Public Spending Code

Quality Assurance Report for 2023

Longford County Council

To be submitted to

National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC)

May 2024

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: 31 May 2024

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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.

Requirements of the Quality Assurance Aspect of the Public Spending Code

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

- ***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.

- ***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.

- ***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.

- ***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.

- ***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 - 2023

The Inventory contains 79 Projects under the three stages and comprises a total value of €182.23m. 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.

	Revenue Expenditure			Capital Expenditure			
Project Numbers	€0.5m - €5m	€5m - €20m	Over €20m	€0.5m - €5m	€5m - €20m	Over €20m	Totals
Expenditure Being considered	2			16			18
Expenditure Being Incurred	27	2		22	4		55
Expenditure recently ended				6			6
Totals	**29**	**2**		**44**	**4**		**79**

	Revenue Expenditure			Capital Expenditure			
Project Total Values	€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	1.35			27.22			28.57
Expenditure Being Incurred	45.82	15.76		48.56	34.17		144.31
Expenditure recently ended				9.35			9.35
Totals	**47.17**	**15.76**		**85.13**	**34.17**		**182.23**

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

For 2023 Longford County Council have reported no projects in this category.

The Quality Assurance Report for 2023 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 some additional controls were required in some instances to ensure compliance with the Public Spending Code.

STEP 4 - In-Depth review of a sample project

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

The value of the projects selected for in-depth review each year must follow the criteria set out below:

- Capital Projects: Projects selected must represent a minimum of 5% of the total value of all Capital projects on the Project Inventory.
- Revenue Projects: Projects selected must represent a minimum of 1% of the total value of all Revenue Projects on the Project Inventory.

This minimum is an average over a three-year period.

The table below reflects the In-depth checks completed by Longford County Council over the three-year period. As the projects selected for Revenue In-depth checks have exceeded the minimum average over the required period, a Revenue project was not selected for review on this occasion.

Longford County Council In-Depth Checks 2021 - 2023				
	2021	**2022**	**2023**	**TOTAL**
Capital	**€m**	**€m**	**€m**	**€m**
Total Reported	113.83	125.45	119.30	358.58
In-Depth Review	5.88	4.08	7.64	17.60
% averaged	**5%**	**3%**	**6%**	**5%**
	2021	**2022**	**2023**	**TOTAL**
Revenue	**€m**	**€m**	**€m**	**€m**
Total Reported	58.43	57.68	62.93	179.04
In-Depth Review	2.28	1.48	0.00	3.76
% averaged	**4%**	**3%**	**0%**	**2%**

Internal Audit In-Depth Check

The Internal Audit Unit of Longford County Council was assigned the task of completing the In-depth checks.

The In-depth check has been completed on Capital projects and the project selected was twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford (***see Appendix C***)

In general, there is substantial compliance with the Public Spending Code. Listed below is the summary from the In-depth check.

Summary of Acquisition of Twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford In-Depth Check

It is the opinion of Internal Audit that there is substantial compliance with the Public Spending Code in respect of this project acquiring twenty-three houses for social housing as part of the Housing for All Action Plan 2023. The main objective of this project was the acquisition of social housing units in a cost-effective manner, to contribute to the targets set out by the DHLGH and to reduce the number of approved applicants on the Council's housing list. In parallel to this, the Council also supported the urban regeneration of a derelict industrial site located on the outskirts of the centre of Longford town and improved the environs for the community already residing there.

There were extensive negotiations on the development costs for the proposed project between the Council and the developer. The subsequent review of these costs by Ciaran Leech, Chartered QS confirmed the project was value for money and in line with current market rates, except for the costs associated to comply with planning conditions resulting in an exceptional high finish to the houses.

Good practice was demonstrated by the staff involved in the project including budget discussions with the developer, seeking advice from the Finance department on tax compliance, project management, budget management, record keeping and negotiating on behalf of the Council a percentage share of revenue collected from the EV Chargers.

The development at Richmond Street, Longford commenced in April 2023. The estate was named Connaught Park and eighteen houses numbered 1-13, 19-21 and 22-23 were handed over to the Council in four phases by the end of 2023 with the project scheduled for completion in June 2024. The houses have an A2 BER and the scheme has maximum capacity to house ninety-one people. The Council have provided a sustainable social housing complex that will meet the needs of housing applicants of all ages.

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 2023 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 contained in the Project inventory has been completed and further confirmed that there is, in general, substantial 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 substantial 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 – 2023

Expenditure being Considered - Greater than €0.5m (Capital and Current)							
Project/Scheme/Programme Name	**Short Description**	**Current Expenditure Amount in Reference Year**	**Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Non-Grant)**	**Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Grant)**	**Project / Programme Anticipated Timeline**	**Projected Lifetime Expenditure**	**Explanatory Notes**
Housing and Building							
Essential Repair Grants 2024			€0	€0	Dec-24	€1,830,000	20% LA Contribution
Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme 2024			€0	€0	Dec-24	€1,680,000	
4 Houses Clough Dillons, Kenagh N14/2/161	LP 450		€0	€0		€1,063,835	Stage 1 approved, legal delays
4 Houses Farrells, Ballinalee N14/2/168	LP 473		€0	€0	Sep-24	€950,690	Approval in principle July 2022, awaiting contracts.
14 Houses Longford Road Ballinalee N14/2/172	LP 482		€0	€0	Jul-25	€4,418,078	Approval in principle Nov 2022 for Turnkey project
Market Square, Longford	LP 505		€0	€0	2024	€509,450	Stage 1 approval for turnkey project 2 units
St. Rita's Phase 2						€1,380,000	Taken from Capital Budget detail
O'Hara's Granard						€640,000	Taken from Capital Budget detail
Road Transportation and Safety							
Active Travel							
Templemichael Cycleway and Camlin Bridge to Mall, Longford Town	LD/24/XXXX		€0	€0		€2,500,000	NTA funding
Lower Battery Road, Church Street	LD/24/XXXX		€0	€0		€2,800,000	NTA funding
NTA at Royal Canal Greenway Link to Market Square			€0	€0		€650,000	NTA funding
Development Management							
RRDF 2021 - Granard Destination Town			€0	€0	3 years	€4,000,000	Out to tender in 2024 for design consultants.
North Longford Rebel Trail Phase 2 – Monaduff to			€0	€0	1 year	€783,680	Starting April 2024
Environmental Services							
Pathfinder Energy Retrofits for Aras an Chontae, Camlin Court, Longford Library and HQ and Longford Firestation			€0	€0	3 years	€2,000,000	€1m from SEAI, €1m match funding - Project approved by Mgmt. Team
Ballymahon Fire Station			€0	€0	2026	€1,500,000	Awaiting Sanction from DEPT.
New Fire Engine			€0	€0	2027	€520,000	Sanction approved from DEPT.
E11 Operation of Fire Service		€844,905					
E15 Climate Action and Flooding		€502,869					
Totals		**€1,347,774**	**€0**	**€0**		**€27,225,773**	

