Improve the quality of life of our citizens



What is diversification and why is it a good idea?

Like most other Councils, Longford County Council has always had many more men than women Councillors. The first women to serve as Longford County Councillors were Mary Ellen Brady and Philo Kelly who were successful in the 1974 Local Elections.

Local Election Year	Councillors	Men Elected	Women Elected	% of total that are women
1974	21	19	2 (Mary Ellen Brady and Philo Kelly)	9.5%
1979	21	19	2 (Mary Ellen Brady and Philo Kelly)	9.5%
1985	21	20	1 (Maura Kilbride-Harkin)	5%
1991	21	18	3 (Maura Kilbride-Harkin, Mae Sexton and Philo Kelly)	14%
1999	21	19	2 (Maura Kilbride-Harkin and Mae Sexton)	9.5%
2004	21	19	2 (Maura Kilbride-Harkin and Peggy Nolan)	9.5%
2009	21	19	2 (Peggy Nolan and Mae Sexton)	9.5%
2014	18	16	2 (Peggy Nolan and Mae Sexton)	11%
2019	18	17	1 (Peggy Nolan)	5.5%

*\*Uruemu Adejinmi was co-opted onto the Council by the local members of the Fianna Fáil party, to fill the seat made vacant by the election of Cllr Joe Flaherty to Dáil Éireann in February 2020.*

It is argued that the lack of diversity on Longford County Council is problematic for two main reasons.

1. The idea underpinning democratic elections where candidates are voted into government to represent the people is that those elected should reflect the population they represent. The last census (taken in 2016) tells us that the adult population of County Longford was 50.4% men and 49.6% women, and that 14.1% of the County's population were non-Irish nationals. Longford County Council (like many other councils) does not resemble the population it represents.



*Longford County Council, 2021. Elected Councillors pictured with the Management team and the Meetings Administrator.*

2. The over-representation of men in Longford County Council, as elsewhere, means that only certain perspectives are prevalent when decisions are being made. Longford County Council provides essential services such as houses, roads, libraries, and makes decisions and plans that affect everybody in Longford. In Municipal District and County Council meetings, the people present need to think about and understand the different ways men and women from different backgrounds and with very different experiences might be affected. A more diverse Council, that more closely reflects what the population of Longford looks like, would better inform collective decision making.

Both the National Government and Longford County Council recognise and accept the need for change.

The National Government has stated in its Programme for Government that it wants participation in Local Government to be actively encouraged and facilitated and to introduce practical measures that will encourage more women to stand in the 2024 Local Elections. It also hopes to empower local authorities to encourage improved gender and ethnic mix in Local Elections.

Longford County Council is committed to supporting women and diversity in Local Government and would welcome an increase in the presence of women and individuals from diverse backgrounds in Longford County Council in 2024 and beyond. The Council has acquired funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to deliver an information and capacity programme in collaboration with the SHE Programme, Longford Women's Link and Longford's Public Participation Network.

## Women in Local Government in Longford

### Some historic firsts for women in Local government in Longford

- The first woman councillor in Longford was Madame Françoise Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown House. She was elected to Granard Rural District Council in the first Local Elections held in 1899. She was also one of the first female Councillors in Ireland. She served one three-year term.
- The first women to serve as County Councillors were Mary Ellen Brady and Philo Kelly, both elected in 1974. The first female Cathaoirleach (which is the Irish word for Chairperson) of Longford County Council was Maura Kilbride-Harkin in 1995-96.
- The first woman on Longford Urban District Council was Elizabeth Fanning in 1928.
- The first female Cathaoirleach of Longford Urban District Council was Mae Sexton, 1999-2000.
- The first woman to be elected to Granard Urban District Council was Dr Sybil Magan in 1942. The town was de-urbanised in 1944 and the Urban District Council became a Town Commission. She served as its first female Cathaoirleach.

## Women in Local Government in Longford now

To close, two of the women currently serving on Longford County Council share their thoughts with us.

