Public Spending Code

Quality Assurance Report for 2016

Longford County Council

To be submitted to

National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)

May 2017

Certificate

This Annual Quality Assurance Report sets out Longford County Council's approach to completing the Quality Assurance requirements as set out in the Public Spending Code. It is based on the best financial, organisational and performance related information available across the various areas of responsibility.

Signature of Accounting Officer:

P Mahon

Paddy Mahon
Chief Executive
Longford County Council

Date: 31st May 2017

Contents

Introduction

Longford County Council has completed the Quality Assurance (QA) requirements as set out in the Public Spending Code and the purpose of this report is to present the results of each of the 5 Steps in the QA exercise and to report on compliance with the requirements of the Public Spending Code as established during this exercise.

The Public Spending Code was written specifically with Government Departments in mind and some of the terminology is very specific to that sector. In order to inform the QA exercise for the Local Government Sector a Guidance Note was developed for the sector to assist in providing interpretations from a Local Government perspective.

Requirements of the Quality Assurance Aspect of the Public Spending Code

The Quality Assurance obligation involves a **5 step** process as follows:

o **Step 1** - Drawing up inventories of projects/programmes at the different stages of the Project Life Cycle that have a total Project Life Cost of €500k or more.

o **Step 2** - Publishing summary information on the organisation's website of all procurements in excess of €10m, related to projects in progress or completed in the year under review. (The PSC originally required projects in excess of €2m to be published under this requirement but this has now been changed to €10m) A new project may become a "project in progress" during the year under review if the procurement process is completed and a contract is signed.

o **Step 3** - Completing the 7 checklists contained in the PSC. Only one of each checklist per Local Authority is required. Checklists are not required for each project/programme.

o **Step 4** - Carrying out a more in-depth check on a small number of selected projects/programmes based on criteria established within the Public Spending Code.

o **Step 5** - Completing a short summary report for the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC). The report, which will be generated as a matter of course through compliance with steps 1-4 set out above.

STEP 1 – Project Inventory

This section presents the project inventories of Longford County Council which amount to an excess of €500,000. The inventory is presented in three stages as set out in the attached table which also outlines the Expenditure Category/Band relevant for inclusion in each stage:

Project/Programme Stage		Category/Band
1	Expenditure being considered	Capital Projects between €0.5m - €5m
		Capital Projects between €5m - €20m
		Capital Projects over €20m
		Current Expenditure programme - Increases over €0.5m
		Capital Grant Schemes greater than €0.5m
2	Expenditure being incurred	Capital Projects greater than €0.5m
		Current Expenditure greater than €0.5m
		Capital Grant Schemes greater than €0.5m
3	Expenditure that has recently ended	Capital Projects greater than €0.5m
		Current Expenditure greater than €0.5m
		Capital Grant Schemes greater than €0.5m

The Project inventory, set out in the format described above, is included in Appendix A. Appendix A – Inventory of Projects and Programmes Over €0.5m - 2016

The Inventory contains 42 Projects under the three stages and comprises a total value of €52.425m. The following table provides an overview of the number of projects under each Project/Programme stage and under each of the categories/bands in each of these stages. It also provides an overview of the Project Costs under each category.

Project Numbers	Revenue Expenditure			Capital Expenditure			
	€0.5m - €5m	€5m - €20m	Over €20m	€0.5m - €5m	€5m - €20m	Over €20m	Totals
Expenditure Being considered				7			7
Expenditure Being Incurred	25	1		4			30
Expenditure recently ended				5			5
Totals	**25**	**1**		**16**			**42**

Project Total Values	Revenue Expenditure			Capital Expenditure			
	€0.5m - €5m	€5m - €20m	Over €20m	€0.5m - €5m	€5m - €20m	Over €20m	Totals
	€M	€M	€M	€M	€M	€M	€M
Expenditure Being considered				7.155			7.155
Expenditure Being Incurred	27.157	6.598		6.397			40.152
Expenditure recently ended				5.118			5.118
Totals	**27.157**	**6.598**		**18.67**			**52.425**

STEP 2 - Summary of Procurements in excess of €10m

For 2016 Longford Co Council have reported no projects in this category.

The Quality Assurance Report for 2016 can also be found at this link:

http://www.longfordcoco.ie/Services/Finance/Finance-Documents/Compliance/

STEP 3 – Checklists

Step three of the Quality Assurance procedure for the Public Spending Code involves the compilation of a number of checklists. There are 7 checklists in all. Checklists 2, 4 and 6 are capital related checklists while checklists 3, 5 and 7 are Revenue/Current Expenditure related.

The Checklists are informed by the Project Inventory and the following table outlines the approach taken for the completion of the Checklists

Checklist Completion aligned with Project Inventory	
Expenditure Type	**Checklist to be completed**
General Obligations	General Obligations - Checklist 1
A. Expenditure being considered	Capital Projects/Programmes & Capital Grant Schemes – Checklist 2
	Current Expenditure – Checklist 3
B. Expenditure being incurred	Capital Projects/Programmes & Capital Grant Schemes – Checklist 4
	Current Expenditure – Checklist 5
C. Expenditure that has recently ended	Capital Projects/Programmes & Capital Grant Schemes – Checklist 6
	Current Expenditure – Checklist 7

All checklists as outlined below have been completed and can be found in Appendix B of this document.

1. General Obligations Not Specific to Individual Projects/Programmes.
2. Capital Expenditure Being Considered – Appraisal and Approval.
3. Current Expenditure Being Considered – Appraisal and Approval
4. Incurring Capital Expenditure
5. Incurring Current Expenditure
6. Capital Expenditure Recently Completed
7. Current Expenditure that (i) reached the end of its planned timeframe or (ii) was discontinued

Findings on Completion of Checklists

While the responses included in the Checklist indicates a satisfactory level of compliance there are indications that there is room for improvement in certain aspects of the requirements. However, no specific serious issues/concerns were evident during the completion of this element of the QA exercise.