Expenditure being Incurred - Greater than €0.5m (Capital and Current)								
Project/Scheme/Programme Name	**Short Description**	**Current Expenditure Amount in Reference Year**	**Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Non-Grant)**	**Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Grant)**	**Project /Programme Anticipated Timeline**	**Cumulative Expenditure to-date**	**Projected Lifetime Expenditure (Capital Only)**	**Explanatory Notes**
Housing and Building								
A01 Maintenance Improvement of LA Housing		€4,877,340						
A02 Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer		€772,625						
A03 Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration		€846,249						
A05 Administration of Homeless Service		€942,530						
A06 Support to Housing Capital and Affordable Programme		€2,150,392						
A07 RAS and SHL Programme		€2,785,937						
2024 Voids Programme			€570,196	€0		€570,196	€1,925,000	Voids programme annual scheme
3 Houses Cranleymore Abbeylara	LP 290		€461			€104,608	€630,000	Stage 3 approved. Japanese Knotweed treatment April 2024, then advertise main contract.
13 Houses St Rita's Park Road, Longford N14/2/142	LP 298		€461			€170,541	€2,265,938	Stage 2 approval received. Japanese Knotwood treatment April 2024 and Stage 3 will then be submitted.
24 & 25 Congress Terrace N14/2/164	LP 495			€591,063		€708,314	€846,633	Stage 4 approval received
22 Houses Radharc na Muilleann, Lanesboro N14/2/162	LP 376		€38,730			€217,110	€4,185,779	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted soon, awaiting additional information from consultants.
4 units at 2 Legion Terrace, Longford	LP 405			€430,255	Apr-24	€578,841	€1,162,421	Expected to be completed in April 2024.
13 Houses Drynan, Ballymahon N14/2/163	LP 407		€22,125			€231,065	€2,777,384	Stage 1 approved. Stage 2 to be submitted when additional information received from consultants.

4 Houses 22-25 Woodland Path, Kenagh	LP 392			€802,345	2024	€1,086,797	€1,225,272	All houses completed December 2023, retention and legal invoices due.
6 Houses, Cnoc na Greine, Granard N14/2/165	LP 449		€9,548			€147,605	€1,397,370	Stage 1 approved and Stage 2 to be submitted in 2024. Awaiting additional information from consultants, may increase to eight units.
6 Houses Lamagh, Newtownforbes	LP 466		€2,499		2024/2025	€141,790	€1,491,025	Stage 2 approved.
54 Main Street, Granard (Hourican's Hotel) 8 units and parking	LP 470		€153,088		2025	€404,931	€1,290,000	Projected Lifetime Expenditure taken from Capital budget. Demolition complete. Survey and Road safety audit complete. Management plan for Japanese Knotweed received. Housing agency submitted feasibility study for apartments/duplex units and parking. Received comments from the Department. Awaiting planning comments.
13 Houses Forthill, Aughnacliffe N14/2/167	LP 486			€1,937,711	Mar-24	€1,937,834	€3,702,765	6 houses completed in 2023. Two to be completed by end of Q1 2024 and another five to be completed by end of May 2024.
23 Houses Richmond Street, Longford N14/2/153	LP 474			€5,701,995	Jun-24		€7,640,704	21 substantially complete and remainder expected to be complete Q2 2024.
16 Houses Cluan Ri, Ballymahon N14/2/174	LP 490			€3,583,682	2024	€3,583,682	€4,707,905	Twelve houses completed in 2023 and four units to be completed by March 2024.
12 Houses Silver Birches, Stonepark, Longford	LP 502			€3,720,500		€3,720,500	€3,818,400	All houses completed November 2023, awaiting final legal invoices.
4 Houses Abhainn Glas, Edgeworthstown N14/2/175	LP 493			€1,160,220		€1,160,220	€1,191,425	All houses completed December 2023, awaiting final legal invoices.
19 Houses at Colmcille Terrace, Granard	47 V			€2,127,298		€2,127,298	€4,923,045	

Road Transportation and Safety								
B01 NP Road Maintenance & Improvement		€5,811,025						
B02 NS Road - Maintenance & Improvement		€2,465,647						
B03 Regional Road - Maintenance & Improvement		€2,945,467						
B04 Local Road - Maintenance & Improvement		€9,947,400						
B05 - Public Lighting		€740,370						
B09 - Maintenance & Management of Car Parking		€839,349						
Active Travel								
Active Travel Pathfinder: R198 Battery Road Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme, Longford Town	LD/21/0005			€745,052	Q3 2024	€927,640	€2,578,530	NTA funding
Active Travel Pathfinder: Longford Town - N63 Pedestrian and Cycle Scheme	LD/21/0010			€1,003,302	Q1 2024	€1,085,642	€1,756,762	NTA funding
R392 Ballymahon - Pedestrian and Cycle Improvement Scheme	LD/21/0007			€10,023	Q3 2025	€15,568	€500,568	NTA funding
Water Services								
C01 Operation and maintenance of Water Supply		€2,506,904						
C02 Operation and maintenance of Waste Water Treatment		€1,012,735						
C06 Support to Water Capital Programme		€528,455						
Development Management								
D02 Development Management		€931,765						
D06 Community & Enterprise Function		€2,475,683						
D09 Economic Development & Promotion		€3,194,194						
D12 Agency & Recoupable Services		€3,310,817						

Camlin Quarter Regeneration Project			€7,442	€0	6 years	€17,534	€13,921,255	Waiting business case approval
RRDF 2018 Granard Motte Hertitage Project	Granard Motte Hertitage Project		€19,065	€0	3 Years	€701,941	€4,340,000	Project paused while LCC exploring options re costs
URDF 2018 Longford Connected	Public Realm, Longford town		€657,061	€1,234,998		€4,678,198	€5,200,000	Substantially completed. Retention to be released in 2024, Consultatns final account
RRDF 2019 Abbeyshrule Project	Rural Working Hub & Enterprise Space		€74,583	€93,306		€1,121,380	€1,213,824	Substantially completed. Retention to be released in 2024
RRDF 2020 Lanesborough Enhancement	Enhancement of the Attractiveness of Lanesborough as a Tourism Destination. Visitors Centre Lanesboro		€0	€74,823	3 Years	€74,823	€625,000	Grant Funding of €468,750 plus match funding of €156,250 3 stages to project -Amphitheatre, Roads & Visitor Centre. Planning Permission lodged with Bord Pleanna for Amphitheatre Oct 2023
RRDF 2020 Pobal le Cheile, Ballymahon	Ballymahon Town Regeneration		€0	€50,642	4 Years	€552,614	€7,405,332	It is expected that tenders for the construction of the project will be advertised in Q4 2024 with works commencing on the project in Q2 2025.
Environmental Services								
E05 Litter Management		€741,253						
E06 Street Cleaning		€750,872						
E07 Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement		€505,246						
E11 Operation of Fire Service		€2,503,697						

Recreation and Amenity								
F02 Operation of Library & Archival Service		€2,725,621						
F03 Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations		€710,223						
F04 Community Sport and Recreational Programme		€793,805						
F05 Operation of Arts Programme		€840,230						
Miscellaneous Services								
H03 Administration of Rates		€1,370,808						
H09 Local Representation / Civic Leadership		€1,556,712						
Totals		**€61,583,351**	**€1,555,259**	**€23,267,215**		**€26,066,673**	**€82,722,337**	