### **Cllr Peggy Nolan - Cathaoirleach, Longford County Council 2021-2022**

*'I decided to seek election to Longford County Council, with the intention of serving the people I grew up with and with whom I shared all that our town and county had to offer. The decision was easy as twenty-two years ago when I first ran; Longford was a very different place.*

*Every month, every year, I saw services removed to neighbouring counties, so I believed that I could make a difference and I sought permission from people to allow me to try and make that difference.*

*The 'p' in politics for me represents people. I have lived all my life in Longford and I have family and friends residing throughout the county. What affects me affects them. The services and infrastructure that are absent impacts on the quality of life for us all. I deem it a privilege to represent my own place as I believe where you live defines a part of who we are.*

*I won't be popular for saying this, but I don't believe in gender quotas for women in elections. But I would still encourage our women to consider going into politics; it can be very rewarding. The reality is, it will take up most of your time as you must be available to the public 24/7. Local politics has no support systems, so you must be very organised. And it is not easy to plan your future in politics as it works in five-year cycles.*

*The public will decide if you are elected or re-elected and never assume that women will vote for women, just because they are women. While ten women were nominated to run in the 2019 local election, only one woman was elected. There is no secret to election success. A duty of care and having a work ethic which means you are never too busy to listen, represent or to try to make a difference: these are the things that will help you in future elections.*

*If you don't try, you won't know if your vision is what the electorate can identify with.*

*Don't just think about it, do it. Believe in yourself and your community and make that difference.'*



## **Cllr Uruemu Adejinmi - Cathaoirleach Longford Municipal District 2021-2022**

*'My political activism began in 2016 when I joined the Fianna Fáil Party at the invitation of my family friend and neighbour. In 2018, I completed an internship run by the Immigrant Council of Ireland. As part of the internship, I shadowed a local Councillor in Longford for four months and diarised my observations and activities.*

*During this internship, I became a volunteer on Longford County Council's Intercultural Working Group along with participants from Longford County Council, state bodies and community groups. This led to the creation of the Longford Africans Network (LAN) to help Africans in the Community access supports and services as well as promote inclusion and integration in the community.*

*These activities highlighted for me the importance of representation in positions of authority and when I was nominated to run in the 2019 elections, I welcomed the opportunity to serve and be a representative for my community.*

*I have been a Councillor on Longford County Council for over a year now. I have had the opportunity to work alongside some very committed people and have gained a true understanding of how local politics works in Ireland. I have witnessed a difference in politics in Longford. I believe that increased representation has contributed to this as more people in the community now feel represented.*

*I am a strong advocate on local issues such as housing and education and on broader societal issues such as climate change, diversity and inclusion. I am involved in many community groups and not-for-profit organisations in Longford such as St Mel's Cathedral and St Christopher's Disability Services.*

*We are currently living in uncertain times and life as we know it is changing. It is important, now more than ever, for everyone to be part of the change process for a more inclusive society. Political activism allows me to create the world I want to see - a world that is equitable; one where my children can grow and excel in any field of endeavour, alongside their peers regardless of gender or ethnic background.*

*My advice to any woman reading this is: if you can relate to my story and you are passionate about serving the community, please consider running for political office. Whether you choose to join a political party or stand as an independent, there are supports available and organisations that can help you on the journey and you can always contact me if I can be of any assistance.'*



## References

These are some of the publications and websites we consulted in the preparation of this publication. They are all useful resources for anyone wishing to further their understanding of politics.

### **Longford County Council**

<https://www.longfordcoco.ie/your-council/contact-us/>

### **Citizens information Bureau:**

[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government\\_in\\_ireland/local\\_and\\_regional\\_government/functions\\_of\\_local\\_authorities.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government_in_ireland/local_and_regional_government/functions_of_local_authorities.html)

### **Information of Government Departments:**

<https://www.gov.ie/en/help/departments/>

### **Houses of the Oireachtas:**

<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/visit-and-learn/how-parliament-works/>

### **See Her Elected:**

[www.seeherelected.ie](http://www.seeherelected.ie)

### **Central Statistics Office:**

<http://census.cso.ie/areaprofiles/PDF/CTY/longford.pdf>

### **Public Participation Networks**

<https://www.socialjustice.ie/sites/default/files/attach/publication/6443/2021-01-26ppnrepresentationreport-finalforwebsite.pdf?cs=true>

## Appendix 1

Longford County Council provides a wide range of services to the public. Here is a list of the **main** services. For further information please go to [www.longfordcoco.ie](http://www.longfordcoco.ie) and click on services to select the area you would like to find out more details on.