STEP 4 - In-Depth review of a sample project

Step 4 of the Quality Assurance Process involved examining two projects included on the Project Inventory to test the standard of practices in use and compliance with the Public Spending Code within the organisation.

Internal Audit In-Depth Checks

The Internal Audit Unit of Longford County Council was assigned the task of completing the In-depth checks. The approach taken was to select one capital project and one revenue programme from the inventory.

The In-depth checks have been completed and the projects selected were Acquisition of Four Fire Appliances (*see Appendix C*) and the revenue expenditure A07 RAS Programme (*see Appendix D*). There is a general sense of satisfactory compliance with the Public Spending Code and listed below are the summaries from these in-depth checks.

Summary of Acquisition of Four Fire Appliances In-Depth Check:

This in-depth check involved examining records held on file by the Council's Fire Service and the expenditure on the financial management system (Agresso). Longford County Council is the lead authority to purchase four fire appliances one for each of the following local authorities (Longford, Monaghan, Laois and Louth). The Request for Tender (RFT) was prepared in consultation with the other three Local Authorities and detailed the specifications and requirements for the appliances. Prior to publishing the RFT on eTenders website the RFT was forwarded to the Department.

The tender evaluation was carried out in January 2016 with one representative of each Local Authority present. The successful tenderer was High Precision Motor Products Ltd. The Department confirmed that they had no objections to the proposal to accept the tender of High Precision Motor Products Ltd. The overall total amount is €1,375,698.

It is anticipated that the four appliances will be delivered to the relevant Local Authority by the end of January 2018.

Summary of A07 RAS Programme In-Depth Check

This in-depth check involved examining the operation of RAS and SHL during 2016 in Longford County Council. The revenue expenditure A07 RAS Programme involves processing individual applications for housing support, on both the RAS and SHL schemes that Longford County Council operates on behalf of the Department. Returns are made on a monthly and quarterly basis to the Department in relation to both schemes. The RAS annual financial return for financial year 2015 was forwarded to the Department in March 2016. The RAS annual return for 2016 has not yet been completed as the Department are issuing a revised template document.

This revenue expenditure appears to have been guided in large part by the Sanctioning Authority which in this case was the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. The SHL element of this Revenue expenditure was funded by the Department and the RAS 2016 expenditure was funded from the RAS Reserve. The RAS Reserve accumulated between 2005 and 2015 of surplus income over expenditure under the RAS scheme, and can only be used for RAS purposes as per Department guidelines and circulars.

Following the recommendation the issues of enhancing the iHouse database to be the sole source of information for all of the Housing options is to be brought to the attention of the Department again as it affects all Local Authorities. The Housing Section has agreed to have a procedure manual put in place for the RAS and SHL schemes by the end of October 2017.

Conclusion

This report has set out all the requirements of the Quality Assurance aspect of the Public Spending Code.

- An inventory of projects and programmes has been prepared outlining the various projects/programmes – capital and revenue that were being considered, being incurred or recently completed by Longford County Council within the 2016 financial year.
- The relevant publication in relation to procurements over €10m will be placed on Longford County Council's website if applicable.
- The 7 checklists required to be completed under the terms of the Public Spending Code Quality Assurance requirement have been completed and provide reasonable assurance that there is satisfactory compliance with the Public Spending Code.
- An in-depth review of one capital project and one revenue programme contained in the Project inventory has been completed and further confirmed that there is, in general, satisfactory compliance with the requirements of the Public Spending Code.
- The final step of the QA exercise, as required under the Public Spending Code, is the compilation and publication of a summary report outlining the Quality Assurance Exercise undertaken by Longford Co Council. The contents of this report provide an overview on the QA exercise completed which has been certified by the Accounting Officer, Chief Executive.

Overall the QA exercise has provided satisfactory assurance to the management of Longford Co Council that the requirements of the Public Spending Code are being met.

Appendix A – Inventory of Projects and Programmes Over €0.5m - 2015

Longford County Council	Expenditure being considered					Expenditure being incurred			Expenditure recently ended			Notes
	Current >€0.5m	Capital Grant Schemes >€0.5m	Capital Projects €0.5 - €5m	Capital Projects €5 - €20m	Capital Projects €20m plus	Current Expenditure	>€0.5m Capital Grant Schemes	Capital Projects	Current Expenditure	>€0.5m Capital Grant Schemes	Capital Projects	
Housing & Building												
Housing Void Programme 2017			€800,000									
Disabled Grants 2017			€740,000									20% funding from own resources
OPD's Lanesboro			€700,000									
Houses Churchview Longford			€2,000,000									
Ballymahon OPD's								€827,816				
Turnkey 14 Houses Millrace Park Drumlish								€2,968,000				
Capital Repairs 2016											€796,742	
Disabled Grants											€833,318	20% funded from own resources
A01 Maintenance/Improvement of LA Housing						€2,466,064						
A03 Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration						€643,025						
A06 Support to Housing Capital & Affordable Prog.						€587,496						
A07 RAS Programme						€1,716,245						
A08 Housing Loans						€589,021						