Projects/Programmes Completed or discontinued in the reference year - Greater than €0.5m (Capital and Current)

Project/Scheme/Programme Name	Short Description	Current Expenditure Amount in Reference Year	Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Non-Grant)	Capital Expenditure Amount in Reference Year (Grant)	Project /Programme Completion Date	Final Outturn Expenditure	Explanatory Notes
Housing and Building							
Essential Repair Grants 2023			€277,993	€1,452,620	Dec-23	€1,730,613	20% LA Contribution
2023 Voids Programme			€998,564	€2,206,328	2023	€3,204,892	Voids programme annual scheme
Midlands Energy Retrofit Programme			€533,166	€1,122,077	2023	€1,615,780	Energy Retrofit Programme annual scheme
5 Houses Woodlawn Path, Kenagh	LP 476			€1,080,355	Sep-23	€1,199,319	Turnkey project delivered in 2023
4 Houses Creevaghbui, Ceevaghbeg, Ballymahon, Longford	LP 497			€907,593	Dec-23	€907,593	Project completed in 2023
Road Transportation and Safety							
Active Travel							
Ennybegs Pedestrian and Cycle Improvements			€0	€597,681	Nov-23	€691,889	NTA funding
Totals			**€1,809,723**	**€7,366,654**		**€9,350,086**	

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)?	3	Email sent to all staff.
1.2 Has training on the Public Spending Code been provided to relevant staff within the authority?	3	Training has been provided where requested to relevant staff.
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?	3	Guidance is available.
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	Local Authority does not have a significant role in this regard yet.
1.5 Have recommendations from previous QA reports (incl. spot checks) been disseminated, where appropriate, within the local authority and to agencies?	2	Yes
1.6 Have recommendations from previous QA reports been acted upon?	3	The Audit Findings Tracker is used to follow up on recommendations.
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	Yes
1.8 Was the required sample of projects/programmes subjected to in-depth checking as per step 4 of the QAP?	3	Yes
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	The Regeneration department have a process in place for preparing Post Project Reviews however there is room for improvement in relation to Post Project Reviews across the Council.
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?	1	A limited number of Post Project Reviews were completed for significant capital projects that were completed in 2023.
1.11 Is there a process to follow up on the recommendations of previous evaluations/Post project reviews?	1	Only the Regeneration department have a process in place. There is room for improvement in relation to Post Project Reviews.
1.12 How have the recommendations of previous evaluations / post project reviews informed resource allocation decisions?	2	Improvement actions have been implemented following Post Project Reviews in the past.

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

Templemichael Cycleway and Camlin Bridge to Mall, Longford Town - 100% NTA Funded

	Capital Expenditure being Considered – Appraisal and Approval	**Self-Assessed Compliance Rating: 1 - 3**	**Comment/Action Required**
Q 2.1	Was a Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) completed for all capital projects and programmes over €10m?	N/A	
Q 2.2	Were performance indicators specified for each project/programme which will allow for a robust evaluation at a later date? Have steps been put in place to gather performance indicator data?	N/A	Project only at feasibility and options stage.
Q 2.3	Was a Preliminary and Final Business Case, including appropriate financial and economic appraisal, completed for all capital projects and programmes?	N/A	Grant Application form not submitted in 2023 which contains the business case.
Q 2.4	Were the proposal objectives SMART and aligned with Government policy including National Planning Framework, Climate Mitigation Plan etc?	1	Not required at the time of application. Will be incorporated into consultant objectives.
Q 2.5	Was an appropriate appraisal method and parameters used in respect of capital projects or capital programmes/grant schemes?	3	Will be in accordance with the NTA's Project Appraisal Guidelines when application is submitted.
Q 2.6	Was a financial appraisal carried out on all proposals and was there appropriate consideration of affordability?	3	Will be in accordance with the NTA's Project Appraisal Guidelines when application is submitted.
Q 2.7	Was the appraisal process commenced at an early enough stage to inform decision making?	3	Will be in accordance with the NTA's Project Appraisal Guidelines when application is submitted.
Q 2.8	Were sufficient options analysed in the business case for each capital proposal?	3	Will be in accordance with the NTA's Project Appraisal Guidelines when application is submitted.
Q 2.9	Was the evidence base for the estimated cost set out in each business case? Was an appropriate methodology used to estimate the cost? Were appropriate budget contingencies put in place?	3	In accordance with the NTA's Cost Management Guidelines.

Q 2.10	Was risk considered and a risk mitigation strategy commenced? Was appropriate consideration given to governance and deliverability?	3	Yes
Q 2.11	Were the Strategic Assessment Report, Preliminary and Final Business Case submitted to DPER for technical review for projects estimated to cost over €100m?	N/A	
Q 2.12	Was a detailed project brief including design brief and procurement strategy prepared for all investment projects?	3	Will be in accordance with the NTA's Project Appraisal Guidelines when application is submitted.
Q 2.13	Were procurement rules (both National and EU) complied with?	N/A	Nothing procured in 2023 for this project.
Q 2.14	Was the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) properly implemented?	N/A	Nothing procured in 2023 for this project.
Q 2.15	Were State Aid rules checked for all support?	N/A	
Q 2.16	Was approval sought from the Approving Authority at all decision gates?	N/A	Will be in accordance with the NTA's Project Appraisal Guidelines when application is submitted.
Q 2.17	Was Value for Money assessed and confirmed at each decision gate by Sponsoring Agency and Approving Authority?	N/A	Will be in accordance with the NTA's Project Appraisal Guidelines when application is submitted.
Q 2.18	Was approval sought from Government through a Memorandum for Government at the appropriate decision gates for projects estimated to cost over €100m?	N/A	

See Note 2 in the opening guidelines in relation to the interpretation of Capital Grant Schemes in the context of Local Government

Checklist 3 – To be completed in respect of new current expenditure under consideration in the past year **E11 Operation of Fire Service**

Current Expenditure being Considered – Appraisal and Approval	Self-Assessed Compliance Rating: 1 – 3	Comment/Action Required
3.1 Were objectives clearly set out?	3	Providing funding for the provisions of National Pay deal.
3.2 Are objectives measurable in quantitative terms?	3	
3.3 Was a business case, incorporating financial and economic appraisal, prepared for new current expenditure?	3	
3.4 Was an appropriate appraisal method used?	3	
3.5 Was an economic appraisal completed for all projects exceeding €20m or an annual spend of €5m over 4 years?	N/A	
3.6 Did the business case include a section on piloting?	N/A	
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	
3.8 Have the methodology and data collection requirements for the pilot been agreed at the outset of the scheme?	N/A	
3.9 Was the pilot formally evaluated and submitted for approval to the relevant Department?	N/A	
3.10 Has an assessment of likely demand for the new scheme/scheme extension been estimated based on empirical evidence?	N/A	
3.11 Was the required approval granted?	3	
3.12 Has a sunset clause (as defined in section B06, 4.2 of the Public Spending Code) been set?	N/A	
3.13 If outsourcing was involved were procurement rules complied with?	N/A	
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?	1	
3.15 Have steps been put in place to gather performance indicator data?	1	