Services	Main Activities
Community	<p>Supports the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the preparation and implementation of the community element of the Local Economic &amp; Community Plan (LECP). Facilitates the development of integrated strategies and programmes that enhance social and cultural experiences in Longford such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CLÁR Scheme: provides funding for small-scale infrastructural projects in rural areas.</li><li>• Comhairle na nÓg: gives children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies.</li><li>• Community Enhancement Programme: provides capital funding to community groups to enhance facilities.</li><li>• Healthy Ireland (HI): an initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in County Longford.</li><li>• Longford Age Friendly County Plan: this plan acts as a blueprint for Longford as it sets out on the road to becoming an age friendly place.</li><li>• Longford Intercultural Strategic Plan: addressing provision for the needs of the Migrant, Traveller and Roma and indigenous Irish communities.</li></ul>

- Longford Sports Bursary: to facilitate achievement by aspiring individual performers who have the ability and potential to bring recognition and success at National and International level.
- Property Marking Scheme: punch your EIRCODE or other identifying information onto household or farm property.
- Public Participation Network (PPN): a network that allows the local authority to connect with community groups.
- RDP (LEADER) 2014-2020 Programme: supports private enterprises and community groups who improve quality of life and economic activity in rural areas. The LCDC acts as the Local Action Group and the Implementing Partner is Longford Community Resources Clg (LCRL).
- Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP): aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality. It does this through Programme Implementers, agencies and companies, who work with the most disadvantaged and the hardest to reach in communities. SICAP is being delivered in conjunction with Longford Community Resources Clg (LCRL).
- Administers a variety of Community Grants.

## Economic

Provides micro-enterprise support services through the Longford LEO office to include financial, training and mentoring support. Administers a variety of grants to SME's.

Plans for future economic development by drafting or contributing to a number of spatial plans such as town plans, LECP, regional and national plans.

Competes for funding under regional & national programmes to deliver planned programmes that support economic regeneration and growth.

Implements the County Tourism Strategy.

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## Community Sports Recreation & Leisure

Provides publicly - accessible leisure services such as parks and playgrounds. Manages Longford Sports Partnership who works to increase participation levels in sport & active recreation by providing assistance in the areas of sports development, education, training and general information on sporting activities.

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## Library, Cultural and Archive Services

Delivers a public library service. Provides information and life- long learning opportunities to the community.

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## Arts and Heritage

Delivers an arts programme encouraging participation in all forms of art. Identifies, protects, preserves and enhances the natural heritage by developing and implementing a Heritage Plan.

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## Corporate

Provides information on elections and voting, on the register of electors, council meetings, on various plans and reports relevant to the workings of the council.

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## Information Technology

Supports the roll out of the National Broadband scheme, the Digital Strategy, Longford Connected Communities Broadband connection points and free Wi-Fi.

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## Housing

Provides and manages rented Local Authority housing for those unable to provide housing from their own resources. Provide and manages accommodation for Travellers and the homeless. Promotes home ownership through tenant purchase schemes, shared ownership schemes and various loan options for those who fulfil certain criteria. Acts as a facilitator for approved voluntary or non-profit housing organisations by providing rented accommodation. Facilities the enforcement of housing standards and controls in relation to private rented dwellings.

## Road Transportation and Safety

Road maintenance and improvement, public lighting, traffic management facilities, road safety, motor taxation and licensing of drivers.

## Water and Wastewater Services

Maintains the public water supply and sewerage schemes, provides assistance for private water and sewerage facilities.

## Planning Development and Controls, Regeneration

Physical planning policy, control of new development and building, regeneration of areas and the promotion of industrial and other development.

## Environmental Management and Climate Regeneration

Monitors and controls industries and waste activities that fall beneath the EPA's remit and an assortment of essential environmental services. These activities include:

- Water Pollution Monitoring & Control
- Air Pollution Monitoring & Control
- Waste Management Plan Implementation
- Litter Control & Tidy Towns
- Waste Management Permitting & Enforcement
- Environmental Awareness & Education
- Burial Grounds
- Animal Control
- Derelict Sites and Dangerous Structures
- County Veterinary Office
- Rural Water Programme

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## Fire and Emergency Services

Establishes and maintains a fire brigade service and responds to emergencies with the support of the Civil Defence.

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# Notes

A series of 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



An Roinn Tibhíochta,  
Rialtais Aontúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



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