Road Transportation and Safety				
R392 Ballymahon-Center Parcs	€525,000			
N4 Lacken Pavement Phase 2	€1,750,000			
Cathedral Junction				€876,777
2014/2016 Bridge Strengthening				€1,961,590
B01 NP Road - Maintenance and Improvement			€896,597	
B02 NS Road - Maintenance and Improvement			€867,187	
B03 Regional Road - Maintenance and Improvement			€1,568,669	
B04 Local Road - Maintenance and Improvement			€6,597,917	
B05 Public Lighting			€715,227	
B09 Maintenance & Management of Car Parking			€830,896	
B11 Agency & Recoupable Services			€618,105	
Water Services				
C01 Operation and Maintenance of Water Supply			€2,199,068	
C02 Operation and Maintenance of Waste Water Treatment			€1,245,850	
C07 Agency & Recoupable Services			€513,665	
Development Management				
D02 Development Management			€679,220	
D06 Community and Enterprise Function			€511,801	
D07 Unfinished Housing Estates			€547,379	
D09 Economic Development and Promotion			€894,032	
D12 Agency & Recoupable Services			€1,023,395	
Connolly Barracks Works		€650,000		

Environmental Services			
E06 Street Cleaning		€611,036	
E11 Operation of Fire Service		€2,052,160	
Extension to Longford Town Fire Station	€640,000		
Purchase Of Fire Engines For Four Local Authorities			€1,375,698
Recreation and Amenity			
F01 Operation and Maintenance of Leisure Facilities		€612,092	
F02 Operation of Library and Archival Service		€1,889,067	
Royal Canal Greenway Abbeyshrule			€1,225,010
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare			
H03 Administration of Rates		€2,056,372	
H09 Local Representation/Civic Leadership		€823,465	

Appendix B – Checklists of Compliance

Checklist 1 – To be completed in respect of general obligations not specific to individual projects/programmes

General Obligations not specific to individual projects/programmes	Self-Assessed Compliance Rating: 1 - 3	Discussion/Action Required
1.1 Does the local authority ensure, on an on-going basis, that appropriate people within the authority and its agencies are aware of the requirements of the Public Spending Code (incl. through training)?	2	
1.2 Has training on the Public Spending Code been provided to relevant staff within the authority?	3	
1.3 Has the Public Spending Code been adapted for the type of project/programme that your local authority is responsible for? i.e., have adapted sectoral guidelines been developed?	1	
1.4 Has the local authority in its role as Sanctioning Authority satisfied itself that agencies that it funds comply with the Public Spending Code?	2	
1.5 Have recommendations from previous QA reports (incl. spot checks) been disseminated, where appropriate, within the local authority and to agencies?	2	
1.6 Have recommendations from previous QA reports been acted upon?	2	
1.7 Has an annual Public Spending Code QA report been certified by the local authority's Chief Executive, submitted to NOAC and published on the authority's website?	3	
1.8 Was the required sample of projects/programmes subjected to in-depth checking as per step 4 of the QAP?	3	
1.9 Is there a process in place to plan for ex post evaluations/Post Project Reviews? Ex-post evaluation is conducted after a certain period has passed since the completion of a target project with emphasis on the effectiveness and sustainability of the project.	1	
1.10 How many formal Post Project Review evaluations have been completed in the year under review? Have they been issued promptly to the relevant stakeholders / published in a timely manner?	3	There were two carried out.
1.11 Is there a process to follow up on the recommendations of previous evaluations/Post project reviews?	2	
1.12 How have the recommendations of previous evaluations / post project reviews informed resource allocation decisions?	N/A	

Checklist 2 – To be completed in respect of capital projects/programmes & capital grant schemes that were under consideration in the past year

Capital Expenditure being Considered – Appraisal and Approval	Self-Assessed Compliance Rating: 1 – 3	Comment/Action Required
2.1 Was a preliminary appraisal undertaken for all projects > €5m?	N/A	There were no projects greater than €5m.
2.2 Was an appropriate appraisal method used in respect of capital projects or capital programmes/grant schemes?	2	
2.3 Was a CBA/CEA completed for all projects exceeding €20m?	N/A	There were no projects greater than €20m.
2.4 Was the appraisal process commenced at an early stage to facilitate decision making? (i.e. prior to the decision)	2	
2.5 Was an Approval in Principle granted by the Sanctioning Authority for all projects before they entered the planning and design phase (e.g. procurement)?	3	
2.6 If a CBA/CEA was required was it submitted to the relevant Department for their views?	N/A	There were no projects that required CBA/CEA.
2.7 Were the NDFA consulted for projects costing more than €20m?	N/A	There were no projects greater than €20m
2.8 Were all projects that went forward for tender in line with the Approval in Principle and, if not, was the detailed appraisal revisited and a fresh Approval in Principle granted?	2	
2.9 Was approval granted to proceed to tender?	2	Some projects have not yet progressed to tender stage.
2.10 Were procurement rules complied with?	2	
2.11 Were State Aid rules checked for all supports?	2	
2.12 Were the tenders received in line with the Approval in Principle in terms of cost and what is expected to be delivered?	3	
2.13 Were performance indicators specified for each project/programme that will allow for a robust evaluation at a later date?	1	
2.14 Have steps been put in place to gather performance indicator data?	1	

Checklist 3 – To be completed in respect of new current expenditure under consideration in the past year

Current Expenditure being Considered – Appraisal and Approval	Self-Assessed Compliance	Rating: 1 - 3	Comment/Action Required
3.1 Were objectives clearly set out?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.2 Are objectives measurable in quantitative terms?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.3 Was a business case, incorporating financial and economic appraisal, prepared for new current expenditure?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.4 Was an appropriate appraisal method used?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.5 Was an economic appraisal completed for all projects exceeding €20m or an annual spend of €5m over 4 years?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.6 Did the business case include a section on piloting?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.7 Were pilots undertaken for new current spending proposals involving total expenditure of at least €20m over the proposed duration of the programme and a minimum annual expenditure of €5m?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.8 Have the methodology and data collection requirements for the pilot been agreed at the outset of the scheme?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.9 Was the pilot formally evaluated and submitted for approval to the relevant Department?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.10 Has an assessment of likely demand for the new scheme/scheme extension been estimated based on empirical evidence?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.11 Was the required approval granted?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.12 Has a sunset clause (as defined in section B06, 4.2 of the Public Spending Code) been set?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.13 If outsourcing was involved were procurement rules complied with?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.14 Were performance indicators specified for each new current expenditure proposal or expansion of existing current expenditure programme which will allow for a robust evaluation at a later date?	N/A		No new current expenditure
3.15 Have steps been put in place to gather performance indicator data?	N/A		No new current expenditure