Checklist 4 – To be completed in respect of capital projects/programmes & capital grants schemes incurring expenditure in the year under review **URDF Longford Connected 75% URDF Funding 25% Match funding Longford County Council**

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?	3	
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?	3	
4.5 Were monitoring reports prepared regularly, showing implementation against plan, budget, timescales and quality?	3	Prepared by Consultants
4.6 Did projects/programmes/grant schemes keep within their financial budget and time schedule?	1	Contract late starting because of supply chain issues. Budget went over, Conciliator appointed and final account settled with contractor. Grant Authority notified.
4.7 Did budgets have to be adjusted?	N/A	Yes
4.8 Were decisions on changes to budgets / time schedules made promptly?	N/A	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.)	N/A	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?	Yes	
4.12Were 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	

See Note 2 in the opening guidelines in relation to the interpretation of Capital Grant Schemes in the context of Local Government

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

B01 National Primary Roads

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	Yes. Spending programme defined as part of the Annual Budget and under TII direction
5.2 Are outputs well defined?	3	Yes defects recorded on TII Map Portal, Pavement Improvement schemes recorded on Map Road
5.3 Are outputs quantified on a regular basis?	3	Yes
5.4 Is there a method for monitoring efficiency on an on-going basis?	3	Yes
5.5 Are outcomes well defined?	2	YES, On TII pavement condition survey
5.6 Are outcomes quantified on a regular basis?	2	Yes
5.7 Are unit costings compiled for performance monitoring?	3	Yes, on Supply gov
5.8 Are other data compiled to monitor performance?	2	Yes, on TII pavement condition surveys
5.9 Is there a method for monitoring effectiveness on an on-going basis?	3	Yes on-going survey/testing. TII Pavement Condition Survey
5.10 Has the organisation engaged in any other 'evaluation proofing'[1] of programmes/projects?	3	Yes

[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.

Ennybegs Pedestrian and Cycle Improvements - 100% NTA Funded

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?	3	One completion report for this project.
6.2 Was a post project review completed for all projects/programmes exceeding €20m?	3	Lessons learned identified and listed in the completion report and communicated to the NTA
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	One
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?	N/A	
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	

See Note 2 in the opening guidelines in relation to the interpretation of Capital Grant Schemes in the context of Local Government

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	Not reported in PSC 2023
7.2 Did those reviews reach conclusions on whether the programmes were efficient?	N/A	Not reported in PSC 2023
7.3 Did those reviews reach conclusions on whether the programmes were effective?	N/A	Not reported in PSC 2023
Have the conclusions reached been taken into account in related areas of expenditure?	N/A	Not reported in PSC 2023
7.3 Were any programmes discontinued following a review of a current expenditure programme?	N/A	Not reported in PSC 2023
7.4 Were reviews carried out by staffing resources independent of project implementation?	N/A	Not reported in PSC 2023
7.5 Were changes made to the organisation's practices in light of lessons learned from reviews?	N/A	Not reported in PSC 2023

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 – Capital Expenditure 2023 – Twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford

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	Housing Capital Programme.
Detail	Acquire a development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford.
Responsible Body	Longford County Council
Current Status	Capital Expenditure Being Incurred
Start Date	April 2023
End Date	Anticipated June 2024
Overall Cost	€7,640,704

Project Description

The project involved the development of properties for social housing as part of the social housing delivery targets set out under Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland which is the Government's housing policy to 2030. Targets are developed for Longford County Council (the Council) based on the social housing waiting list and data obtained from the Housing Needs Demand Assessment which profiles future demand for social housing. A target of seventy-four new build social homes was set for the Council for 2023.

Due to the new targets set by the Government to meet the need for social housing, the Council advertised for expressions of interest for turnkey developments, housing schemes and land for the provision of affordable and social housing on etenders, the Council's website and in the local paper in May 2019.

Fast Fit Doors Limited submitted details of a proposed development on a derelict industrial brownfield site of 0.437 hectare, located on Richmond Street on the outskirts of the centre of Longford town. Planning permission was sought for the demolition of the existing industrial buildings on site and the construction of twenty-three two bed houses as well as all associated site development works and services.

Following an appraisal of all projects submitted to the Council, the development of six blocks housing twenty-three, two bed houses on Richmond Street was selected for an all-in purchase price of €6,001,881. Due consideration was also given to the brownfield site, the gateway location, the need to demolish existing structures containing asbestos, contaminated soil on site and the benefit of town regeneration in the area.

In August 2020 the Council submitted a Capital Appraisal report to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). As there were a number of abnormal costs included in the Capital Appraisal that pushed the cost per unit over the allowed Unit Cost Ceilings (UCC), the DHLGH recommended an independent Quantity Surveyor (QS) report to assess reasonable cost delivery for the project in line with Turnkey Circular 31/2019.
Meanwhile site investigation works at the proposed development by the consultant engineer and a geotechnical company revealed that the bearing capacity of the existing soil was inadequate to support a standard strip or raft foundation and a solution was agreed to pile the site at a considerable outlay to the development cost plan.

In June 2022 an independent QS report supported a gross project cost of €7,483,404. The Council withdrew the previous Capital Appraisal submitted to the DHLGH in August 2020 and submitted a revised Capital Appraisal report in July 2022. The DHLGH approved an all-in budget of €7,640,704 including technical, legal and project management fees.
The site was purchased from the developer and ownership was transferred into the Council's name.

Works commenced in April 2023 under a building agreement. Phased payments were made to the developer as houses were completed. Agreed development costs to divert the existing foul sewer to facilitate the new development escalated when Uisce Eireann directed the developer to further divert and upgrade the foul sewer for operational reasons. Negotiations continue between all parties as to who these additional associated costs will be attributed to, as the contract price cannot be increased as per the terms of the Building Agreement.

The estate was named Connaught Park and eighteen houses numbered 1-13, 19-21 and 22-23 were handed over to the Council in four phases by the end of 2023 with the project scheduled for completion in June 2024.

The project is funded under the Social Housing Investment Programme and is being delivered under the Housing for All Plan.

Section B - Step 1: Logic Model Mapping

As part of this In-Depth Check, Longford County Council have completed a Programme Logic Model (PLM) for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford. 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
• Acquire social houses to meet the social housing need in County Longford in a reasonable timeframe. • Reduce the number of approved applicants on the Council's housing list. • Comply with Revenue rules.	• Corporate Plan 2019-2024. • Capital funding of an all-in budget of €7,640,704 approved by the DHLGH to acquire the site and build the houses. • Circulars for the provision of Social Housing. • Letter from DHLGH outlining Social Housing Delivery Targets for 2023 under the Housing for all – a New Housing Plan for	• Place an advertisement on etenders, in the local paper and on the Council's website seeking expressions of interest for turnkey developments, housing schemes and land for the provision of Social and Affordable housing. • Appraisal of proposals received and selection of preferred proposal. • Obtain current independent valuation report for the development. • Submission of capital appraisal to the DHLGH for approval. • Correspond with the DHLGH on queries regarding costs exceeding the UCC. • Obtain the services of an independent QS. • Liaise with the developer regarding costs. • Obtain current independent valuation reports for the site and the development. • Withdraw original capital appraisal from the DHLGH and submit revised capital appraisal.	• Twenty-two new two-bed houses including living/dining, bathroom, and hall with the capacity to house four people per house. • One new two- bed house including living/dining, bathroom, and hall with the capacity to house three people. • Maximum capacity to	• Twenty-three families will be provided with social housing. • Twenty-three families will be removed from the housing list. • Additional income for Longford County Council from rent. • The housing units are 70% more energy efficient and cheaper to heat. • Increased resilience to impacts of climate change.

Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
	Ireland. The Council had a target of seventy-four new build houses and this development accounted for eighteen houses completed in 2023. • Grant of Planning Permission for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford. • Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and Finance staff. • Administrative, engineering and technical staff support.	• Receive funding approval from the DHLGH. • Engage with legal advisors re contract preparation for purchase of site and building agreement. • Seek advice on application of Relevant Contracts Tax (RCT) on payments to the developer. • Ongoing inspection of site works by the Council technical and engineering staff. • Certification of completed works by the consulting engineer and payments certified by the Council's engineer. • Process phased payments through Agresso, the Financial Management System. • Submit completed and certified forms to the Department for recoupment of project payments. • Transfer ownership of the site to the Council. • Eighteen houses are handed over to the Council by the end of 2023. • Anticipated development will be completed in June 2024. • Appoint tenants to each of the properties.	house ninety-one people in the housing development. • All units are built to A2 BER. • Two Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points installed at the development with the capacity to charge four electric cars. • Tax compliant payments processed to the developer.	• Delivery of a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. • Progress towards a near zero carbon investment strategy. • Regeneration of a derelict site, enhancing the environs. • The Council is supporting the urban regeneration of Longford Town. • The Council are compliant with Revenue rules.

Description of Programme Logic Model

Objectives: The main objectives of the project were to acquire properties for social housing in a cost-effective manner, in order to house applicants on Longford County Council's housing list and reduce the number of approved applicants on the Council's housing list, and to do this in a manner that helped the Council achieve objectives in the Corporate Plan 2019-2024 and met the social housing build targets set by the DHLGH for 2023. The Council must be compliant with Revenue rules when processing payments to the developer.

Inputs:
1. The Corporate Plan 2019-2024.
2. The primary input to the programme was the capital funding of €7,640.704 including associated costs (technical, legal and project management fees) which was provided by the sanctioning authority, the DHLGH.
3. The Council are guided by Housing Circulars for the provision of Social Housing.
4. Letter from the DHLGH outlining the Social Housing Delivery Targets for 2023 under the Housing for All Plan.
5. Grant of Planning Permission for Planning Application 19/292 and the attached conditions.
6. LGMA and Finance staff provide advice to the housing capital staff in the application of tax on payments to the developer.
7. Administrative, engineering and technical support from the housing staff was also required throughout the project.

Activities:
Key activities performed throughout the project included:
1. Publish an advertisement on etenders, in the local paper and on the Council's website seeking expressions of interest for turnkey developments, housing schemes and land for the provision of Social and Affordable housing.
2. Assess the proposals received and proceed with preferred proposal.
3. Obtain a current independent valuation report for the proposed development.
4. Submit the project proposal and Capital Appraisal for the project to the DHLGH for approval.
5. Correspond with the DHLGH on queries regarding the UCC's.
6. Obtain the services on an independent QS to assess reasonable cost delivery for the proposed project.
7. Liaise with the developer regarding development costs including the diversion of existing services, demolition of the derelict buildings and removal of asbestos and contaminated soil, additional costs to reinforce the poor ground and to comply with planning conditions, and increased costs associated with construction inflation.
8. Obtain current independent valuation reports for the site and the proposed development.
9. Withdraw the original Capital Appraisal from the DHLGH and submit a revised Capital Appraisal for the project.
10. On receipt of DHLGH funding approval, liaise with the Council's legal advisors regarding the contract preparation for purchase of the site and the building agreement.

11. Seek advice on the application of RCT on payments to the developer.
12. Ongoing inspection of site works by the Council's engineering and technical staff.
13. Certificate of Compliance with Planning Permission and Building Regulations completed by the consulting engineer and payments certified by the Council's engineer.
14. Phased payments were made to the developer as houses were completed. These payments were raised through Agresso and paid to the developer in compliance with the building agreement.
15. Completion of HCA3 and HCA4 forms and submit to the DHLGH for recoupment of funds.
16. Transfer ownership of the site to the Council.
17. Eighteen houses are handed over to the Council in four phases by the end of 2023.
18. Anticipated that the development will be completed in June 2024.
19. Appoint tenants to the twenty-three houses.

Outputs:
1. The Council acquire twenty-three new social houses with an A2 BER.
2. There is maximum capacity to house ninety-one people in the housing development.
3. There are two new EV charging points installed at the development with the capacity to charge four electric cars.
4. All payments processed to the developer are compliant with Revenue rules.

Outcomes: There were a number of outcomes from the project including:
1. Provision of twenty-three social houses for twenty-three families on the housing list in a relatively short time frame.
2. The number of approved applicants on the Council's housing list is reduced.
3. Additional rental income will be received by the Council.
4. The housing units have a A2 BER making them 70% more energy efficient, cheaper to heat and have improved air quality.
5. The Council is increasing the County's resilience to the impacts of climate change and achieving Greener County strategic objectives in our Corporate Plan.
6. Removal of the contaminated soil on the site and removal of asbestos from the derelict buildings.
7. Regeneration of a derelict site, enhancing the environs.
8. The Council is supporting the Urban Regeneration of Longford Town.
9. The Council are compliant with Revenue rules and not liable for any penalties.

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

The following section tracks the acquisition of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford from inception to conclusion in terms of major project/programme milestones.

May 2019	• Advertisement published on etenders, the Council's website and in the local paper seeking expressions of interest for turnkey developments, housing schemes and land for the provision of Social and Affordable housing.
July 2020	• Planning permission granted for all associated works to develop twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford – PL19/292. • Independent valuation of proposed development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford received from DNG Frank Regan for €6,160,000 (incl. VAT).
August 2020	• Capital Appraisal on the proposed housing development at Richmond Street, Longford submitted to the DHLGH along with HCA3 form for the sum of €6,000,881 (incl. VAT) plus associated costs. • DHLGH query cost of development as UCC's are exceeded.
November 2020	• Letter to DHLGH outlining abnormal costs associated with proposed development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford.
December 2020	• Letter from DHLGH requesting an independent QS report to assess reasonable cost delivery for the proposed project in line with Turnkey Circular 31/2019.
March 2021	• Obtain the services of independent QS Ciaran Leech to assess reasonable cost delivery for the proposed project. • Independent QS Ciaran Leech provides a report on the costs submitted for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford.
May 2021	• Independent valuation of site at Richmond Street with planning permission for the development of twenty-three houses received from Chazey Properties Ltd. for €850,000 - €900,000.