Checklist 4 – To be completed in respect of capital projects/programmes & capital grants schemes incurring expenditure in the year under review

Incurring Capital Expenditure	Self-Assessed Compliance Rating: 1 - 3	Comment/Action Required
4.1 Was a contract signed and was it in line with the Approval in Principle?	3	
4.2 Did management boards/steering committees meet regularly as agreed?	1	
4.3 Were programme co-ordinators appointed to co-ordinate implementation?	3	
4.4 Were project managers, responsible for delivery, appointed and were the project managers at a suitably senior level for the scale of the project?	2	
4.5 Were monitoring reports prepared regularly, showing implementation against plan, budget, timescales and quality?	2	
4.6 Did projects/programmes/grant schemes keep within their financial budget and time schedule?	2	Delay on fire appliances due to lack of available production slot in U.K. plastic body supplier/
4.7 Did budgets have to be adjusted?	No	
4.8 Were decisions on changes to budgets / time schedules made promptly?	Yes	
4.9 Did circumstances ever warrant questioning the viability of the project/programme/grant scheme and the business case incl. CBA/CEA? (exceeding budget, lack of progress, changes in the environment, new evidence, etc.)	No	
4.10 If circumstances did warrant questioning the viability of a project/programme/grant scheme, was the project subjected to adequate examination?	N/A	
4.11 If costs increased was approval received from the Sanctioning Authority?	N/A	
4.12 Were any projects/programmes/grant schemes terminated because of deviations from the plan, the budget or because circumstances in the environment changed the need for the investment?	No	

Checklist 5 – To be completed in respect of current expenditure programmes incurring expenditure in the year under review

Incurring Current Expenditure	Self-Assessed Compliance Rating: 1 -3	Comment/Action Required
5.1 Are there clear objectives for all areas of current expenditure?	3	Budgets agreed at the Annual Budget meeting.
5.2 Are outputs well defined?	3	Performance Indicators and Department returns.
5.3 Are outputs quantified on a regular basis?	3	
5.4 Is there a method for monitoring efficiency on an on-going basis?	3	Budget performance monitored regularly and Performance Indicators.
5.5 Are outcomes well defined?	3	
5.6 Are outcomes quantified on a regular basis?	3	
5.7 Are unit costings compiled for performance monitoring?	1	
5.8 Are other data compiled to monitor performance?	2	
5.9 Is there a method for monitoring effectiveness on an on-going basis?	2	Returns to the Department and Performance Indicators
5.10 Has the organisation engaged in any other 'evaluation proofing'1 of programmes/projects?	1	

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[1] Evaluation proofing involves checking to see if the required data is being collected so that when the time comes a programme/project can be subjected to a robust evaluation. If the data is not being collected, then a plan should be put in place to collect the appropriate indicators to allow for the completion of a robust evaluation down the line.

Checklist 6 – To be completed in respect of capital projects/programmes & capital grant schemes discontinued and/or evaluated during the year under review

Capital Expenditure Recently Completed	Self-Assessed Compliance Rating: 1 – 3	Comment/Action Required
6.1 How many post project reviews were completed in the year under review?	2	Lanesboro Fire Station and Willow Park Halting Site Refurbishment
6.2 Was a post project review completed for all projects/programmes exceeding €20m?	N/A	No projects exceeding €20m
6.3 Was a post project review completed for all capital grant schemes where the scheme both (1) had an annual value in excess of €30m and (2) where scheme duration was five years or more?	N/A	No projects with an annual excess of €30m.
6.4 Aside from projects over €20m and grant schemes over €30m, was the requirement to review 5% (Value) of all other projects adhered to?	No	
6.5 If sufficient time has not elapsed to allow for a proper assessment, has a post project review been scheduled for a future date?	N/A	
6.6 Were lessons learned from post-project reviews disseminated within the Sponsoring Agency and to the Sanctioning Authority? (Or other relevant bodies)	N/A	
6.7 Were changes made to practices in light of lessons learned from post-project reviews?	N/A	
6.8 Were project reviews carried out by staffing resources independent of project implementation?	N/A	

Checklist 7 – To be completed in respect of current expenditure programmes that reached the end of their planned timeframe during the year or were discontinued

Current Expenditure that (i) reached the end of its planned timeframe or (ii) was discontinued	Self-Assessed Compliance Rating: 1 - 3	Comment/Action Required
7.1 Were reviews carried out of current expenditure programmes that matured during the year or were discontinued?	N/A	None relevant to PSC in 2016
7.2 Did those reviews reach conclusions on whether the programmes were efficient?	N/A	None relevant to PSC in 2016
7.3 Did those reviews reach conclusions on whether the programmes were effective?	N/A	None relevant to PSC in 2016
7.4 Have the conclusions reached been taken into account in related areas of expenditure?	N/A	None relevant to PSC in 2016
7.5 Were any programmes discontinued following a review of a current expenditure programme?	N/A	None relevant to PSC in 2016
7.6 Were reviews carried out by staffing resources independent of project implementation?	N/A	None relevant to PSC in 2016
7.7 Were changes made to the organisation's practices in light of lessons learned from reviews?	N/A	None relevant to PSC in 2016

Notes:

(a) The scoring mechanism for the above checklists is as follows:
- o Scope for significant improvements = a score of 1
- o Compliant but with some improvement necessary = a score of 2
- o Broadly compliant = a score of 3

(b) For some questions, the scoring mechanism is not always strictly relevant. In these cases, it is appropriate to mark as N/A and provide the required information in the commentary box as appropriate.

(c) The focus should be on providing descriptive and contextual information to frame the compliance ratings and to address the issues raised for each question. It is also important to provide summary details of key analytical outputs covered in the sample for those questions which address compliance with appraisal/evaluation requirements i.e. the annual number of appraisals (e.g. Cost Benefit Analyses or Multi Criteria Analyses), evaluations (e.g. Post Project Reviews). Key analytical outputs undertaken but outside of the sample should also be noted in the report.

Appendix C – In Depth Check – Acquisition of Four Fire Appliances

Quality Assurance – In Depth Check

Section A: Introduction

This introductory section details the headline information on the programme or project in question.

Programme or Project Information	
Name	Acquisition of four Fire Appliances
Detail	Longford County Council is the lead authority to purchase four fire appliances one for each of the following Local Authorities (Longford, Monaghan, Laois and Louth)
Responsible Body	Longford County Council
Current Status	Expenditure Being Incurred
Start Date	12th June 2015
End Date	31st January 2018
Overall Cost	€1.376 million

Project Description

Longford County Council was notified in June 2015 by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (the Department) that under the Fire Service Capital Programme for 2015 a provision had been made for the procurement of one appliance on behalf of the Council. The Department stated that this would be a joint procurement process and that a lead authority would be appointed.

Longford County Council was appointed the lead authority to procure four Class B Fire Appliances one on behalf of each of the Local Authorities listed below:

Longford County Council

Laois County Council

Louth County Council

Monaghan County Council

The Request for Tender (RFT) for four Class B Fire Appliances was prepared by the Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the other three Local Authorities. The RFT was forwarded to the Department in November 2015 seeking approval to proceed to issuing it through eTenders. The Department confirmed satisfaction with the RFT after one slight amendment.

The RFT was published on eTenders website on 9th November 2015 with a response deadline of 4pm on 31st December 2015. Four tenders were received on or before the closing date.

The tender evaluation was carried out in January 2016 when one representative from each of the four Local Authorities met at Longford Fire Station. High Precision Motor Products Ltd. Scania P320 tender proposal achieved the highest overall marks when all the award criteria had been applied and was deemed to be the successful tender.

The Director of Services wrote to the Department seeking approval to proceed to contract with the successful tenderer. The Department confirmed that they had no objections to the proposal to accept the tender from High Precision Motor Products Ltd. to an overall total amount of €1,375,698 plus VAT. The total amount per Local Authority is listed below:

Longford County Council   €348,442

Laois County Council   €346,013

Louth County Council   €341,570

Monaghan County Council   €339,673

The unsuccessful and successful tenderers were notified of the award decision in early February 2016.

Under payment terms of the RFT High Precision Motor Products Ltd. was paid €558,358.50 in December 2016 when they received delivery of the chassis and upon inspection of same by the members of the staff from the relevant Local Authority. A grant payment request was issued to the Department in December 2016 in the amount of €558,358.50. This payment was received by Longford County Council in December 2016.

A further payment of €47,364.84 was paid to High Precision Motor Products Ltd. in March 2017.

It is anticipated that the four appliances will be delivered by the end of January 2018. The four chassis and three of the pumps are currently in High Precision Motor Products Ltd. which is based in Carlow. The four plastic bodies are being manufactured in England with the Monaghan County Council body expected to be completed by the end of May and the Laois County Council one by end of June. The other two are due for manufacture in August. Once the bodies are received in Carlow the major fit out of bodies onto the chassis and fitting of pumps, lights, wiring etc will commence.

Section B - Step 1: Logic Model Mapping

As part of this In-Depth Check, Internal Audit, Longford County Council completed a Programme Logic Model (PLM) for the Acquisition of four Fire Appliances. A PLM is a standard evaluation tool and further information on their nature is available in the Public Spending Code.

Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Provide Class B Fire Appliances for four Local Authorities.	Capital funding of €1.376m approved by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.	Organising tender competition.	Provision of four Class B Fire Appliances.	Respond more efficiently and with greater reliability to emergency events.
To improve Local Authority fire fighting fleet.		Analysis and ranking of tenders submitted.		
		Placing the order with the successful tenderer.		Longer vehicle life and reduction in maintenance costs.
		Ongoing liaison with both the supplier and other local authorities.		
		Inspection of vehicles during construction to ensure compliance with specifications.		Reduction in CO_2 emissions.

Description of Programme Logic Model

Objectives: The objectives are to provide Class B Fire Appliances for four Local Authorities (Longford, Laois, Louth and Monaghan) and to improve the Local Authority fire fighting fleet overall.

Inputs: The main input will be the capital funding of €1.376 which is provided by the sanctioning authority the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Activities: The activities involve organising the tender competition, analysing and ranking the tenders submitted, placing the order with the successful tenderer, ongoing liaison with both supplier and other local authorities and inspection of vehicles during construction to ensure compliance with specifications.

Outputs: The outputs will be each of the four Local Authorities taking delivery of a Class B Fire Appliances that comply with the specifications of the relevant Local Authority.

Outcomes: The outcomes are that the individual Fire Services can respond more efficiently and with greater reliability and there should be a reduction in overall maintenance and running costs. The reliability of the fire service fleet will improve due to new vehicles and the existing vehicles moving into reserve vehicle stock.