June 2021	• At the request of Consulting Engineer Cunningham Design and Planning, Irish Drilling Limited carry out site investigation works on the proposed residential development at Richmond Street and provide a report.
July 2021	• Consulting Engineer Cunningham Design and Planning make recommendation in relation to the foundation for the proposed residential development at Richmond Street.
September 2021	• Launch of Housing for All – a new Housing Plan for Ireland.
July 2021 – May 2022	• Negotiations on development costs for the proposed project at Richmond Street continue between the Council and the developer.
June 2022	• Independent QS Ciaran Leech provides a report on the costs submitted for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford.
July 2022	• Independent valuation of proposed development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford received from DNG Frank Regan for €8,000,000 (incl. VAT). • The Council withdraw the Capital Appraisal submitted in August 2020 for the proposed housing development at Richmond Street, Longford and submit a revised Capital Appraisal to the DHLGH along with HCA3 form for the sum of €7,483,404 (incl. VAT) plus associated technical, legal and project management fees.
August 2022	• Approval received from the DHLGH for the proposed housing development for the sum of €7,640,704 (including associates costs) subject to the conditions set out by the DHLGH.
September – December 2022	• The Council engages with E.C. Gearty Solicitor regarding the Contract of Sale for purchase of the site and the Building Agreement.
January 2023	• Contract for Sale and Chief Executive Order No. H23929 are signed for the purchase of site at Richmond Street, Longford.
February 2023	• Building Agreement signed for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford.

	• Housing capital staff seek guidance from the Finance department on the correct application of tax on payments to the developer. • Finance department contact the LGMA regarding the application of RCT and advice is received following recent meetings of Revenue, Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC) and Heads of Finance representative. • Payment of €897,000, made to E.C. Gearty Solicitor for the purchase of the site.
March 2023	• Payment of €658,640 made to Fast Fit Doors in accordance with the building agreement – 10% deposit of building agreement costs. • HCA3 & HCA4 forms and supporting documentation for claim of €748,340 in respect of payment to the developer sent to DHLGH. • Remittance of €748,340 received from DHLGH in respect of payment to the developer for 10% deposit of building agreement contract. • Appointment of Project Supervisor Construction Stage (PSCS) – Ciaran Hourican Contracting Ltd. • Appointment of Project Supervisor Design Process (PSDP) – Cunningham Design and Planning.
August 2023	• Payment of €1,603,646 made to Fast Fit Doors in respect of houses 1-7. • HCA3 & HCA4 forms and supporting documentation for claim for houses 1-7 Richmond Street, Longford for €2,064,302 sent to DHLGH. • Remittance of €2,064,302 received from DHLGH in respect of houses 1-7 Richmond Street, Longford including project management fees of €14,000 and valuation fees of €500.
October 2023	• Payment of €916,369 made to Fast Fit Doors in respect of houses 8-11. • HCA3 & HCA4 forms and supporting documentation for claim for houses 8-11 Richmond Street, Longford for €1,179,315 sent to DHLGH. • Remittance of €1,179,315 received from DHLGH in respect houses 8-11 Richmond Street, Longford including project management fees of €8,000. • Payment of €916,369 made to Fast Fit Doors in respect houses 12-13, 22-23. • HCA3 & HCA4 forms and supporting documentation for claim for houses 12-13 Richmond Street, Longford for €607,851 sent to DHLGH.

November 2023	• Remittance of €607,851 received from DHLGH in respect of houses 12-13 Richmond Street, Longford including legal fees of €22,193.
December 2023	• Payment of €687,277 made to Fast Fit Doors in respect of houses 19-21. • HCA3 & HCA4 forms and supporting documentation for claim for houses 19-21 Richmond Street, Longford for €884,487 sent to DHLGH. • Remittance of €884,487 received from DHLGH in respect of houses 19-21 Richmond Street, Longford including project management fees of €6,000. • Application for Land Registry Folio 18603F – site at Richmond Street, Longford to be transferred into the ownership of the Council.

Section B - Step 3: Analysis of Key Documents

The following section reviews the key documentation relating to appraisal, analysis, and evaluation for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford.

Project/Programme Key Documents	
Title	**Details**
1. Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland	Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland' is the government's housing plan to 2030.
2. Means to meet need	Place an advertisement on etenders, in the local paper and on its website seeking expressions of interest for turnkey developments, housing schemes and land for the provision of Social and Affordable housing.
3. Project Appraisal Scoring Summary	An appraisal of the expressions of interest received against predetermined pass/fail criteria and selection of preferred proposal based on scoring mechanism.
4. Housing Need Analysis	Examined the housing need in the area for mixed size accommodation.
5. Planning Permission PL 19/292	Planning Permission for development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford including the schedule of conditions 1-16 attached to the grant of planning permission.
6. Independent Valuation Reports	Independent valuation reports were obtained for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford in July 2020 (€6,160,000) and again in July 2022 (€8,000,000) from DNG Frank Regan. An independent valuation report was also arranged in May 2021 for the site at Richmond Street with

Project/Programme Key Documents	
	planning permission for the development of twenty-three houses (€850,000 - €900,000) from Chazey Properties Ltd.
7. Site Investigation Report	Following the excavation of a number of trial holes on site, consulting engineer Cunningham Design and Planning instructed a geotechnical company Irish Drilling Ltd. to carry out a number of bore holes throughout the site to assess the bearing capacity of the underlying soil. The bearing capacity of the existing soil was inadequate to support a standard strip or raft foundation.
8. Capital Appraisal Reports	Capital Appraisal report was prepared in August 2020 and submitted to the DHLGH outlining the rationale for choosing this development to provide twenty-three houses for the sum of €6,000,881 plus associated costs. The Capital Appraisal report submitted in August 2020 was withdrawn by the Council and a revised Capital Appraisal report was prepared and submitted to the DHLGH in August 2022 seeking approval to purchase the site and develop twenty-three houses for the sum of €7,483,404.
9. Independent QS report on the costs submitted by Fast Fit Doors for the proposed development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford	In August 2020 the DHLGH queried the cost of developing the twenty-three houses in the Capital Appraisal report as the UCC's were exceeded. The Council sought an independent QS report on the costs submitted by Fast Fit Doors for the proposed development at Richmond Street, Longford. The project did not proceed at that time and a further report on project costs was provided by Ciaran Leech QS in June 2022 to support the Council's application for grant funding for the development.
10. Letter of funding approval from DHLGH	Letter of approval received from the DHLGH in August 2022 for the proposed project subject to compliance with the conditions set out and the budget notes in Appendix 1.

Project/Programme Key Documents	
11. Social Housing Delivery Targets 2023	Letter from the DHLGH setting out the Social Housing Delivery Targets under the Housing for All Plan. The Council's targets for 2023 were seventy-four new build houses.
12. Invoices from the developer	The developer Fast Fit Doors commenced the development in April 2023 and submitted invoices for payment as houses were completed in phases.
13. Certificates of Compliance from the consulting engineer	Certificate of Compliance with Planning Permission and Building Regulations by the consulting engineer and payments certified by the Council's engineer are received for phased payments.
14. HCA3 and HCA4 forms	These forms were completed and submitted to the DHLGH at intervals during the project to recoup monies paid to the developer.
15. Letters of confirmation from DHLGH regarding recoupment of monies	Letters received from DHLGH confirming recoupment of monies for payments made by the Council for the phased development of houses at Richmond Street, Co. Longford.
16. Registration of Title	An application for Land Registry Folio 18603F to be transferred into the ownership of the Council.