Section B - Step 2: Summary Timeline of Project/Programme

The following section tracks the Acquisition of four Fire Appliances from inception to conclusion in terms of major project/programme milestones

June 2015	Department stated provision had been made for the procurement of one appliance on behalf of Longford County Council.
November 2015	Department confirmed satisfaction with the Request for ender (RFT)
November 2015	RFT was published on eTenders website.
December 2015	Four tenders were received on or before the closing date.
January 2016	Tender evaluation completed.
February 2016	Department approval received to accept successful tender.
February 2016	Notifications were sent to unsuccessful tenderers.
February 2016	Notification was sent to the successful tenderer.
December 2016	High Procession Motor Products Ltd. paid €558,358.50.
December 2016	Grant payment request issued to the Department for €558,358.50.
December 2016	Grant payment received from the Department.

Section B - Step 3: Analysis of Key Documents

The following section reviews the key documentation relating to appraisal, analysis and evaluation for the Acquisition of four Fire Appliances.

Project/Programme Key Documents

Title	Details
Correspondence from the Department dated 12th June 2015 confirming capital allocation provision.	Notification that under the Fire Services Capital Programme for 2015 a capital allocation provision had been made for Longford County Council Fire Service for the procurement of one appliance. It detailed that this was to be part of the Joint Procurement Programme for 2015. Longford was assigned the lead authority role in the procurement process at a later stage.
Request for Tender	This document detailed the specifications and requirements for the appliances.
Memorandum dated 1st February 2016 prepared by the Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer with Assessment Report on Tenders attached as an appendix.	An evaluation of tenders received was carried out in January 2016 by one representative from each of the four local authorities.

Key Document 1: Correspondence from the Department

Correspondence was received from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government regarding the Fire Services Capital Programme for 2015. This stated that as part of this capital allocation, provision had been made for the procurement of one appliance on behalf of Longford County Council. It detailed that this was to be part of the Joint Procurement Programme for 2015 with a lead authority dealing with the procurement process.

Key Document 2: Request for Tender

This 75 page document included instructions to tenderers, qualification and award criteria, and requirements and specifications section for the appliances. The requirements and specifications section was made up of the following sections:

Section 1   General Requirements

Section 2   Chassis

Section 3   Crew Cab

Section 4   Body Construction and Design

Section 5   Paint and Conspicuity Markings

Section 6   Electrical Systems

Section 7   Fire Engineering

Section 8   Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS)

Section 9   Spare Parts and Warranty

Section 10   Additional Items

Key Document 3: Assessment Report on Tenders Received

An evaluation of tenders received was carried out in January 2016 by one representative from each of the four local authorities. All tenders received were deemed to be compliant tenders as per compliant tenders section of the qualification and award criteria section of the Request for Tender.

In evaluating the tenders, the following award criteria as specified in the request for tenders were applied:

Criteria	Marks
1. Proposed Cost	250
2. Conformity to specification	50
3. Bodywork Warranty	50
4. Vehicle Systems and Driveline Warranty	50
5. Availability of Spare Parts, Technical Assistance and Back-up	100
Total	**500**

The successful tenderer High Precision Motor Products Ltd. achieved the highest marks overall at 480 and was deemed to be the successful tenderer.

Section B - Step 4: Data Audit

The following section details the data audit that was carried out for the Acquisition of four Fire Appliances. It evaluates whether appropriate data is available for the future evaluation of the project/programme.

Data Required	Use	Availability
Maintenance cost per vehicle per annum going forward.	Compare with historic costs and benchmark with other local authorities.	Yes
Ongoing metrics regarding vehicle management including servicing costs, fuel efficiency, mileage, cost of wear and tear.	Efficient fleet management	Yes
Response time	Analyse trends and benchmark with other local authorities	Yes
Workplace accident rate	To measure improvements in fire personnel safety.	Yes

Data Availability and Proposed Next Steps

It can be seen from the table above that the data required to evaluate the project is readily available. Any increase in public safety as a result of the purchase of these vehicles would be a lot more difficult to quantify as there are issues around identifying causality. While the introduction of new fire appliances with advanced pumping systems will deliver benefits in terms of public safety the quantified evidence base is limited preventing a full and robust cost-benefit analysis of this area.

Section B - Step 5: Key Evaluation Questions

The following section looks at the key evaluation questions for Acquisition of four Fire Appliances based on the findings from the previous sections of this report.

Does the delivery of the project/programme comply with the standards set out in the Public Spending Code? (Appraisal Stage, Implementation Stage and Post-Implementation Stage)

Initial appraisal was carried out by the Department as they were aware of the existing stock of fire appliances in each of the Local Authorities and average useful life of same. The Department notified Longford County Council that a provision had been made for the procurement of fire appliance on their behalf and that this would be a joint procurement with a lead authority.

As appraisal for this programme was carried out at Department level the quality of the appraisal process was not examined. The project appears to have been guided in large part by the Sanctioning Authority which in this case was the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

Is the necessary data and information available such that the project/programme can be subjected to a full evaluation at a later date?

Yes there are a number of criteria by which the success or otherwise of the project can be measured. Compilation of the necessary data is relatively straightforward using reporting framework already in place throughout the organisation.

What improvements are recommended such that future processes and management are enhanced?

The acquisition of these vehicles on a regional basis has reduced the administrative burden involved and consideration should be given to expand this into other areas.

Section: In-Depth Check Summary

The following section presents a summary of the findings of this In-Depth Check on the Acquisition of four Fire Appliances.

Summary of In-Depth Check

This in-depth check involved examining records held on file by the Council's Fire Service and the expenditure on the financial management system (Agresso). Longford County Council is the lead authority to purchase four fire appliances one for each of the following local authorities (Longford, Monaghan, Laois and Louth). The Request for Tender (RFT) was prepared in consultation with the other three Local Authorities and detailed the specifications and requirements for the appliances. Prior to publishing the RFT on eTenders website the RFT was forwarded to the Department.

The tender evaluation was carried out in January 2016 with one representative of each Local Authority present. The successful tenderer was High Precision Motor Products Ltd. The Department confirmed that they had no objections to the proposal to accept the tender of High Precision Motor Products Ltd. The overall total amount is €1,375,698.

It is anticipated that the four appliances will be delivered to the relevant Local Authority by the end of January 2018.

Appendix D – In Depth Check –A07 RAS Programme

Quality Assurance – In Depth Check

This introductory section details the headline information on the programme or project in question.

Programme or Project Information	
Name	A07 RAS Programme
Detail	Rental Accommodation Scheme and Social Housing Leasing
Responsible Body	Longford County Council
Current Status	Revenue Expenditure Being Incurred
Start Date	January 2016
End Date	December 2016
Overall Cost	€1,716,245

Project Description

The rental accommodation scheme (RAS) and social housing leasing (SHL) are both leasing schemes which provide housing authorities with options to meet the accommodation needs of people assessed as requiring long term housing support.

RAS

The rental accommodation scheme (RAS) was introduced as a social housing option in 2005 in accordance with the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. The purpose of RAS is to provide housing authorities with an option for meeting the accommodation needs of people assessed as requiring long term housing support and was targeted at applicants who were in receipt of rent supplement (RS) for 18 months or more. Typically the tenancies are for a period of six months and rolled over on a monthly basis thereafter. The responsibility for the maintenance and management of the RAS property remains with the landlord.

RS is paid to people living in private rented accommodation who cannot afford to accommodate themselves from their own resources. To qualify for the RS payment a person has to be assessed in the last twelve months by Longford County Council (the Council) as being eligible for, and in need of, social housing. They must be habitually resident in the state, in receipt of a social welfare payment and the proposed accommodation must suit their needs.

SHL

A further housing scheme of social housing leasing (SHL) was introduced during 2009 in accordance with the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009. In 2010, the Council entered into SHL under this initiative. SHL provides housing in a location and of a type that can appropriately meet the needs of people on the Council's housing list. As at the 31 December 2016 the Council had only used short term leases of six months, rolling over on a monthly basis thereafter, as under short term leases the responsibility for maintenance and management of the property remains with the landlord.

Section B - Step 1: Logic Model Mapping

As part of this In-Depth Check, Internal Audit, Longford County Council completed a Programme Logic Model (PLM) for the Rental Accommodation Scheme and Social Housing Leasing Revenue Expenditure 2016. A PLM is a standard evaluation tool and further information on their nature is available in the Public Spending Code.

Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
To provide medium to long term housing support to people who meet the eligibility requirements.	The RAS Reserve accumulated between 2005 and 2015. The expenditure for RAS in 2016 was funded from this reserve as per instructions from the Department.	Interviews with tenants and landlords.	Provide long term social housing support in privately owned accommodation.	Provide high quality accommodation on medium to long term basis.
That every property meets minimum standards.		Negotiations with landlords in relation to obtaining discounts on market rents.	Ensuring minimum property standards are maintained.	Achieve value for money by negotiating discounts on market rents.
The combined delivery for 2016 and 2017 of 32 RAS and 79 SHL units.	The Social Housing Leasing element of this Revenue expenditure was funded by the Department.	Minimum standards inspections of all properties.	The target combined delivery for 2016 and 2017 of 32 RAS and 79 SHL units.	During 2016 there were 17 new RAS tenancies and 39 new Social Housing Leases.
		Entering into contracts with landlords and tenants.		More choice for approved housing applicants regarding the area they wish to reside in. Hence better social inclusion.
		Furnish monthly, quarterly and annual returns to the Department.		

Description of Programme Logic Model

Objectives: The objectives are to provide medium to long term housing support to people who meet the eligibility requirements in properties that achieve the minimum standards. To achieve the targets set by the Department for the delivery of 32 RAS and 79 SHL units in the 2 year time frame (2016 and 2017).

Inputs: The RAS element of this Revenue Expenditure was financed from the RAS reserve fund which was accumulated by the successful operation of the RAS scheme from 2005 to 2015 by Longford County Council. The Social Housing Leasing element of this Revenue expenditure was funded by the Department.

Activities: Interviews with tenants and landlords. Managing tenancies by dealing with tenant queries, tenants rent reviews and processing the weekly rent routine. To ensure that value for money is received in relation to rents paid to landlords by negotiating with them to obtain discounts on the market rents. Ensuring that technical staff carries out inspections of all these properties prior to signing of the contract. Entering into contracts with landlords and renewing / reviewing these plus tenant contracts. Completing and forwarding monthly, quarterly and annual returns to the Department for the RAS scheme and monthly and quarterly returns for the SHL scheme.

Outputs: To provide long term social housing support in privately owned accommodation. Ensuring minimum property standards are maintained.

Outcomes: To Provide high quality accommodation on medium to long term basis. Achieve value for money by negotiating discounts on market rents. During 2016 there were 17 new RAS tenancies and 39 new SHL tenancies. More choice for approved housing applicants regarding the area they wish to reside in and consequently better social inclusion. Correspondence issued by the Department dated 17 April 2015 detailed the targets for delivery under the Social Housing Strategy with 32 RAS and 79 SHL units to be delivered during 2016 to 2017. These targets have been achieved for 2016.

Section B - Step 2: Summary Timeline of Project/Programme

The following section tracks the Rental Accommodation Scheme and Social Housing Leasing 2016 revenue expenditure from inception to conclusion in terms of major project/programme milestones

April 2015	Department letter stating target for units for delivery under RAS and SHL for 2015 - 2017.
Nov 2015	Longford County Council 2016 Revenue budget was adopted by the members.
Jan – Dec 2016	Progress re both schemes recorded in the monthly management reports which are circulated to members.
Jan – Dec 2016	Monthly and quarterly returns completed and returned to the Department.
March 2016	Annual 2015 return completed and forwarded to the Department.