Key Document 1: Housing for All – a new Housing Plan for Ireland
Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland' is the government's housing plan to 2030.
It is a multi-annual, multi-billion-euro plan which will improve Ireland's housing system and deliver more homes of all types for people with different housing needs.
The government's overall objective is that every citizen in Ireland should have access to good quality homes:

- to purchase or rent at an affordable price.
- built to a high standard and in the right place.
- offering a high quality of life.

The policy has four pathways to achieving housing for all:

- supporting home ownership and increasing affordability.
- eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion.
- increasing new housing supply.
- addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock.

The pathways contain actions to be taken by government departments, local authorities, State agencies and others. The pathways are supported by actions to enable a sustainable housing system.

Key Document 2: Means to meet need
To meet the high demand for social housing in particular locations and to achieve a faster turnaround by developers, an expression of interest for the provision of turnkey developments, housing schemes and land for the provision of Social and Affordable housing was advertised on the Council's website, the local paper and etenders.

Key Document 3: Project Appraisal Scoring Summary
An appraisal of expressions of interest received was completed against the predetermined pass/fail criteria and the preferred proposal was selected based on the marks awarded. The scoring mechanism considered:
Site location, number of units proposed, housing need, land zoning, utility services available or available at a reasonable cost, timescale for delivery, value for money, planning permission, location within town/village, proximity to schools/shops/services, profile of land.

Key Document 4: Housing Need Analysis
Longford Town is a location option on Longford County Council's housing need application form. Data extracted from iHouse the Housing database, showed there was a total of 474 applicants with Longford as their preferred option. The analysis of accommodation required by these applicants consisted of 41 one-bedroom units, 191 two-bedroom units, 221 three-bedroom units and 21 four-bedroom units.

Key Document 5: Planning Permission PL 19/292
Planning Permission PL19/292 was granted on 1 July 2020 for the:

- Demolition of existing industrial buildings on site.
- Construction of twenty-three new dwelling houses comprising of two no. two storey, two-bedroom semi-detached units and twenty-one no. two storey, two-bedroom terrace units.
- Public realm landscaping including shared public open space and public lighting.
- Provision of all associated surface water and foul drainage services and connections ancillary to the residential development.
- New pedestrian and vehicular access from Richmond Street and a new pedestrian and vehicular access from Sandy Row/Annaly Park.
- Associated site development works and services at Richmond Street, Longford.

Sixteen conditions were attached to the grant of planning permission. These included specific requirements for:
The external finishes for the proposed houses, footpaths and kerbing.
The removal of waste materials and the contaminated soil.
Diversion of the existing foul sewer.
Installation of EV Chargers.
Landscaping and lighting.
Naming the development.

Key Document 6: Independent Valuation Reports
Independent valuation reports were obtained for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford in July 2020 (€6,160,000) and again in July 2022 (€8,000,000) from DNG Frank Regan. An independent valuation report was also arranged in May 2021 for the site at Richmond Street with planning permission for the development of twenty-three houses (€850,000 - €900,000) from Chazey Properties Ltd. Valuation considerations on sales of similar properties were unable to take place as there were none in the area at that time.

Key Document 7: Site Investigation Report
Following the excavation of a number of trial holes on site, consulting engineer Cunningham Design and Planning instructed a geotechnical company Irish Drilling Ltd. to carry out several bore holes throughout the site to assess the bearing capacity of the underlying soil. The bearing capacity of the existing soil was inadequate to support a standard strip or raft foundation. There were considerable costs involved to pile the site and these abnormal costs increased the overall development cost plan.

Key Document 8: Capital Appraisal Reports

A Capital Appraisal report was prepared in August 2020 and submitted to the DHLGH outlining the rationale for choosing this development to provide twenty-three houses for the sum of €6,000,881 plus associated costs.

The Capital Appraisal report submitted in August 2020 was withdrawn by the Council and a revised Capital Appraisal report was prepared and submitted to the DHLGH in August 2022 seeking approval to purchase the site and develop twenty-three houses for the sum of €7,483,404 plus associated technical, legal and project management fees. This complies with the guidelines set out in Circular 31/2019.

Key Document 9: Independent QS report on the costs submitted by Fast Fit Doors for the proposed development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford

In August 2020 the DHLGH queried the cost of developing the twenty-three houses in the Capital Appraisal report as the UCC's were exceeded. The Council sought an independent QS report on the costs submitted by Fast Fit Doors for the proposed development at Richmond Street, Longford. The project did not proceed at that time and a further report on project costs was provided by Ciaran Leech QS in June 2022 to support the Council's application for grant funding for the development. There were a number of abnormal cost items:

- Diversion of existing services.
- ESB sub-station.
- Additional costs due to poor ground.
- Demolition of industrial buildings and removal of asbestos and contaminated soil.
- Additional costs to comply with some of the planning conditions.

The QS agreed that these items were Extra Over Costs except for the costs imposed on the developer to comply with some of the planning conditions of the Council. The QS reported that these additional costs of approx. €250,000 plus vat result in an exceptional high finish to the houses but do not enhance the standard of the houses, rather it is the architectural appearance of the house that is improved.

Key Document 10: Letter of funding approval from DHLGH

Letter of funding approval was received from the DHLGH in August 2022 for the proposed project for an all-in budget of €7,640,704 including technical, legal and project management fees subject to compliance with the conditions set out and the budget notes in Appendix 1.

Key Document 11: Social Housing Delivery Targets 2023
Letter received from the DHLGH setting out the Social Housing Delivery Targets under the Housing for All Plan. The Council's target for 2023 were seventy-four new build houses and sixteen leases. The Council delivered seventy-four new builds in 2023 and eighteen completed houses in Richmond Street, Longford were included in these figures.

Key Document 12: Invoices from the developer
The developer Fast Fit Doors commenced the development in April 2023 and submitted four invoices for payment throughout the year for eighteen houses as they were completed in four phases. The Council processed payments for houses 1-7 in August, houses 8-11, 12-13 and 22-23 in October and houses 19-21 in December 2023.

Key Document 13: Certificates of Compliance from the consulting engineer
Prior to raising payments for the agreed phased payments, the Council receives Certificates of Compliance from the consulting engineer certifying that completed works comply with relevant Planning and Building Control, Building Regulations etc. These payments are also certified by the Council's engineer.

Key Document 14: HCA3 and HCA4 forms
- **HCA3 form** – is completed in compliance with Circular Housing 15/2019, where an application is made for an exchequer capital grant (Form HCA4) in relation to the acquisition of a dwelling for use as a social housing unit. This was completed for each phase of funding.
- **HCA4 forms** – in compliance with Circular 15/2019 the HCA4 form was completed to draw down funding for the capital costs associated with the phased delivery of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford based on vouched expenditure.

Key Document 15: Letters of Confirmation from the DHLGH regarding recoupment of monies
Recoupments were made from the DHLGH for development costs and letters confirming payments to the Council were received from the DHLGH.

Key Document 16: Registration of Title
An application was made for Land Registry Folio 18603F to be transferred into the ownership of the Council. This was completed in April 2024.

Section B - Step 4: Data Audit

The following section details the data audit that was carried out for the development of the twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford. It evaluates whether appropriate data is available for the future evaluation of the project/programme.

Data Required	Use	Availability
Relevant Housing Legislation	To check compliance by the Council.	On file
Project Appraisal Scoring Summary	To ensure that all expressions of interest received have been objectively assessed based upon the predetermined appraisal criteria. This demonstrates transparency for unsuccessful parties.	On file
Housing Need Analysis	To establish there is a need in the area for housing and for what type of housing.	On file/iHouse
Planning Permission	To review planning conditions associated with the development.	On file/iPlan
Independent Valuation Reports	To ensure that acquisitions do not exceed the market value for the properties.	On file
Site Investigation Report	To confirm that the additional site costs were warranted.	On file
Capital Appraisal Reports	Two Capital Appraisal reports prepared by the Council for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford and submitted to the DHLGH.	On file
Contract for Sale to purchase the site	The Council purchased the site and ownership was transferred to the Council in April 2024.	On file
Building Agreement	Documentation to support the decision to fund the development through a Building Agreement. The signed building agreement detailing the terms and conditions of the contract.	On file
Correspondence from and to the DHLGH	• To review correspondence from the DHLHG regarding queries on the cost levels being above the relevant UCCs. • To confirm funding approval was received from the DHLGH. • To confirm that recoupment of monies from DHLGH was completed.	On file
Correspondence regarding the upgrade to the foul sewer	To review correspondence between Uisce Eireann, Cunningham Design and Planning, the developer and the Council, regarding the works and the additional costs associated with the diversion and upgrade of the existing foul sewer.	On file
Financial data from Agresso.	• To check payments associated with the development charged to Job Code 01193287. • To confirm recoupments were received by the Council at the time of review.	On file/ Agresso

Data Availability and Proposed Next Steps
The in-depth check involved reviewing the project file and records held by the Housing department in relation to this housing project. Records are maintained in hard copy file and all data is recorded electronically.

Information regarding housing applicants is available on iHouse, the housing management system and database. The housing needs analysis was available on file. The houses while completed, are not yet available to tenant as the development remains a building site pending the final ground works. Offers of accommodation will be made subject to Garda checks. Rent assessments will be completed when offers of accommodation have been accepted and the appropriate rent charges will be set-up in Agresso. Payments for rent charges will also be recorded in Agresso.
All financial records are available on Agresso, the financial management system including:

- payments made to the developer, the Council's solicitor and the valuer.
- recoupments from the DHLGH.

Phased payments to the developer were reduced by:

- the site costs of €897,000 paid in February 2023.
- the 10% deposit of building agreement costs of €658,640 paid in March 2023.
- a further 10% of the building agreement costs which will be paid to the developer on completion of services and agreement of final account.

A claim to the DHLGH has not been made for houses 15, 22 and 23 due to the above reductions applied to the phased payments to the developer. This claim will be processed on receipt of the final invoice from the developer.

The project has been closely managed by the Council's Senior Executive Engineer. This has led to a number of cost-savings:

- limestone sills and kerbs and brick edging (in consultation and agreement with the Planning office).
- amending the ground works design to avoid moving an EIR box (in agreement with the developer).
- use of existing ESB sub-station in Annaly Park instead of installing an ESB sub-station on-site (in consultation and agreement with the ESB, four mini pillars will be installed on-site for the houses and two mini pillars for the EV Chargers).
- not building an internal wall in each house (to comply with room size requirements in Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007 and in agreement with the developer).
- negotiations with EasyGo Charging Limited to install EV Chargers for free.

These and other savings will be offset against extra contract costs associated with a new boundary wall, additional fence and footpath works, alteration to drainage layouts at two houses and possibly some of associated costs with the diversion and upgrade of the foul sewer. There is no agreement yet between the parties as to who will have liability for the foul sewer costs however the contract price cannot be increased as per the terms of the Building Agreement.

Section B - Step 5: Key Evaluation Questions

The following section looks at the key evaluation questions for the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford 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)
Delivery of the project does comply with the standards set out in the Public Spending Code. The project was selected following a project appraisal of expressions of interest received and the preferred proposal was selected based on the scoring mechanism. The project involved the acquisition of twenty-three houses for social housing as part of the social housing delivery targets for 2023 under the Housing for All Plan. The project is scheduled for completion in June 2024.

A target of seventy-four builds was set for the Council for 2023 and eighteen of the twenty-three houses in the Richmond Street, Longford development were accounted for in the seventy-four new builds delivered in 2023.

Is the necessary data and information available such that the project/programme can be subjected to a full evaluation at a later date?
All necessary data and information is available to ensure that the project can be subject to a full evaluation at a later date. All records were available on the electronic files located in the Technical Management and Capital Management folders.

What improvements are recommended such that future processes and management are enhanced?
Comprehensive observations from the Housing Department are merited on planning applications for housing developments, given that the Council have been acquiring many of these developments over the past number of years. These observations are taken into account by the planning authority in its determination of the planning application.

Section: In-Depth Check Summary

The following section presents a summary of the findings of this in-depth check on the development of twenty-three houses at Richmond Street, Longford.

Summary of In-Depth Check

It is the opinion of Internal Audit that there is substantial compliance with the Public Spending Code in respect of this project acquiring twenty-three houses for social housing as part of the Housing for All Action Plan 2023. The main objective of this project was the acquisition of social housing units in a cost-effective manner, to contribute to the targets set out by the DHLGH and to reduce the number of approved applicants on the Council's housing list. In parallel to this, the Council also supported the urban regeneration of a derelict industrial site located on the outskirts of the centre of Longford town and improved the environs for the community already residing there.

There were extensive negotiations on the development costs for the proposed project between the Council and the developer. The subsequent review of these costs by Ciaran Leech, Chartered QS confirmed the project was value for money and in line with current market rates, except for the costs associated to comply with planning conditions resulting in an exceptional high finish to the houses.

Good practice was demonstrated by the staff involved in the project including budget discussions with the developer, seeking advice from the Finance department on tax compliance, project management, budget management, record keeping and negotiating on behalf of the Council a percentage share of revenue collected from the EV Chargers.

The development at Richmond Street, Longford commenced in April 2023. The estate was named Connaught Park and eighteen houses numbered 1-13, 19-21 and 22-23 were handed over to the Council in four phases by the end of 2023 with the project scheduled for completion in June 2024. The houses have an A2 BER and the scheme has maximum capacity to house ninety-one people. The Council have provided a sustainable social housing complex that will meet the needs of housing applicants of all ages.

Overall Assurance Level

	Substantial Assurance – There is a robust system of risk management, control and governance which should ensure that objectives are fully achieved.