Section B - Step 3: Analysis of Key Documents

The following section reviews the key documentation relating to appraisal, analysis and evaluation for the Rental Accommodation Scheme and Social Housing Leasing.

Project/Programme Key Documents

Title	Details
Department letter issued April 2015	Targets for delivery under the Social Housing Strategy of RAS & SHL for 2015, 2016 & 2017.
RAS & SHL spreadsheet	Contains details of the Landlords, the property, tenants, market rent, and actual rent paid showing discount achieved on market rent.
Landlord files	Contains the contracts (between landlord and Longford County Council, tenant and the landlord, tenant and the Council).
iHouse (database)	This displays housing applicant information that confirms that tenants met the relevant criteria for either RAS or SHL.

Key Document 1: Department letter issued April 2015

In April 2015 the Department issued a letter under the Social Housing Strategy with targets for delivery of RAS and SHL units for years 2015, 2016 and 2017. The letter gave a combined target for years 2016 and 2017 for both RAS (32) and SHL (79). There were 17 RAS units and 39 SHL units delivered during 2016.

Key Document 2: RAS & SHL Spreadsheet

This contains details of the landlords, contract dates, duration of the contracts, the property addresses, the tenants, market rents, actual rent paid showing the discounts that were achieved on the market rent. The spreadsheet and the financial management system are the main sources of information regarding these schemes. This information is used to complete all the returns to the Department and to provide information for monthly management reports. Data verification carried out has confirmed that accurate information is maintained on this spreadsheet for any of the 67 cases reviewed.

Key Document 3: Landlord Files

The landlord files contain the contracts (between the landlord and the Council, tenant and the landlord, tenant and the Council). They also contain copies any correspondence between the Housing Section and the landlord. Correspondence including rent negotiation memos. The files are only available to Housing staff as they contain personal data which is protected under data protection rules. **Key Document 4: iHouse**

This is a national system that is used by all Local Authorities where individual housing application information is stored. Confirmation of the information on iHouse is necessary for the applicants to be approved for housing support under RAS and SHL.

Section B - Step 4: Data Audit

The following section details the data audit that was carried out for the Rental Accommodation Scheme and Social Housing Leasing 2016 revenue expenditure. It evaluates whether appropriate data is available for the future evaluation of the project/programme.

Data Required	Use	Availability
RAS & SHL units delivered during the year	To confirm if the targets set down by the Department have been achieved.	Yes
Market rents	To confirm if the rents paid to the landlords are less than market rents. Thereby confirming if the Housing Section have obtained the relevant discounts on the market rent. This is verified by online enquires of local renting agents.	Yes
Tax Clearance Certificates	To confirm that landlords are tax compliant.	Yes

Data Availability and Proposed Next Steps

It can be seen from the above that the data is available to evaluate the Rental Accommodation Scheme and Social Housing Leasing 2016 revenue expenditure. On the test of landlords compliance there is one landlord that hasn't been paid since June 2013 due to non compliance which confirms that the tax compliance system is working.

Section B - Step 5: Key Evaluation Questions

The following section looks at the key evaluation questions for Rental Accommodation Scheme and Social Housing Leasing 2016 revenue expenditure based on the findings from the previous sections of this report.

Does the delivery of the project/programme comply with the standards set out in the Public Spending Code? (Appraisal Stage, Implementation Stage and Post-Implementation Stage)

This is a national initiative and targets are set down by the Department which have been achieved in 2016 therefore this project is compliant with the PSC. RAS forms part of the overall revenue expenditure which is approved by the Council. There are individual applications for each tenant that are individually accessed to ensure that the housing need of the applicants are achieved and that there is adherence to the RAS and SHL schemes as issued by the Department.

Is the necessary data and information available such that the project/programme can be subjected to a full evaluation at a later date?

Yes. There is information available in relation to the number of applicants that have been housed in either RAS or SHL properties. This can be compared to the targets issued from the Department to confirm if the targets set down by the Department have been achieved

What improvements are recommended such that future processes and management are enhanced?

A procedure manual for the RAS and SHL schemes should be put in place. The Housing Section has agreed to have this in place by the end of October 2017. The national iHouse system should be enhanced to incorporate both schemes which would alleviate the necessity of using spreadsheets.

Section: In-Depth Check Summary

The following section presents a summary of the findings of this In-Depth Check on the Rental Accommodation Scheme and Social Housing Leasing 2016 revenue expenditure.

Summary of In-Depth Check

This in-depth check involved examining the operation of RAS and SHL during 2016 in Longford County Council. The revenue expenditure A07 RAS Programme involves processing individual applications for housing support, on both the RAS and SHL schemes that Longford County Council operates on behalf of the Department. Returns are made on a monthly and quarterly basis to the Department in relation to both schemes. The RAS annual financial return for financial year 2015 was forwarded to the Department in March 2016. The RAS annual return for 2016 has not yet been completed as the Department are issuing a revised template document.

This revenue expenditure appears to have been guided in large part by the Sanctioning Authority which in this case was the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. The SHL element of this Revenue expenditure was funded by the Department and the RAS 2016 expenditure was funded from the RAS Reserve. The RAS Reserve accumulated between 2005 and 2015 of surplus income over expenditure under the RAS scheme, and can only be used for RAS purposes as per Department guidelines and circulars.

Following the recommendation the issues of enhancing the iHouse database to be the sole source of information for all of the Housing options is to be brought to the attention of the Department again as it affects all Local Authorities. The Housing Section has agreed to have a procedure manual put in place for the RAS and SHL schemes by the end of October 2017.